Party system stability in Latin America: a comparative study

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PARTY SYSTEM STABILITY IN LATIN AMERICA:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

by

Luis F. Clemente

A Dissertation

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Abstract

It has been argued that party systems should always be on “working order” because stable party systems correlate with stable democracies, and whenever party systems become dysfunctional, democracy becomes dysfunctional as well. In Latin America, there is legitimate concern for party system stability precisely because of such outcome. Political parties in the region not only face internal and external challenges, but also the added pressure of being part of democratic consolidation. Most importantly, Latin American politics currently present a great challenge: how to restore citizen trust in political parties and party systems.

This dissertation addresses the concern of how to prevent future episodes of party system collapse that can undermine democratic governance, and answers a crucial question: *what are the conditions that result in party system stability?* I hypothesize that party system stability results from the institutionalization of a pattern of interactions between political parties created at a prior moment from an intersection between the assumption of partisan self-interest and factors external to the parties. To test the hypothesis, I have created a qualitative research design that combines single case studies with a cross-country comparison, and have chosen South American countries (Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, and Chile) to analyze. The possibility of causal complexity will also be examined.

The analysis will reveal that different contexts can result in different combinations of exogenous factors and the assumption of partisan self-interest, and that not all combinations of exogenous variables and partisan self-interest are conducive to
institutionalization, but it will also show that the hypothesis was confirmed for the most part. The case studies will show that party system stability depends on how a pattern of interactions between parties institutionalizes in complex causal processes involving the assumption of partisan self-interest and exogenous variables.
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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

A part of the emphasis of scholarly literature in comparative politics has been dedicated to political parties and party systems. The reasons for it range from the theoretical to the empirical; party systems are not only considered an integral part of a theory of political institutions, but also as crucial actors in political practice. Indeed, in the words of Mala Htun, “[a] key insight of an institutionalist perspective on politics is that the configuration of governing institutions and political party systems shapes the relationships among political actors and the possibility for policy change (2003, 17)” – something with crucial consequences for democratic stability (Ibid, 20). Related to that assessment, party systems are the arena where political parties perform functions directly relevant to policymaking (i.e., political mobilization, political education, and interest aggregation) because they represent the manifestation of a priori demands for the authoritative allocation of resources by the state. It has been argued time and again that party systems should always be on “working order” because stable party systems correlate with stable democracies, and whenever party systems become dysfunctional, democracy becomes dysfunctional as well.

Party systems have been on the verge of becoming dysfunctional indeed, and in some cases observers have been legitimately concerned for democratic stability. In the case of Western Europe, the building blocks of party systems – political parties –faced situations that threatened the performance of their main functions and their overall character of crucial political actors. For instance, globalization has redefined the sphere and role of the state, as intergovernmental organizations become more influential in areas such as macroeconomic policy and human rights. The effects of globalization are not
limited to its direct challenge to the concept of state sovereignty, but entail that the programmatic positions of political parties – when transformed into actual state policies – can be curtailed by external imperatives. Domestically, social movements have challenged the primacy of political parties as axis for mobilization regarding specific issues, and have made important strides in influencing state policy through direct lobbying or transnational networks. Social movements are also said to provide a more direct connection between citizens and governments for the consideration of concerns that otherwise might be not considered by political parties, thus rendering the latter irrelevant. Demographic tendencies like international migration, sociological phases like post-modernization, and even technological advances in political campaigning are also part of the list of challenges (Montero & Gunther 2002) because they transform some of the nuances of competition between parties. Some have spoken about a “crisis” in political parties and party systems that has four guises: the denial of parties, the selective rejection of parties, the selective rejection of party systems, and the redundancy of parties (Daalder 2002, 39). To be sure, Western European political parties have been able to adapt and their party systems have survived (Puhle 2002), but the challenges did show that party systems are not taken for granted anymore.

Party systems in fledgling democracies present the most worrisome scenarios and the most significant implications of their functionality for democratic stability. That is obvious in areas of the world like Africa and Eastern Europe, but Latin America is also a poignant example. Political parties in the region, including its “third wave” democracies, face the same situations confronted by Western European parties and the added pressure of being part of democratic consolidation; worse yet, Latin American politics currently
present a great challenge: how to restore citizen trust in political parties and party systems. There was indeed a time when the resumption of party politics was one of the most celebrated feats of “third wave” transitions from authoritarianism to democracy, but nowadays the attitude towards political parties and party systems is unfavorable. Negative assessments of the performance of political parties are consistent and well documented, and the nature of this problem has been dramatically expressed in public opinion surveys since at least 1995. The main repercussion of this problem is that it shows a disintegration of the ties between parties and their constituencies – that is, a crisis of democratic representation that finds the most dramatic consequence in party system collapse, defined as an almost wholesale rejection of political parties (Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez 2006).

Notwithstanding the crucial importance of the challenges faced by political parties, the focus of this dissertation project is on party systems. While party systems cannot exist without political parties, I will argue that political parties need to have their political rivalries structured and formalized if democratic politics is to achieve the highly important characteristics of predictability and and familiarity. I will advance the idea that party systems have a leviathanesque character, being simultaneously a creation of and an influence over political parties. Most importantly, I deal in this project with the concept of party system stability and ask the following research question: what are the conditions that result in party system stability? The importance of identifying those conditions goes beyond mere description and explanation, for the connection I envision between party system stability and democracy – exemplified by Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe – goes beyond the truism (unquestionable for some, debatable for others) that
democracy is the best system of government. Given that “political parties are at the core of democracy (Puhle 2002, 58),” regions where democratic consolidation is incipient or elusive confirm that party system stability is imperative.

My dissertation project thus addresses the concern of how to prevent future episodes of party system collapse that can seriously undermine democratic governance. I will show that party system stability is the end result of a process that involves both rationality and contextual factors; more precisely, party system stability results from the institutionalization of a pattern of interactions between political parties created at a prior moment from an intersection between self-interest and factors external to the parties. It is in such an appreciation of what influences political parties to behave as they do where I will find the nuances I consider necessary for understanding party system stability. I have chosen four South American countries (Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, and Chile) to be analyzed qualitatively in a two-fold fashion: I first look at each country individually in order to identify which external factors combine with rationality, and then I make a cross-country comparison where I expect to find similarities and differences between the cases and set the stage for my final conclusions.

This project addresses a second but no less important concern: how to understand the concept of party systems and party system stability in a more nuanced way. The study of both topics is certainly not new to comparative politics, but Latin America defies a number of arguments, statements, and conclusions studied extensively in Western Europe, where the most important works on the subject originate. My review of the literature will argue that some research (i.e., the emphasis on the total number of parties in the system) is inadequate for explaining party system stability because of theoretical
pitfalls and empirical inconsistencies, and that an exclusive focus on rationality is misleading because it ignores context. It will also advance the claim that party systems are characterized by their interactions and that other aspects mentioned in the literature (number of parties, ideology, and strength) are only secondary.

The most important contribution of my project is simply to give what I believe is a new look to party system stability, especially in regions like Latin America; in fact, what makes it novel is that it incorporates the concept of causal complexity. Analyses of party system stability in Latin America have focused (rightly so) in aspects such as political culture, incentives to comply with an institution, the role of political parties, and other variables; yet it appears that the possibility of all those variables interacting with each other in generating a particular outcome has not been addressed – at least not in the same way Charles Ragin (1987) does with political phenomena in general. Moreover, the stated aims of the literature review indicate another major contribution this project will provide, which is paraphrased by Morris Fiorina (2002) as an inconsistency between theory and practice in the study of political parties. He has advanced that argument as an assessment of the study of party politics in the United States, but it can be also be extrapolated to my chosen subject; in other words, there is an inconsistency between party politics in Latin America and some of the existing theory of party systems and party system stability. I will not call for a paradigm shift, but for a more modest revision of the literature.

A third contribution of this project is empirical, particularly through an analysis of the chosen cases that includes very recent developments that may not be mentioned in scholarly publications. By the same token, my analysis can be extrapolated to party
systems in Africa and particularly Eastern Europe, where recent figures indicate that trust in political parties is very low (Stojarová et al. 2007). Considering that Latin America experienced the resumption of party politics before the Soviet Bloc, finding an answer to my stated research question can provide a path for studying and prescribing solutions for post-Marxist polities. In Africa, cases like Kenya, Zimbabwe, and other incipient democracies can also be analyzed utilizing the insights from this research, although the cultural and ethnic heterogeneity of the region might pose challenges to applicability.

There are some important statements I need to make. First, my analysis is weighted in a way towards the conclusion that exogenous factors are important, but it does not mean that they are necessarily more important than the endogenous ones. I will advance the claim that the exogenous factors have more explanatory power than the number of parties in analyses of party system stability, but the role of partisan self-interest should not be underestimated. The hypothesis I will present combines both aspects because rationality is a necessary condition for party systems, but also an insufficient one. In other words, as I will conclude in the literature review, the parties have powers of agency but do not act without considering external factors.

Second, I must justify my emphasis on the concept of stability instead of focusing on terms such as viability, performance, or even institutionalization. In my defense, the literature on party system stability I will utilize – both the Western European seminal works and case studies centered on Latin America – neither focuses on viability and performance, and in this project I am simply following the same convention. Nevertheless, a reasonable case can be made for treating viability and performance as synonyms for stability. I make a statement pointing to the necessity of links between
parties and voters as a key implication arising from my analysis, but it is based on the
tenets of the model I will later introduce; that is, insofar as parties as self-interested actors
are cognizant of the mindset of voters represented by the exogenous variables, the
patterns of interactions that characterize party systems will become a viable proposition,
and insofar as the systems are viable they will remain constant for an extended period of
time (i.e., stability). By the same token, this recognition of voter mindset by self-
interested parties can be considered what party system performance should be. Regarding
institutionalization, scholars like Scott Mainwaring & Timothy Scully (1995)
understandably treat the concept as a synonym for stability, but in my project I will
introduce it as the means to the end rather than the end itself. In other words, I adhere
strictly to Samuel Huntington’s (1968) definition of institutionalization as the process by
which organizations acquire value and stability.

Third, this dissertation is not intended to settle certain debates. One of them is
about party identification: critiques of spatial models – to which the concept is related –
are many, but I will not attempt to take any sides for or against the latter. My objective is
simply to utilize the definition of the term presented by Campbell et al (1960) and see if
it holds for the chosen cases and how it does, although I will mention critiques of that
definition for the sake of providing an introductory review. Another debate on which I
will not take sides is about what should be the real meaning of democracy – whether
procedural or substantive. Although my analysis focuses on one element of procedural
democracy, it should not be understood as a disdain of substantive democracy. To be
sure, there are pros and cons to either meaning and Latin America is a case in point for
either one, but my dissertation will simply focus on party system stability as a way to
guarantee the stability of democracy in general – whether based on periodic elections or involving more comprehensive socioeconomic equality.

A few methodological considerations are also in order. First, most of the electoral results I will include in the case studies are presidential and legislative elections because of their importance for the political system, and sub-national elections were included whenever there was available data. Also, my definition of party competition will be based in part on Peter Mair’s (2006a) own characterization and will be extrapolated in order to include political systems that are not fully democratic but that nevertheless have political parties striving for power (i.e., Venezuela under chavismo). Finally, I will concentrate on the description of events in each case study without including any connections with the theory I will present later in this project, and the connection between both will be made after the facts of the cases have been presented. That approach does not mean to deny any possible interplay between facts and values, but to make the narrative more fluid and facilitate the comprehension of the information I will present.
Chapter II
LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will introduce and review the sources that were utilized to create the theory that sustains this project. I have divided this review in two main sections: the study of party systems, and the study of party system stability. In neither section I pretend to be utterly exhaustive given the gargantuan size of the literature, but my intention is to include a considerable amount of sources in the first section, and a fairly representative sample as part of the second section.

This review will advance three crucial points:

1. I consider the interaction between political parties in their competition for political or state power as the most fundamental and definitive characteristic of all party systems, especially for purposes of their comparative study.

2. I argue for the existence of an identifiable body of literature about party system stability that unifies otherwise scattered research, but I also propose a singular scheme in order to address certain disadvantages in existing classifications.

3. Based on that classification of the literature, I argue that factors located outside the party system are as important as rationality on the part of political parties when analyzing party system stability.

I introduce point 1 and part of point 2 in agreement with Peter Mair, who first argued about both the importance of party interactions and the existence of a defined body of literature about party system stability. More importantly, those points have implications for the theory I will present in chapter III.

As it will be evident here, the exogenous factors in question are several and their effects on party system stability are reasonably logical. While it seems that individual
exogenous factors are plausibly presented as necessary and sufficient conditions for party system stability, it may be even more sensible to think that they could also operate in concert; that is, one exogenous factor could correlate with others precisely in the same way Charles Ragin (1987) argued variables would do in situations of causal complexity. That conclusion could easily and understandably be made from a juxtaposition of how those exogenous factors are defined, but that will be revisited later in this chapter and discussed at length in chapter III.

I also address an issue presented by Scott Mainwaring (1999, 21): the applicability of existing theory to regions outside Western Europe; indeed, the existing literature originated in and has been applied extensively and intensively to that area. By the same token, some of the most important names in party systems theory are French (Maurice Duverger, Jean Blondel), Italian (Giovanni Sartori, Stefano Bartolini), Danish (Mogens Pedersen), Estonian (Rein Taagepera), Finnish (Markku Laakso) and Irish (Mair). However, Mainwaring believes that the theory as it has been applied in Western Europe has a very limited applicability in other areas of the world (particularly in “third wave” democracies), and that scant efforts have been made so far to redefine it. I agree with Mainwaring’s assertion that the existing theory should be revised for non-Western European cases; in fact, the most important conclusion from this literature review is that such undertaking is possible. In that sense, the aforementioned points form an integrated whole: interactions should be given preeminence and understood differently from certain conceptions of party system stability, while its definition for this project provides a way

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1 Mainwaring also argues that the study of party systems in general has also been dominated by analyses of the American party system.
to present the latter statement in a way that is connected with a differentiated body of literature.

Before discussing the study of party systems, it is necessary to make a few claims regarding its connection with political parties and how does the latter influence the study of the former. Party systems and political parties are inextricably related, so close as to elicit confusion between what characterizes the whole (the party system) and what characterizes the parts (the parties) (Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 163; Moulián 2002, 241). Still, I will emphasize on political party systems rather than on political parties individually because party systems influence the behavior of political parties (Puhle 2002, 62), can initiate internal changes in the parties themselves (Sartori 2001, 902; Sauger 20033), are a necessary element for legitimate elections (Castañeda and Navia 2007, 56), and prevent the appearance of political outsiders (Taylor 2007, 12). But the most fundamental reason for my focus on party systems is that the patterns of interaction between them are as much determined by factors outside their sphere than by the parties themselves (Eckstein 1968, 436). Similarly, as Juan Abal Medina & Julieta Suárez Cao conclude, “when we speak of configurations or the specific format of a party system, we assume that they can vary while their components do not (2002, 163)4.”

Likewise (Moulián 2002, 241)5,

In the analysis of [party systems], the study of relationships must have primacy. The study of a [party] system cannot be studied adequately with the mere description and analysis of its elements, regardless of its

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3 More precisely, Sartori contends that a change in party systems from the outside will result in changes in their composing parts – that is, the parties themselves. I will revisit this statement in chapter II.

4 Sauger’s exact argument is that there is a feedback loop between political parties and party systems that can help bridge the systematic study of both. I will return to that statement in the conclusion of this project.

5 My translation. They conclude more precisely that there is a mutual relationship between political parties and party systems.; in that sense, the components can change without provoking similar transformations in the configurations. Likewise, any problems in one element do not necessarily show in the other (2002, 163-164).

5 My translation.
detail, depth, or appeal. When the objective is [to study] the system, the order of observation must be inverted. In this analytical situation, individual parties are mere references, while the description of relationships is main focus of the analysis.

In sum, political party systems should not be considered a mere sum of their composing political parties. Political parties do matter, but they always do their functions of political socialization and interest aggregation within a larger arena of competition for political power; and party systems formalize, organize, and regulate that competition. In that sense, as Peter Mair (1997) argues, party systems are both a creation of and a powerful influence over political parties. Since that mimics the origins of and justification for states presented in Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, party systems thus have a leviathanesque character.

*The study of party systems*

Eckstein (1968) has argued that the study of party systems was dominated by the study of political parties because the latter was the subject of the works written by Max Weber, Moisei Ostrogorski, and Roberto Michels; and adds that by the 1940s scholarship on party systems featured analyses that treated the subject in a more direct way but did not separate it from the study of political parties. There were many efforts in succeeding decades to do just that, confirming Eckstein’s own assertion that party systems are much more than a sum of political parties. Steven Wolinetz (2006) divides the study of party systems as we know it into two major branches: the American branch, which concentrates exclusively on the American party system and studies aspects related to its characteristics and conduct (e.g., partisan behavior in smaller localities, partisan realignment and its connection with societal differentiations, and issues related to the quality of democracy within the system); and the comparative branch, which focuses on cross-country
comparisons designed to determine variation between different systems. It is within this branch where the most seminal works about party systems can be found.

The study of party system stability, which I will introduce later in this chapter, is in itself a natural product of the study of party systems. In his review of the literature, Moshe Maor (1997) argues that party systems can be seen as either dependent or independent variables; that is, their study can be based on either how the parts of the system are created or how a pattern of interaction between parties is developed, respectively. The model for party system stability I will present in the next chapter will incorporate both aspects, but we must first define what is a party system.

1. Definitions

The major works on party systems do not agree on a single definition of the concept. Instead, they present characterizations such as the following:

- the forms and modes of inter-party coexistence (Duverger [1951] 1966, 203);
- “the number of parties within a country, their ideological orientations, and various other general patterns (Sodaro 2004, 239);”
- something that can be “generally classified according to the number of political parties and the interactions among the parties in the governing process (Danziger 2007, 197);”
- a subject of analysis that “would require a consideration of the number of parties, of their strength, of their place on the ideological spectrum, of the nature of their support, and of their organization and type of leadership (Blondel 1968, 183);”
• something that can be characterized “in terms of the number of parties contesting the elections, and the distribution of electoral strength among these parties (Pedersen [1979] 1990, 196);”

• a precise pattern of interaction between parties (Mainwaring & Scully 1995, 4; Mainwaring 1999, 24; Mainwaring & Torcal 2006, 205);

• something consisting of “regular and recurring interactions among its component parties (Wolinetz 2006, 52);”

• the end result of processes of sociological differentiation⁶ (Lipset & Rokkan 1967);

• the product of competition between “relevant” parties in the form of a system of interactions that also provides channels of communication to the state where specific demands are autonomously represented and expressed (Sartori 1976);

• “the interaction patterns among significant and genuine electoral organizations in representative governments […] (Eckstein 1968, 438);”

• something that can be understood either as an institution or as party interactions (Ware 1996);”

• “the characteristics of the array of parties operating in a particular country” that indicate “the extent of competition between parties and the number of them that have a serious chance of winning elections (Ethridge & Handelman 2008, 131);”

• “the set of all parties (Shively 2007, 261);”

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⁶ More precisely, they define such divisions as *cleavages*. Because that concept will be introduced and analyzed later, I choose not to make a more direct paraphrasing of their argument.
• “[t]he network of competitive relationships between political parties […] within a single political regime (Rae 1967, 47);”

• processes by which voters screen and decide between alternatives constructed by politicians (Kitschelt & Zechmeister 2003);

• mechanisms that control the rate of political inclusion and participation (Huntington 1968);

• something with “a strong empirical relationship with electoral systems (Lijphart 1996, 590); and

• something that can be labeled in terms of the number of parties, their social orientation, and volatility (Bennett 1998).

There are several ways to make sense of all those definitions. Alan Ware classifies the determinant factors of party systems mentioned in the literature into three categories: sociological (party systems as conduits for the expression of social conflict [e.g. Lipset & Rokkan]), institutional (party systems as appendices of a larger structural context [e.g. Duverger, Mair, and Lijphart]), and competition factors (party systems as by-products of the inter-party contest for state power [e.g. Sartori, Ware, Mair, Danziger, Eckstein, Pedersen, Mainwaring, Mainwaring & Scully, Mainwaring & Torcal, Wolinetz, and Ethridge & Howard]) (1996, 8-9). However, it is difficult to classify all the definitions presented here because in some cases (i.e., Sodaro, Bennett, Kitschelt & Zechmeister, Huntington, Shively, and Blondel) their emphases on either one are not easy to identify. I propose an alternative way, which is to look closely at the concepts mentioned in each definition rather than on a particular focus. From that we can find that

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7 Some scholars, like Lipset & Rokkan and Sartori, were already classified by Ware. Others, like Sodaro, Ware himself and others, were added by me to this scheme. I refer to the actual cited passage for Ware’s actual classification.
there are four main features or characteristics of party systems: \textit{the number of parties, the interactions between parties, the ideological orientation of parties, and party strength}. The number of parties is straightforward and no definition is necessary. The other characteristics are usually defined as follows:

- The ideological orientation of parties pertains to the position of the party in a left-right spectrum and to the connection between ideological and programmatic positions (Ruiz Rodríguez 2006, 75), though sometimes it includes the adoption of comprehensive beliefs not necessarily located in an ideological continuum (e.g., feminism and nationalism).

- Party interactions, as defined by Ware, refer to inter-party competition (disputes over issues) and cooperation (formal or informal inter-party agreements by which certain issues are more favored than others) (1996, 7); but in this project I will emphasize more on competition because it is the most visible aspect of political parties, and because intentionally-ignored issues can find their way into the platforms of new parties just as often as older parties.

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8 Abal Medina & Suárez Cao agree that both the number of parties and their ideology are relevant characteristics of political parties, but add that both the number of politically relevant cleavages and the structure of competition matter as well (2002, 164). The structure of competition can easily be subsumed into the characteristic of party interactions, although not all scholars of party systems accept that cleavages are fundamental because of alleged flaws (e.g., lack of applicability outside Western Europe, and conceptual imprecision). That latter statement will be analyzed later in this chapter.

9 The characteristic of number of parties has implications for our understanding of the concept of political party. Kenneth Janda argues that “a truly general theory of political parties cannot be built on a narrow definition of party that precludes applications to one-party systems and anti-party systems (1993, 166);” in other words, he believes that political parties can be defined \textit{broadly} (as organizations that pursue the goal of placing representatives in government positions regardless of the political regime in place) or \textit{narrowly} (as organizations that can only exist in the setting of democratic politics). I agree with the broad definition because of its compatibility with the case of the current Venezuelan party system, which will be analyzed as part of its corresponding case study.

10 Ruiz Rodríguez refers to this as ideological structure and differentiates it from ideological polarization, although she also points out that both are related.
discard them. Later in this chapter, I will add the notion of “‘strategic’ capabilities (Maor 1997) as part of what constitutes those interactions in more precise terms.

- Party strength is a way to identify parties that can play notable roles in electoral competition and its aftermath, usually in terms of votes (Eckstein 1968). It can also incorporate three other dimensions: organizational (the ability of a party to mobilize voters), affective (the aptitude of a party to root itself deeply in society), and representational (the capacity of a party to capture existing divisions) (Archer 1995, 170).

Those four characteristics of party systems have not just served as an operationalization, but also as the foundation for their comparative study. More precisely, there is no shortage of scholars who agree on the number of parties as the most important characteristic and the definitive definition of party systems. Justifications for its seemingly critical importance include its ability to describe both the concentration and dispersion of power in the polity and possible resulting patterns of party interactions (Sartori 1976, 120), explain the precise characteristics (Sartori 2001, 94) or mechanics (Pedersen [1979] 1990) of party systems, describe “how cabinet-level concentration of power is constrained by party-level concentration of seats (Taagepera 2002, 228),”

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11 Germany’s Green Party, which will be analyzed later, is an example.
12 Those factors, however, are not the only ones being suggested as representative of party systems. For instance, Donald A. Gross & Lee Sigelman (1984) argue that party systems have four attributes: party fractionalization, ideological fractionalization (the dispersion of votes or seats among ideological positions), the existence of an ideological center of gravity, and ideological polarization. Also, Jack Dennis (1966) focuses on popular support for party systems and concludes that in the case of the United States voters displayed mixed opinions about the party system because of one of several possible factors: ambivalence with political parties (prestige to political positions combined with discouragement for participating in politics), negative experiences with political parties, and internal contradictions within the parties (promoting and curbing competition at the same time). Finally, Mark P. Jones and Scott Mainwaring (2003) emphasize on the nationalization of party systems.
indicate how politics occurs at the legislative level (Taagepera 1999a, 531), increase the utility of dimensionalized analyses of party politics (Dunleavy & Boucek 2003, 307), and exert effects on political culture (Ethridge and Handelman 2008, 131). They have been so persuasive that the consequence can be seen particularly in two major and interrelated aspects of the comparative study of party systems: how to count parties, and how to classify them.

2. How to count parties: Arguments and measurements

Since the number of parties was considered as the definitive characteristic of party systems, it necessarily followed that there had to be a way to count parties. Measurements and rules for counting are legion (Lijphart 1994), but the effective number of parties measure ($N_a$), devised by Markku Laakso & Rein Taagepera (1979), is arguably the most utilized. The equation they propose is:

\[ N_a = \left( \sum p_i^a \right)^{1/(1-a)} \]

where $p_i$ represents the share of votes or legislative seats of the $i$th party and $a$ is a parameter that can have any positive value. Taagepera (1999b) has recognized that $N_a$ is not as accurate for cases where existing parties are of unequal strength (i.e., when a party has more than 50% of the total legislative shares), but suggests that the inverse of the share of the largest party ($p_1$) can supplement $N_a$ in those situations.

Arendt Lijphart hails it for its remarkable precision (1996, 590), and it is perhaps for that reason that it has been utilized so widely (e.g., Amorim Neto & Cox 1997, Taagepera & Shugart 1993a, and Taagepera & Shugart 1993b). Some, however, have proposed its substitution for allegedly more precise measurements (e.g., Juan Molinar’s [1991] index). Still a few others criticize both Laakso & Taagepera and Molinar: the effective number of parties has been judged as an unreliable indication of specific situations related to the share of the vote of the largest

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13 Taagepera (1999b) has recognized that $N_a$ is not as accurate for cases where existing parties are of unequal strength (i.e., when a party has more than 50% of the total legislative shares), but suggests that the inverse of the share of the largest party ($p_1$) can supplement $N_a$ in those situations.
party; and the Molinar index miscounts parties when one of them has a majority (Dunleavy & Boucek 2003, 307).

The debates surrounding fractionalization / fragmentation are a by-product of measurement creation because they touch upon the latter’s underlying logic. Douglas Rae has defined fractionalization as “the proportion of pairs of members in a system which contain persons who have voted for (or belonged to) different parties in the last previous election (1968, 414)\(^{14}\)” and argued that the concept may substitute for prior flawed ones. In a later work, he and Michael Taylor consider it as an instance of deep divisions that materialize through organization and electoral politics\(^{15}\). They later subsume it under the term fragmentation, defined in turn as “the proportion of all pairs of […] individuals which join members from different groups (1970, 25).” John Wildgen criticizes Rae and argues that fragmentation loses accuracy under certain conditions – specifically, when trying to ascertain the relationship between voters and political parties (1971, 236-237) – and proposes the use of the index of hyperfractionalization, which he defines as how political divisions are connected with political parties. In response, Rae (1971) declares that Wildgen’s proposition of linearity between dispersion and political parties – upon which hyperfractionalization is based – is not as intuitive as he concluded, among other claims.

Despite these debates, the most fundamental reason for the creation of measurements for counting parties was to address substantive issues in the creation of typologies of party systems (Wolinetz 2006, 53). Before describing the issues in question, I will discuss the aspect of party system typologies.

\(^{14}\) Parenthesis in the original.
\(^{15}\) Like Lipset & Rokkan, they define such differentiations as cleavages.
3. How to classify party systems: The creation of typologies

As Ware mentions, the necessity for creating typologies – concentrating on factors such as the penetration of parties in society, their ideologies, and their stance in favor or against regime legitimacy – was real and substantive; indeed, classifications go beyond mere description and shift the focus of research to explanation. Although classification is difficult and sometimes frustrating, it simplifies an otherwise large and convoluted universe of cases (Ware 1996, 147-149).

The oldest, most straightforward, and most utilized party system typology – at least in the opinion of Wolinetz (2006, 53), Ware (1996, 154), and Eckstein (1968, 439) – is the single-party/two-party/multiparty system (henceforth, the numerical) typology, first devised by Maurice Duverger ([1951] 1966). It simplified the existing universe of cases and became the standard for the study of party systems, but its parsimony became a liability because of its oversimplification (Gross & Sigelman 1984, 463) and inapplicability to certain cases (Eckstein 1968, 439). That unleashed the major issue within party system classification that would be addressed with the creation of measurements for counting parties (i.e., whether the mere counting of parties was enough and if other factors were just as relevant) (Wolinetz 2006, 53). It was also at this point where the first revisions to Duverger’s typology were proposed, bringing in aspects such as the internal unity of parties and how does it influence competition and cooperation (Dahl [1966] 1990), party ideology and strength (Blondel 1968), and the effects of electoral outcomes (Rokkan [1970] 1990); nonetheless, all of them retained the elements (if not the whole logic) of the numerical typology. As a result, the resulting types of party systems were actually variations in degree of single-party, two-party, and multiparty
systems. Those revisions of Duverger were also criticized for the use of arbitrary criteria (Gross & Sigelman 1984, 463) and for their inability to be translated into quantitative logic (Mair 2006a, 64), but have also shown considerable resiliency. In fact, recent political science textbooks classify party systems for the most part as one-party, dominant-party, two-party, and multiparty systems (e.g. Danziger 2007, Ethridge & Handelman 2008, Shivley 2007).

A major breakthrough occurred when Sartori (1976) proposed the concept of “relevant” parties, defined in turn as any party that can affect the tactics and direction of inter-party competition through their coalition and blackmail potentials. Even though his analysis started from the numerical typology, it nevertheless represented a real departure from Duverger. Combining the concept of relevant party with others he proposes, such as party fragmentation (the existence of many parties) and ideological distance, his resulting typology classifies party systems as one-party, hegemonic-party, predominant-party, two-party, limited pluralist, extreme pluralist, and atomized party systems. Some consider this typology as a meaningful sort of the cases that existed at the time (Wolinetz 2006, 59), but others believe that the connection he makes between party fragmentation and party interactions is simplistic (Ware 1996, 174-175), and that his scheme does not make distinctions between large and small parties (Lijphart 1996, 590). He has also been accused of setting an extremely high benchmark for what constitutes a party system, and of establishing a dichotomy between consolidated party systems and “non-systems” that does not conceive of party system institutionalization as a continuum (Mainwaring & Torcal 2006, 205-206).
Not all scholars of party systems classify them in terms of the number of composing parties. Donald Gross & Lee Sigelman, for instance, believe that party systems incorporate many simultaneous dimensions (party fractionalization, ideological fractionalization, the existence of an ideological center of gravity, and ideological polarization) and that existing classificatory schemes minimize this complexity; hence, the best way to classify party systems is by utilizing a typology that takes account of all those dimensions at the same time – i.e., a dimensionalized analysis of party systems (1984, 463). More recent normative statements make a case for party interactions as the cornerstone for classification (e.g., Bakke & Sitter 2005, Wolinetz 2006), while Mainwaring (on his own and with scholars like Timothy Scully and Mariano Torcal) bases his suggestions in Samuel Huntington’s (1968) concept of institutionalization. Based on that concept, Mainwaring & Scully (1995) created a three-tiered typology that includes fully institutionalized party systems, inchoate (non-institutionalized) party systems, and those transitioning from the latter to the former. Peter Mair refers to the concept of institutionalization as “systemness” and presents it as part of a classification scheme based the aspects of alternation in government, the consistency over time of governing alternatives, and the broadening of access to government (whether it is restricted to a few parties or open to any party in the system) (2006a, 66).

Yet some of those new typologies seem to be at odds with something identified by Wolinetz (2006) and Mair (2006a). Although Sartori’s category of moderate pluralism is considered to be in need of an update, his typology as a whole has been so appealing that

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16 This concept will be described in more detail in chapter III.
17 Their definition of party system institutionalization, which is highly relevant to my theory, will be mentioned later in much more detail.
18 Those aspects also represent what he defines as party system change, which will be discussed in the second half of this review.
it preempted the creation of newer, more nuanced ones. The obvious end result of that situation is that there have been no noteworthy innovations since the publication of Sartori’s study. Conversely, Gross & Sigelman’s scheme does not seem to be popular within scholarly research, and Wolinetz believes that Mainwaring’s emphasis on the institutionalization of party interactions erroneously assumes that voters will maintain fixed party preferences in a society heavily influenced by “rapid electronic media (2006, 60).” In short, the state of the art of the 1960s and 1970s appears to continue as the accepted standard for the study of party systems.

4. An assessment of the literature about party systems

The admission that the comparative study of party systems has not gone beyond what Laakso & Taagepera, Blondel, Sartori and others have proposed does not mean that there is no utility whatsoever in their insights. Rather, the analyses made by the scholars I review in this chapter underscore the relevance of the agreed-upon four characteristics of party systems; after all, interactions between parties sustain representative democracy, the number of parties and their ideology reveal how many and what type of political positions exist in the polity, and party strength indicates voter support. However, I also believe that the comparative study of party systems can do better by redefining itself; in other words, the definition of the concept should be much simpler and, as a result, the classification of cases should be made under a single set of categories. The following paragraphs will make the case for that statement by presenting a series of considerations.

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19 In reality, many new typologies have been proposed, such as the ones already mentioned; but Mair’s statement can still be interpreted as how the popularity of Sartori’s scheme has preempted the adoption by scholars of party systems of those new typologies.
regarding the utility of the four characteristics of party systems as foundations for cross-
country analysis.

a. The number of parties  

Despite the allure of the numerical typology, there are very compelling and very convincing arguments against its continued usage. Wolinetz contends that the number of parties is useful for identifying the scope of political choices and the possibility of forming coalition governments in parliamentary systems, but also admits that those aspects are also dependent on aspects such as the degree of polarization and “the extent to which parties cluster together, forming durable coalitions and alliances (2006, 59).” Simply put, there is something else to party systems than just the total number of composing parties. Ware’s conception of party systems as patterns of inter-party competition and cooperation comes into view through that statement; more precisely, inter-party competition connects to polarization, and inter-party cooperation relates to how parties manage to “cluster together.20"

Mair is more sanguine and also bases his criticism on normative claims, but his focus is on methodological aspects. While on the one hand “[t]he literature on party systems has tended to move away from the discussion of discrete categories and to rely more heavily on continuous variables,” that shift in emphasis “renders meaningless any notion of party systems” because “knowledge of how many parties exist in the polity can tell us next to nothing in itself about how the party system works (2006a, 64).” It can be argued that Mair offers a sag way to party interactions as the most important

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20 It is important to point out, however, that the connection I make between competition and polarization does not relate to the prevailing views of the former as a harbinger of instability. That will be explained in more detail in chapter III.
characteristic of party systems, since it is only by focusing on how parties compete and cooperate with each other that we can see more clearly how particular party systems actually behave.

Mainwaring & Torcal (1999) are equally critical of the numerical typology and argue in favor of party system institutionalization; more precisely, “[a] classification of party systems based on the number of parties and the level of polarization overlooks substantial differences in the level of institutionalization, and hence in how party competition functions in less institutionalized contexts (2006, 206).” Mainwaring & Scully make a similar argument: though they acknowledge that the number of parties and their ideological distance are useful for making sense of Latin American party systems (on which they focus on), they nevertheless argue that those two aspects are much more meaningful once their levels of institutionalization are determined, for “classifying Latin American countries according to the number of parties produces misleading results because it groups together party systems that are not of the same genus (1995, 6).”

Likewise, Sartori’s typology has two crippling limitations: it provides inaccurate assessments of relevant parties; and it was conceived in the first place with parliamentary systems in mind, which are not the prevalent type of system in Latin America (1995, 29).

All those considerations regarding the limitations of the number of parties will be clearer once we take a closer look at the study of party system stability, which is the main subject of the second section of this chapter. For now, it should suffice to say that classifications of party systems based on this characteristic rely on a shaky foundation.

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21 Mainwaring & Torcal also base their statements on an emphasis on electoral volatility as a characteristic of party system institutionalization, but I have deep reservations on my part about that emphasis. A discussion will follow.
b. Party strength

There are considerations against party strength\textsuperscript{22} as well, but one of them has a particular significance. Though scholars like Blondel have examined party strength as a way to revise Duverger’s typology, the simplest assumption we can make is that the largest parties in the system are also the strongest because they have huge memberships that can be mobilized and provide the most voters; as Rokkan would argue, that can influence more heavily in government formation. However, \textit{the strength of a party is not always directly proportional to its size, either in terms of membership, organization or even votes}.

Small parties can have a decisive influence in party systems through either their ideological position or their great flexibility (i.e., their capacity to form coalitions in highly fragmented party systems) (Eckstein 1968, 442). That finding dovetails with Sartori’s concept of relevant party and with Archer’s three criteria (that is, if we consider the latter as a substitute for the electoral criterion), but most importantly it also opens a daunting situation: party strength could contradict any conclusions made from categories of party systems and measurements for counting parties. More specifically, small parties could be considered strong because they have the dimensions mentioned by Archer or significant coalition and blackmail potentials under Sartori’s criteria, but because they are usually electorally weak they can be considered ineffective according to the Laakso & Taagepera measurement. Three examples show that ambiguity: the Radical Socialists during the French Third Republic, the Center Party during Weimar Germany (Eckstein

\textsuperscript{22} According to Eckstein, party strength can be undermined by disunity within the party; that is, “genuine competition takes place among persistent factions within a formally unified party rather than among formally autonomous parties (1968, 442).” The logic of this particular argument is very easy to understand: no political party interacting with another can claim to be stronger if it is internally divided.
1968), and the Green Party in today’s German party system (Ware 1996). The precise political circumstances surrounding all three are different, but they were smaller parties in comparison with much larger forces and their ideological position (in the case of the Center Party), their unique capacity to bargain (in the case of both the Greens and the Radical Socialists), and their ability to aggregate an ignored constituency (in the case of the Greens) greatly compensated for their electoral weakness and gave them considerable strength.

Even if we admitted that party strength is more important than it seems, the idea of it can also be seen as a by-product of variables located outside the parties themselves. If we relate party strength with votes, then we should consider that electoral systems have an effect over the former by limiting the presence of small parties through the means of specific allocation rules (Gabel 1995, 205). Likewise, if we connect party strength with the capacity to capture existing divisions, the notion of social / political cleavages plays a determined and fundamental role through the aggregation of demands from society23.

In sum, it is the inherent ambiguity of the characteristic of party strength what casts a shadow of doubt over its legitimacy as a foundation for the cross-country analysis of party systems.

c. Party ideology

The aspect of party ideology is more complicated to assess. We know that Sartori, Blondel and others have considered it as a legitimate and very compelling characteristic

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23 Both variables – electoral systems and cleavages – also play a role in party system stability, as it will be seen later.
of party systems and have included it in their respective typologies. Likewise, Lijphart states that party systems have ideological dimensions ([1981] 1990), and Ware argues that Anglo-American party politics has become more ideological than before (1996, 228). In addition, an ideologically structured party system displays a link between voting and programmatic / ideological positions, and between the preferences of voters and political elites (Ruiz Rodríguez 2006, 76-77). Yet Wolinetz believes that Western European political parties face a decrease in “electorates of belonging,” the domination by the media of political agendas, difficulties in providing incentives attractive enough to retain supporters, and the appeal of non-partisan organizations such as interest groups (2002, 159). If we consider ideology as a basis for political belonging, Wolinetz argues that it has now become less relevant than before because party constituencies either have found other ways to reduce the information costs associated with political activity or have adopted other forms of political identification (cognitive mobilization and post-modernization, which will be discussed later, are an example of both situations24). He later argues that parties could counter the situation either by becoming “catch-all” parties and attract a broader size of the electorate that could later defect, or by becoming a cartel party and build closer ties with the state at the risk of being held accountable for policy failures (2002, 160). Either way, both alternatives underscore the fact that ideology as an instance of partisan identity has lost considerable weight. An assumption that follows is that ideology might have also lost ground in cross-country comparisons of party systems.

24 Orit Kedar argues that a more-or-less similar situation – an incongruence between party ideology and party constituencies – can degenerate in a crisis of representation (2005, 186).
Even if we accept that ideologies still matter, *they nevertheless change*; although such changes must be gradual, they are not uncommon (Ruiz Rodríguez 2006, 77). In fact, since “[a] two party democracy cannot provide stable and effective government unless there is a large measure of ideological consensus among its citizens,” it follows that “[p]arties in a two-party system deliberately change their platforms so that they resemble one another (Downs 1957, 114-115).” That can be easily seen in the transformation of certain parties; for instance, Social Democratic parties in industrialized countries have changed their positions on labor policy in open preference for the interests of those with secure employment (“insiders”) over the demands of those without secure employment (“outsiders”) (Rueda 2005, 61). Also, Latin American populist parties like the Partido Justicialista in Argentina and the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in Mexico changed their positions in the face of newfound incentives for adaptation, notwithstanding variations in pace (Burgess & Levstky 2003). In both examples, party programs were merely elastic bands (utilizing Wolinetz’s [2006, 162] metaphor) not because they held parties together, but because they could be stretched as much as possible depending on circumstances. Most importantly, as Ruiz Rodriguez (2006) has concluded, there is a connection between a government agenda (ideas or party programs) and a grand vision (ideals or party ideology), and when ideologies change so will programmatic positions. The assumption, then, is that constantly changing ideologies can make party system classification along those lines a cumbersome process.
d. Party interactions

So far, I have presented two major statements regarding the literature on party systems: 1. The number of parties has exerted the most influence in the existing theory, particularly in the creation of concepts and analytical tools; and 2. That characteristic, as well as ideology and party strength, are not immune from scrutiny on empirical and / or normative grounds. Although those three characteristics point to the main features of party systems, they are inaccurate measures for nomothetical purposes (i.e., generalization). In opposition, many scholars of party systems reviewed in this section agree with the aspect of interactions as a defining characteristic; in fact, though their total number is not much larger than those who agree with the number of parties, it is considerable.

That latter finding poses the question of whether party interactions are indeed a necessary and sufficient element of party systems. To be sure, none of the four characteristics of party systems (not even party interactions) is by itself necessary and sufficient because, as I already mentioned, they refer to characteristics of party systems that should not be ignored. I nevertheless insist on a statement I made earlier – that both the definition of the concept of party systems and the classification of cases should be simpler. If we are to discuss party systems, we must take sides with Eckstein and recognize that they are much more than the sum or the composition of its parts. Hence, I offer a two-prong assessment of the literature. The first part encompasses two minor points: first, party systems should be defined simply as patterns of interaction between parties; and second, those patterns should be the onus of their comparative study rather than the number of parties, their strength, or their ideology.
It must be remembered at this point that my definition of party interactions is similar in part to Ware’s (1996): inter-party competition. Mair (2006a, 65) is even more persuasive:

[The core of any party system qua system is constituted by the structure of competition for control of the executive]²⁵. Despite the differing perspectives advanced by the various classifications to be found in the literature, ranging from those of Duverger, Dahl, and Rokkan, to those of Blondel and Sartori, this remains a point of more or less widespread agreement: defining a party system begins with an understanding of how governmental power is contested. It is here that the core of the party system is to be found, and hence the parties which count are those that are involved in or have an impact on that competition.

He also states that the advantages of focusing on interactions as patterns of inter-party competition are that it enables for differentiation between party system change and change within parties, prevents misleading conclusions that can be made from utilizing any of the other approaches, shifts emphasis from marginal changes to those happening within a fundamental inter-party opposition, and facilitates the identification of watershed moments in the development of particular patterns (Mair 2006a, 68-69). Such an interpretation of party systems has made inroads in specialized literature (e.g., Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002), but I argue that it should go much further. This definition does not ignore the possible role of party elites (i.e., those who may devise moves and countermoves in the setting of competition [Maor 1997]), even though neither Ware not Mair do not mention them; yet I do not dissociate party elites and party followers. In sum, I define party systems as patterns of competitive interactions between its composing parties²⁶.

The second part of my assessment recognizes that party interactions are not a necessary and sufficient condition for party systems while restating that the other

²⁵ This, of course, is not the only instance of inter-party competition, since political parties also compete for the representation of legislative districts and the control of local governments. Still, the general point of his argument (that party systems are constituted by competition structures) remains solid.
²⁶ I will argue that competition is between parties defined as unitary entities (i.e., elites and followers) and not between elites alone.
characteristics of party systems are not completely accurate. In other words, the effects of numbers, strength, and ideology are much more pronounced when considered as part of (rather than independently from) party interactions. The number of parties represents available political choices, but it implies that citizens are allowed to choose between them and a reduced number of winners will take the spoils. Party strength refers to voter support, but it is always gathered in response to similar actions by parties with different views but the same desire for political power. Ideology points to the type of existing political positions, but in those cases when it remains relevant – through its encouragement of inter-party competition, its influence over inter-party cooperation, and its ability to differentiate between different parties and reducing the costs of uncertainty about government decisions (Downs 1957, 98) – it can only become so when “uncertainty [regarding those government decisions] allows parties to develop ideologies as weapons in the struggle for office (Downs 1957, 96).” All this presupposes the idea of competition, which is partially defined by Ware in terms of interaction. In that sense, Mair, Bakke & Sitter, Wolinetz, and Mainwaring are correct in their emphases on this characteristic.

My definition of party systems dovetails with the one presented by Herbert Kitschelt & Elizabeth Zechmeister (2003); as I mentioned, they define party systems as processes by which political parties create programmatic positions and voters screen and decide between them. In other words, it is where different parties – two, three, or more – compete for power and gather strength in the process, and where people identify themselves with a party and its ideology. Huntington’s definition of institutionalized party systems is also relevant because it underscores the fact that a pattern of interactions
has to be made binding and legitimate to all. In the end, the key point is that we should pay attention to party interactions as the foundation of all party systems rather than solely on the number of parties, their ideology, or their strength. The next series of considerations will mention in which terms those interactions can be institutionalized.

The study of party system stability

1. Stability or change?

Before I begin, we should ask whether to study party system stability or party system change. Some scholars seem to disagree with both terms: Jan-Erik Lane & Svante Ersson argue that “[t]here are no standard definitions of the concepts of party-system change and party-system stability” and that “the literature on party systems […] is not clear [regarding] how the concepts of party-system change and party-system stability are interrelated or how they are to be operationalized,” while also proposing the terms “trend” and “fluctuation” as more conceptually-sound alternatives (1987, 167). It is indeed true that there is no single definition of what party system change and / or party system stability are, but we can still find a pattern in the same way I did with the definitions of party systems. Mair believes that party systems change when factors such as electoral tendencies, ideologies, and organizational issues initiate major transformations within their structure (1997, 51-52), or in other words when there is a change in the structure of competition (i.e., alternation in government, the consistency over time of governing alternatives, and the broadening of access to government) (2006a, 65-66)27. Wolinetz (1988), in turn, believes that party system change varies between cases, but concurs with Mair in part by acknowledging that party systems transform

27 He also proposes those three aspects as a foundation for the classification of party systems.
because of changes in society and in the relationship between rulers and ruled, the influence of the media, and postmodernization. Still, although the subject of party system change is legitimate, I choose to concentrate in this project on party system stability because most of the literature I will review here believes – overtly or implicitly – that all party systems should strive for that outcome, including Mair and Wolinetz. In other words, existing research concludes that established party systems should remain so and the unsteady ones should reform themselves in order to become more secure.

Why is party system stability so important? The answer to that question relates to how should we conceptualize stability – either as the permanence over time of a particular pattern of party interactions (either two-party or multiparty) or of any pattern (i.e., preventing a collapse). To be sure, party system stability can have both meanings and the concept of collapse itself has slightly different interpretations; either it is the “repudiation not only of individual parties, but also of most of the existing parties” as the most dramatic result of a “crisis of democratic representation” (Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez 2006, 20), or “a particularly troubling sort of transformation, involving both transformation of the system and virtual elimination of its composing parties (Morgan 2007, 79).” Either way, I conceptualize stability as the prevention of collapse because it pays closer attention to the full implications of crises of representation than a focus on the maintenance of a particular pattern, which is the apparent focus of Mair and Wolinetz’s definitions. Those implications are critical because the wholesale repudiation of political parties by citizens associated with crises of representation places huge obstacles on democratic consolidation. If party systems are defined as patterns of competitive interaction, party system stability entails the continuation of those patterns.
over an extended period of time, and the hypothesis I will present in chapter III will indicate a possible way for party systems to achieve that outcome. Indeed, stability is a product of institutionalization, which in and of itself inhibits change and raises the costs of defection from patterns or rules (Levitsky 2005b, 183). Conversely, party system collapse occurs when those patterns cease to exist or are interrupted.

2. A classification of the literature

The study of party system stability is similar to the study of party systems in the use of descriptive case- and cross-country studies and in the statement of normative claims, but there are differences as well. One of them is that the study of party systems aims solely at explanation while the objectives of the study of party system stability are explanation and prescription. Another difference is that the normative component of the study of party systems is based on how they ought to be classified, while the study of party system stability focuses on which conditions party systems ought to achieve to remain stable. The latter focus, in fact, is the main subject of the literature I will review in this section. It is there where Maor’s (1997) categorization of party systems as either independent or dependent variables acquires the most sense.

Although some may doubt that a theory of party system stability exists in the broadest sense of the word (that is, as interpretations of specific instances of political behavior based on generalizations), Mair hints at the existence of a theory by classifying the literature in two major approaches – the traditional approach represented by scholars like Duverger and Sartori, which relates party system stability to changes in the number of parties, and the statistical approach represented by scholars like Laakso & Taagepera,
which interprets party system change as a constant occurrence (2006a, 63). Ware’s three
determinants of parties and party systems are also relevant for party system stability; the
transformation of party systems can be either a product of the alteration of social forces
(sociological), new political rules (institutional), or rationality (competition). There are,
however, instances of resistance that could slow or hinder transformation – when social
transformations are not dramatic enough, when political parties become “highly
unresponsive after the initial critical moment [that] brought them into existence,” or when
the system itself becomes oligopolistic (1996, 9-10).

On my part, I classify the literature in emphases on two different explanatory
variables: endogenous and exogenous. The usage of those terms in this project is entirely
mine and their introduction addresses flaws I see in classifications such as Mair’s and
Ware’s. Classifying the literature (as Mair does) into approaches within the general study
of party systems highlights the connection between the two, but it also puts aside the
more important task of identifying explanatory factors for party system stability. It
describes how interactions can be studied, but not what causes them. Ware’s determinants
of party systems do a better service to theory formation by identifying those causes at the
same time it connects the study of party system stability with the study of party systems
per se, but those determinants can easily overlap and make their differentiation difficult.
In other words, any explanatory factor for party system stability could be institutional,
but it could also be sociological or related to rationality at the same time. Lipset &
Rokkan (1967) point to one instance of this possibility by defining political parties as by-
products of societal differentiations, while some of their critics (particularly Inglehart
[1997]) argue that the transformation of social forces caused by post-modernization has
also transformed inter-party competition by creating new societal differentiations. In both
cases, we can see an overlap between the sociological and the rational without being able
to identify which one is the most salient. My classification addresses these flaws and
achieves all three objectives simultaneously – it establishes the connection with the
general literature on party systems, identifies possible causes of stability, and defines
those causes less ambiguously. I also do something similar to what George Richardson
(1991) did for feedback thought: to bring together previously scattered research into a
discernable body of literature.

a. Endogenously-based party system stability

Causal relationships based on endogenous variables center on the characteristics
of the party system itself as the source of its stability and not on factors outside its
structure. Both Mair’s traditional and statistic approaches to the subject and Ware’s
rational determinant of party systems can be found here. Likewise, in Maor’s
classification, it assumes that party systems are independent variables because they create
the patterns of interaction. Two variations are the most visible: the number of parties, and
partisan self-interest or rationality.

• The number of parties

The number-of-parties variation argues that party system stability is defined by
how many parties exist in the system and how the resulting pattern of interaction
encourages or discourages overall political stability, based on the logic that “[t]he
modification of the number of relevant parties in a system will modify the mechanics of
inter-party relations therein (Sauger 2003, 7).” A related and well-known proposition is that multiparty systems are unstable because their inherent fragmentation entrenches partisan positions (what is usually referred to as polarization), resulting in a marked decrease in governability and the collapse of both the party and political systems. Conversely, either a pure two-party system or a multiparty system with two-party dynamics provides the necessary stability in party interactions, which results in political stability. In other words, the smaller the number of parties in the system, the more stable the party system will be.

Within the scholars that can be associated with this variation, Manus Midlarsky (1984) believes that multiparty systems should possess certain characteristics found in the American two-party system if the former wish to gain long-term stability – that is, the restoration of party competition (internal forces that vary from promises of future benefit, support of opposition parties in times of economic decline, and negative responses to government mistakes) and its restraint by balance. More precisely, both traits entail a form of controlled representation of all parties in the system and are directly proportional (the larger the restoring force, the stronger the tendency towards restraint). Kenneth M. Roberts & Erik Wibbels (1999) argue in turn that the number of parties in a system can contribute to electoral volatility, which in itself can be problematic for party systems; more exactly, multiparty systems have shorter distances between parties and increase the chance for voters to transfer their votes to another party by the next election. Huntington (1968) has concluded that multiparty systems were unsuited for modernizing polities because its parties were not independent from social forces and there was no possibility

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28 To be more precise, Roberts & Wibbels also contend that electoral volatility is also caused by other factors, such as the effects of economic performance on party politics, and existing cleavages.
of any one party gaining a commanding majority, forcing the creation of different party coalitions. While his argument is based on the long-defunct modernization theory (which I will not resuscitate), his explanation is still similar to more recent criticisms of multiparty systems (particularly Midlarsky’s); Huntington believed that two-party systems institutionalize polarization by reducing vote options to two different parties (one of them claiming a majority) constituted by many social sectors. Finally, G. Bingham Powell, Jr. (1981) concludes that party systems that harbor many political parties show more instability than others, which is shown by electoral support for extremist parties (Communist, fascist, etc.)\(^{29}\). In all, the hypotheses advanced by Huntington, Midlarsky, Roberts & Wibbels, and Powell Jr. is the same – the smaller the number of parties, the better the chances for party system stability.

Why has it been argued that the number of parties can increase or diminish party system stability? The answer to that question can be found within the more general literature about party systems; indeed, I mentioned earlier in this chapter that the characteristic of the number of parties exerted a great influence in the literature about party systems. Paraphrasing Mair [2006a], an underlying logic of all number-of-parties-based classifications of party systems (especially those based on Duverger or Sartori) is that there had to be a way to determine the conditions by which one type of party system either gives way to another or collapses altogether. In fact, the second part of the proposition presented by the number-of-parties variant – how the patterns of interaction resulting from a specific type of party system are beneficial or detrimental for political

\(^{29}\) Powell, Jr. also argues that unstable party systems also curtail citizen involvement and contribute to the occurrence of riots.
stability – is based on the justifications made by Sartori and others for why the number of parties in the system is important.

In terms of empirical data, “[two-partyism] was a superior form – it existed in stable democratic regimes, whereas [multipartyism] was associated with unstable regimes, such as Weimar Germany or the French Fourth Republic […] (Ware 1996, 154)” In that sense, Leon Epstein believes that two-party competition was considered normal because it gave voters a choice between two clear alternatives and was the best way to have an effective democratic government (1967, 56-57). Hans Daalder, in turn, goes deeper and argues that scholars like Duverger and Sartori – and their shared admiration of the British party system – are exemplars of a mentality that extolled certain party systems over others (2002, 43). Sartori himself is very revealing in that regard because he argues that “the case of extreme pluralism can hardly be singled out unless we know how parties are to be counted (1976, 131);” he later adds that the “[i]mmoderate and ideological politics” of extreme multipartyism are “conducive either to sheer paralysis or to a disorderly sequence of ill-calculated reforms that end in failure (1976, 140),” and that either the pure two-party dynamics or moderate pluralism (on which there are more than two parties but “in most respects the mechanics [tend] to resemble and to imitate – albeit with a higher degree of complexity – the mechanics of two-partyism [1976, 178]”) are the better options.

I argue, however, that the reasoning connecting a certain number of parties or a certain type of party system with party system stability is flawed. Mair casts reasonable doubt on all classifications based on the numerical typology, which form the base of the

30 Ware refers to both types of party system as “two-partism” and “multipartism” respectively. Also, another example of unstable party systems (not mentioned by Ware) can be found in Spain during its Second Republic (1931-1936), in place before the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.
argument favoring two-party over multiparty systems; more exactly, “while numbers can be important in marking the crucial difference between moderate and polarized pluralism, this is not always the case, particularly when the fragmentation in question has been induced by a multiplicity of domains of identification rather than by a stretching of the dimension of competition, that is, by polarization (2006a, 64).” Also, extremist parties in themselves might not be as dangerous as Powell Jr. believes, particularly in the setting of parliamentary politics and its inherent bargaining processes. That is the case of the directional spatial model, under which “[partisan] positions at either end of the spectrum represent intensity of feeling about the issue rather than ideological extremism (Karp & Banducci 2002, 125). Moreover, “[w]hen institutionalized bargaining takes place voters compensate for the watering-down of their vote by voting for a party whose positions are different from, and are often more extreme than their own ideal points (Kedar 2005, 190).” This does not mean that voters will always choose Marxist or fascist parties when given the choice, but it does point to that possibility.

Another normative criticism against the number-of-parties variable relates to the literature on electoral systems, which argues that they have an additive or subtractive effect over party systems. In other words, they can provide incentives or disincentives for the formation of political parties depending on the specific rules set in place. A related aspect is the composition of the state itself – whether the political system is presidential or parliamentary, whether legislative seats are contested under proportional representation (PR), and how all that can have the same additive or subtractive effects caused by electoral laws. In this sense, party system stability could be dependent either on electoral laws or on the state itself rather than on the number of parties in the system.
Regarding the empirical evidence, there are cases that prove that multiparty systems can be stable and two-party ones can transform. To begin with, Epstein argues that true two-party competition is almost impossible in the real political world and that it is affected by the onset of one-party monopolies and the sudden existence of third parties, in which case “the likeliest way to preclude third parties is to have the two major parties [...] weakly organized, and so fail to meet the true standard of providing two-clear cut policy alternatives (1967, 59).” Also, the case of Uruguay (likely to be considered by scholars like Sartori and Huntington as an example of the moderating influence of two-party competition) shows an instance of transformation that occurred despite the centripetal tendencies of two-party dynamics. In this case, a protracted situation of economic stagnation and political unrest – in the face of which the major political parties (Blancos and Colorados) appeared to be powerless – contributed to a significant change in the party system from a two-party one to a multiparty one, as the Frente Amplio (a left-wing coalition) seized a considerable percentage of the vote in national elections held in 1971 (González 1995, 149-152). The case of Africa also serves as counterevidence by arguing that an increased number of parties is positively correlated with democratic consolidation because “[w]ith more parties, people feel that their views can be represented through party politics and aspirants to political power feel that there is adequate space for them to compete in the legitimate political sphere (Kuenzi & Lambright 2005, 425).”

In addition, the cases of Austria and Spain – which have multiparty systems – prove that extremist parties can either be kept at bay by voters or have in themselves almost no negative effects over political stability. In the case of Austria, of all the (few)
far-right parties that have existed in its post-1945 party system, the Freedom Party received a surprising 11% of the vote in the 2006 parliamentary election after campaigning on an overtly xenophobic platform (The Economist, 10/5/06). Similarly, the Spanish state recognizes the legality of two ideologically extreme political parties – the Marxist Partido Comunista de los Pueblos de España and the fascist Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS. Both of them were among the 96 parties that participated in the last parliamentary election in 2004, but neither of them won seats (Ministerio del Interior 2007). In both the Austrian and Spanish cases, the existence of extremist parties did not signify political instability. Although they show a use of the traditional numerical typology, they also show that multiparty systems can be as stable as two-party systems are said to be in theory. They also point to the possibility of a political culture supportive of democracy (instead of numbers as such) as the key to stability; Austria was occupied by Germany before World War II, and Spain had an authoritarian regime between 1939 and 1975. Both countries have a parliamentary system.

It is for all those reasons that the number-of-parties variant of the endogenous explanation is not the most effective way to make sense of party system stability.

- Partisan self-interest or rationality

Causal relationships based on partisan self-interest hypothesize that party system stability is defined by long-term choices made by political parties within the context of competition for state power driven by utility maximization. One of the main concepts related to this variable is rationality, defined either as pursuing objectives “by means that are efficient and effective (Olson 1965, 65),” action consistent with stated preferences
(Levi 1997, 24), or when “a man […] moves toward his goals in a way which, to the best of his knowledge, uses the least possible input of scarce resources per unit of valued output (Downs 1957, 5).” For that reason, both terms – partisan self-interest and rationality – will be treated in this project as synonyms. Another main concept is the assumption (empirically plausible) of the vote-maximizing government, defined in the following terms (Ibid, 11):  

every government seeks to maximize political support. We further assume that the government exists in a democratic society where periodic elections are held, that its primary goal is reelection, and that election is the goal of those parties now out of power. At each election, the party which receives the most votes (though not necessarily a majority) controls the entire government until the next election, with no intermediate votes either by the people as a whole or by a parliament.

In other words, both the party in control of the government and its opposition are assumed to strive to maximize votes. From this comes the main motivation for the activities of all political parties, summarized by the self-interest axiom. On the side of political parties (Ibid, 28),

party members […] act solely in order to attain the income, prestige, and power which come from being in office. Thus politicians in our model never seek office as a means of carrying out particular policies; their only goal is to reap the rewards of holding office per se. They treat policies purely as means to the attainment of their private ends, which they can reach only by being elected.

It is assumed that partisan self-interest remains constant; since political parties by definition want to place supporters in positions of political power, it is unlikely that they would not wish to maximize votes with that objective in mind. Also, because access to the government is either scarce or indivisible, different parties will compete for it and maximize votes for that purpose.

At the same time, parties must depend on voters to satisfy their self-interest. Although Downs believes that policymaking is incidental to the rationality of party members, “[i]n the eyes of the citizenry, the governing party’s function in the division of

31 Parenthesis in the original.
labor is to formulate and carry out policies, not to provide its members with income, prestige, and power (1957, 28).” The resulting assumption is that voters are just as rational as parties, which means that they will support the party that provides the most utility from policymaking (Ibid, 36); hence, if party members want to achieve the income, prestige, and power of government, they must convince enough voters in order to get elected or reelected, and the way to do that is satisfying voter self-interest. In that sense, the emphasis given to party interactions as a definition of party systems given by both Ware and especially Mair is compatible with this variation of the endogenous explanation (and especially with Downs’s argument) because both of them assume that parties compete for votes. This interaction can occur between a few or many parties with varying degrees of strength that will employ an ideology as a way to attract votes, but the objective is either to be elected or reelected. It is here where my definition of party interactions as competition for political power between parties acquires its highest theoretical relevance.

Sartori has a particular interpretation of partisan rationality with implications for party system stability. In a critique of social class as the building block of political parties (something defined by Maor as an instance of party systems being an independent variable), he concludes that parties are not a consequence of a social class and that the reverse condition – a social class being a consequence of a party organization – is more likely (1969, 84-85). Maor paraphrases this idea as a notion of “‘strategic’ capabilities” on the part of parties, defined as the ability to initiate moves and countermoves on their own without any reference to the external environment; hence, issues are constructions – not givens – around which moves and countermoves can be made, and party systems
destabilize when the agenda-setting role of parties is subverted by value-related ("maverick") issues brought by unrepresented groups, after which existing parties experience splits or new parties arise (1997, 31) \(^{32} \). Neither Sartori nor Maor talk about party elites as the originators of those strategic capabilities, but that possibility can be reasonably assumed. Likewise, there is no mention about what exactly those partisan strategies (i.e., moves and countermoves) are, but two aspects can be inferred: political elites are the likeliest to devise those strategies; and they translate into the concrete actions normally associated with electioneering, including the use of party ideology as a campaign tool (Downs 1957). Indeed, Sartori’s (1969) idea that class is a product of parties – when connected to Downs’s argument – seems to presuppose that party ideologies have a pragmatic quality.

The emphasis on partisan self-interest and the study of its consequences for party system stability have their space in the literature, and Sartori’s (1969) framework is not the only example. The case of the German party system appears to be consistent with how maverick issues condition changes in the configuration of party systems: the Green Party was created because ignored issues within the Social Democratic Party forced many erstwhile supporters to abandon it. Likewise, the former Eastern Bloc has provided an empirical foundation for a number of studies that can be classified under this variation of the endogenous explanation: Elisabeth Bakke & Nick Sitter conclude that in the cases of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia its political parties were able to stabilize their respective party systems by means of the strategic choices they made towards the achievement of their objectives within the larger context of existing electoral

\(^{32}\) My analysis of Maor should not be understood as the claim that he represents the endogenous explanation. Rather, it indicates an interpretation of an argument that utilizes an endogenous logic.
systems (2005, 259). Sitter (2002) reiterates that argument in a latter study, but adds a criticism against the cleavage model proposed by Seymour Lipset & Stein Rokkan (1967) – which will be introduced later in this project – by saying that the party systems of Eastern Europe are different from those of Western Europe in the early 20th century. In other words, Eastern European political parties are not the product of cleavages, like Western European parties. Finally, Michael Laver & Kenneth Benoit conclude that “office-seeking party system[s] can only evolve systematically between elections if shifting legislators from one party to another can produce quantum jumps in the receiving party’s expectations, changing the expectation vector of the system,” and that multiparty systems have the highest possibilities of such evolutions (2003, 231). The assumption of partisan self-interest is not evidently present, but it is very much implicit because of the political dealings Laver & Benoit see happening between elections. In this sense, parties might offer incentives or perks to legislators who decide to shift party allegiances, which may have repercussions on party strength.

The inclusion of rationally-induced party interactions as an explanatory variable gives more accurate interpretations of party system stability than emphasizing on the number of parties. The obvious advantage over the latter is that it is entirely consistent with what I argued in the first part of this review – that is, the effects of the number of parties over the system itself make more sense when considered within the aspect of interactions. Also, the reason why Downs’ notion of the vote-maximizing government is a highly plausible assumption is that the facet mostly associated with party politics is competition for power. Nevertheless, as I advanced in the introduction to this project, the

33 A 2007 report by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance disputes much of these conclusions. That report will receive a longer exposition in chapter III.
**self-interest of parties is a necessary but insufficient condition for party systems.** On a normative level, culture and structure impose limits on rationality (Lichbach 2003), which means that self-interest is bound and made meaningful by embedded beliefs and identities, and either facilitated or constrained by an institutional framework. At the same time, rationality, culture, and structure form a holistic entity within the “socially embedded unit act,” by which “[w]e study […] how norms become internalized as identities and institutionalized as institutions and thereby affect collective action and collective choice (Ibid, 122-123).” Furthermore, “rational and strategic individuals [...] make choices within constraints to obtain their desired ends (Levi 1997, 23).”

In addition, neither Maor’s interpretation of Sartori nor Bakke & Sitter identify the source of the agenda parties set; more precisely, the reasons why the external environment is not as important as pragmatism as a foundation for party system stability are unknown. The idea of parties intervening between society and government should not preclude the fact that political parties are created **within** society; thus, this variation of the endogenous explanation ignores the idea that political parties are composed of people with specific interests that are not entirely determined by party organizations alone. Ironically, the influence of the environment over political parties and party systems can be seen in Bakke & Sitter’s (2005) argument: the necessity of stabilizing Eastern European party systems does not make complete sense without paying attention to democratic transition in that region.

In addition, Laver & Benoit seem to imply that party system stability is indeed the by-product of rent-seeking politicians, but do not establish a clear connection between defections from parties driven by expectations of better payoffs and the resulting pattern
of interactions. How does the co-optation of rent-seeking legislators into different parties influence the larger arena of interaction between the parties? Does it raise the stakes or not? It is possible that party strength as an instance of overall party interactions is what is at stake here, but does the co-optation of defectors entail ideological changes or a “catch-all” strategy? What does that mean for the number of parties? Does this type of rational calculation result in two-party systems or in more fragmented ones? The authors do not seem to give an answer to those questions. Furthermore, as Lewis Taylor contends in the case of Peru, the short-term calculation associated with defections “raises issues of governability” and “impacts negatively on public perceptions of the political class as a whole (2007, 10),” which in the end will result in party system collapse rather than party system stability. Does that causal relationship mean that party systems will always be unstable, with no predictable or familiar patterns of interaction?

Equally important, the aspect of party ideology is noteworthy. Ideologies are indeed very flexible according to Wolinetz and Downs and it could follow that a change in the ideology of any one party has implications for its interactions with other parties, but that does not always happen for the sake of electoral pragmatism. Changes in policy positions experienced by Social Democratic parties in industrialized countries do correspond with political pragmatism because of the inherent incentives provided by the activism and economic independence of those with protected jobs (the “insiders”) (Rueda 2005, 62), but the Mexican PRI and the Argentine Peronists changed their positions as a

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34 Kedar’s (2005) argument connecting ideological incongruence with crisis of representation could be advanced as a hypothesis explaining party system stability because it points to a major disincentive for party politics. However, that can be countered with two statements: first, it confirms that the effects of ideology can only be seen through party interactions; and second, Maor’s concept of “maverick issues” proves that it does not always follow that ideological incongruence results in a crisis in the party system; in fact, it can encourage the creation of new political parties.
result of two economic turning points – the notorious debt crisis of 1982\textsuperscript{35} and the weakening of their electoral bases caused by neoliberal economic policies (Burgess & Levitsky 2003). That latter case points to external factors (rather than simply the quest for votes) as the explanatory factor for ideological change. All said, the relevance of external circumstances ignored by this variant of the endogenous explanation points to political parties performing a role as “restricted protagonists” (protagonismo mediatizado), in which they “exercise a limited decision-making function, determined by the way they deal with the circumstances, events, and changes that configure their milieu (Cruz 1998, 43)\textsuperscript{36}.” Similarly, how profitable is the expense made by parties in time, resources, and effort to win elections depends in part in outside factors (Leiras 2007, 20).

In conclusion, the analysis of partisan self-interest is a step in the right direction because it starts from the premise that party interactions are the cornerstone of party systems. However, that step only takes us so far because it ignores the crucial character of the external environment. Though parties have considerable agency, party interactions cannot be reduced to rationality because the external environment does have an influence, and sometimes a crucial one. Indeed, it is from that larger context where parties gather their support and create the ideals and ideas they will present to the consideration of voters.

b. Exogenously-based stability

Causal relationships based on exogenous explanatory variables emphasize on external factors as influences on or constraints over partisan self-interest and explain the

\textsuperscript{35} A description of that crisis will be made in chapter III.

\textsuperscript{36} My translation. Cruz utilizes the term to describe Puerto Rican political parties, but I argue that it can be extrapolated to other cases.
outcome variable (party system stability) better than the number of parties. Those external factors give the word “exogenous” a very broad definition in this project; when speaking of exogenous variables, I mean variables external to the party system. Some of them can be located within the political system (e.g., electoral systems and other forms of state intervention), while others are economic or sociological (e.g., post-modernization, cognitive mobilization, cleavages, and the economic environment). This is primarily a structural explanation because it focuses on processes and patterns that transcend the volition of individual political actors, but it also includes variables not usually considered structural (e.g., political culture). Ware’s sociological and institutional determinants of party systems can be found within this approach, as well as Maor’s idea that party systems can be dependent variables. In addition, as I already mentioned, the exogenous factors are manifold, so the possibility of causal complexity is not out of the question.

How do these variables make it into party systems defined as competitive interactions between parties will be explained in more detail in chapter III, but a few thoughts will give a glimpse into the process. The concept of partisanship makes the exogenous variables particularly useful: “[b]ecause a party should function to represent its base, a party that lacks sympathizers and militants lacks purpose and power. So, shifts in partisanship tell a story of the ebb and flow of parties within a party system and of how the system changes as a result (Morgan 2007, 81).” It must be remembered from my analysis of the study of party systems in general that parties need a mass of supporters (i.e., voters they were able to convince) to achieve their self-interested objective of election or reelection; considering my prior statements about endogenous variables, it seems warranted to say that the exogenous variables influence voter behavior by
providing reasons for taking sides with certain parties – that is, voters will hence develop attitudes about how relevant are political parties for their immediate political needs. This is all tantamount to party identification, which will be described in the next chapter. At this point, I will introduce and define the exogenous variables individually.

- Cleavages

The concept of cleavages is arguably one of the most discussed and debated in the literature about party system stability and perhaps regarding party systems in general. For that reason, it will get a considerable amount of attention in this part of the chapter in comparison to other variables, but it does not mean that I consider cleavages as the most important exogenous factor.

If party systems are defined as interactions, cleavages describe the lines along which those interactions occur. Similarly, if party system stability is defined as the permanence of specific patterns of interaction between parties, a change in the interests they aggregate will result in a different pattern. Their connection with the self-interest of parties is in terms of ideology because parties will introduce it to gain votes, while the particular situation of voters may determine the benefits they should expect from policymaking.

The first appearance in the literature was in the form of social cleavages, of which two definitions stand out: cleavages are either sociologically-based divisions over policies that become political once they encourage the creation of parties (Lipset & Rokkan 1967)\(^\text{37}\) or rifts that array the polity into mutually exclusive groups set along

\(^{37}\) In a later work, Rokkan describes a process that has six steps: the generation of cleavage lines, their crystallization or transformation into conflicts over public policy, the emergence of alliances of political
ascriptive (ethnicity or race), attitudinal (opinions), or behavioral (political membership) lines (Rae & Taylor 1970)\(^{38}\). Mair, is critical of these definitions and believes that the translation of societal divisions into cleavage lines is less straightforward than what is believed to be; more precisely, he argues that the politicizing agency of specific organizations (e.g., political parties) causes significant cross-country variation in the way this translation occurs (2006b, 371-372). It is nevertheless apparent, however, that there is an implicit agreement on a definition of cleavages as societal splits.

Regardless of that implicit agreement, some scholars have expressed concern with what they believe is a continued absence of a proper conceptual foundation. Although Lane & Ersson define cleavages “a division on the basis of some criteria of individuals, groups or organizations among whom conflict may arise (1987, 39),” they also argue that “there is no agreement on either what the necessary and sufficient conditions are for a cleavage or what a fruitful typology of cleavages would look like” and that “[w]e do not believe that there is valid justification for one criterion that would identify the set of lines of division which would comprise all cleavages.” Out of those concerns comes their proposition of distinguishing between cleavages located within the social structure (“latent”) and those found within social consciousness (“manifest”) (1987, 45-46). Mair, however, dispels such criticisms by conceptualizing cleavages as having a social-structural division that clearly divides individuals into separate groups, a sense of shared

entrepreneurs supporting either side of the cleavage, the choice by those entrepreneurs of mobilization strategies in support of their respective positions, their choice of arenas for that mobilization (electoral or contentious politics), and its pay-offs (specific legislation or agreements) ([1977] 1990, 140).

\(^{38}\) Rae & Taylor, however, do not believe that all divisions produce mutual exclusivity, but they do say that “the assumption of mutual exclusivity seems serviceable for most purposes (1970, 15).” A key part of their analysis is the concept of cross-cutting cleavages and the subsequent idea that they result in stable parties and party systems because political conflicts become inflexible when they center in only one cleavage line, resulting in decreased chances for political compromise. Cross-cutting cleavages reduce that inflexibility by allowing for deep societal divisions alongside one cleavage to be tempered by compromise on another cleavage.
identity or consciousness within those groups, and representation by a social organization
(of which political parties are an example)\(^{39}\) (2006b, 373). That qualification, which is
not dissimilar to Lipset & Rokkan’s and Rae & Taylor’s, describes and justifies a useful
criteria for identifying cleavages, diminishing Lane & Ersson’s concern.

Lipset & Rokkan’s conclusions have been widely accepted, but have also been
intensely scrutinized and disputed. Perhaps the most debated of those findings is the so-
called “freezing hypothesis,” which states that “the party systems of the 1960s reflect,
with a few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s (Lipset &
Rokkan 1967, 50).” Interpretations of that hypothesis abound in the literature (e.g., Ware
their significance goes beyond simple clarification. Ware argues that the “freezing
hypothesis” unleashed a debate on the future of party systems within which three
different answers have been proposed – party systems as a collection of office-seeking
parties with no other type of commitment, the creation of new cleavages and new parties,
and the relative perpetuation of existing cleavages and parties (1996, 226). Such changes
in the party system have direct and fundamental implications for the parties themselves;
Mair, for instance, argues that “the more gradual the change [within cleavages, as
measured by electoral volatility], the more likely it is that the party can adapt ([1983]
1990, 216).”

The literature on the political effects of post-modernization (e.g., Inglehart [1977]
brought the most cogent and passionate argument against the “freezing hypothesis.”

\(^{39}\) Mair adds a fourth characteristic of cleavages – their permanence throughout time (2006b, 373). However, his discussion places more emphasis on the first three properties.
Ronald Inglehart argues that the peace and prosperity of the post-World War II years created the conditions for a watershed change in the value priorities of citizens in the Western world and shifted individual attention from issues of economic growth and overall stability to quality-of-life concerns ([1977] 1990); more precisely, “there seems to be a tendency for the pursuit of economic self-interest itself to reach a point of diminishing returns in advanced industrial societies, and gradually give way to post-materialist motivation, including great emphasis on social solidarity (Inglehart & Flanagan 1987, 1292).” As a result, those value changes have caused partisan realignment or dealignment (Flanagan & Dalton 1990), fragmented existing party systems (Wolinetz 1990) and transfered votes away from political parties that mobilized around economic issues (Inglehart 1990 [1977], Inglehart & Flanagan 1990). Furthermore, Inglehart & Welzel conclude that “societies with relatively high levels of interpersonal trust and life satisfaction were much more likely to have democratic institutions than societies with relatively low levels of trust and well-being (2003, 75-76)” because “economic development tends to promote rising self-expression values that in turn tend to fuel effective democracy (2003, 76).” Though the issues brought by post-modernization lie at the very center of party system stability, they also have extremely important connections for the role of ideology in party systems; that is, polarization based on social class has been neutralized by emerging quality-of-life issues and the traditional positions of left and right transformed dramatically (Inglehart & Flanagan 1987, 1297). In this sense, political parties and their interactions with one another have changed with cleavages, allegedly infirming the “freezing hypothesis.” It could be said as well that citizens have developed different attitudes towards political parties – especially towards
those that represent traditional economic / left-right positions – in the sense that they do not represent their newly-found concerns.

Alan Zuckerman (1975) argues that Lipset & Rokkan’s concept of social cleavage carries “semantic baggage;” more exactly, he believes that the literature on cleavages does not have a consensus on the exact meaning of the concept but nevertheless links cleavages and political conflict. Zuckerman’s solution is to equally consider elites and masses as political actors that influence each other; although he does not provide a clear explanation of how elites influence the masses, his implicit argument is that elites take advantage of their dominant position and influence political behavior within the masses in a way that corresponds with the former’s goals and conflicts. That causal relationship is tantamount to saying that cleavages are a construction with instrumental purposes rather than self-evident within society.

Mainwaring (1999) and Robert Dix (1989) are skeptical of the applicability of the concept of cleavages to cases outside Western Europe. Mainwaring (1999) believes that social classes in “third wave” democracies are less organized and rather fragmented; thus, cleavages are less structured and do not crystallize into party organizations. His alternative explanation for the existence and behavior of party systems is placed instead on how the state influences the system itself (Müller [1993] has a similar argument), but he places more emphasis on how the political elites within the state create the conditions for party change rather than on state entities or decisions (an assessment closer to Zuckerman’s notion of cleavages)\textsuperscript{40}. Dix (1989) analyzes Latin American party systems and believes that cleavage crystallization into party organizations has only happened in Chile and Argentina; in general, contemporary Latin American political parties do not

\textsuperscript{40} His analysis, more precisely, is made for Latin American party systems.
bear any resemblance with their pre-modern forerunners, and partisan politics in the region was always represented by multiclass parties with pragmatic ideologies (i.e., the Western European “catch-all” party). Sitter (2002) also criticizes Lipset & Rokkan by arguing that Eastern European political parties are not the product of cleavages like Western European parties.

The analysis of Timothy Scully deserves a separate mention because it represents a middle position between full acceptance and outright rejection of the Lipset-Rokkan argument. He recognizes that party systems are not always the product of societal divisions and, instead, believes that party elites select and manipulate relevant cleavages through socialization and competition. Nevertheless, he does not infirm Lipset & Rokkan’s thesis completely because “party and party leaders are partly an expression of social cleavages (1992, 14)” and “stable patterns of party alignments are [...] reinforced by the continued salience of foundational social cleavages (Ibid.).” Simply put, political parties have more powers of agency over cleavages than what Lipset & Rokkan argue for, but the critical role of cleavages as a structural condition configuring party interactions cannot be discarded. Parties and their elites utilize cleavages for their own gain, but do not create them.

Lipset still defends the model he devised with Rokkan by arguing that it does exhibit flexibility, which even makes it perfectly compatible with post-modernization. Decades after his co-authored study, he proposed that “[a]lthough the Lipset-Rokkan model emphasized the institutionalization and freezing of cleavage alignments, the model also has dynamic properties. It views social alignments as emerging from the historical process of social and economic developments (2001, 6).” That contradicts Elff’s (2007)
interpretation of the “freezing hypothesis” as too restrictive over the capacity of parties to adjust to changing conditions. In fact, Elf has also concluded that traditional social cleavages (particularly in the case of Western Europe) have not been supplanted by post-materialist ones; though “[v]alue change may have played some part in the changes affecting class voting […] , it has not been leading to a displacement of old socially-based cleavages by new value based cleavages and the clerical / anti-clerical cleavage continues to fragment polities (2007, 289).” Even reputed scholars like Arendt Lijphart have argued that post-modernization did not represent the proverbial end of ideology within Western European party systems ([1983] 1990, 264). Mair does acknowledge that cleavages can weaken and disappear either because of deep social change, an erosion in group consciousness, or of a shift in focus within the organizations the politicize them; but “[w]hat rarely seems to happen in contemporary politics, however, is the wholesale substitution of a cleavage, such that one fading alignment is replaced by another emerging divide (2006b, 374).” Others go even further: in an analysis of post-modernization in Canadian politics, Jonah Butovsky (2002) concludes that the old materialist divide (specifically in areas like unemployment, deficits, and taxes) have influenced voter behavior in the elections held in 1988, 1993, and 1997 more than post-materialist issues.

Regarding the application of the concept of cleavages outside Western Europe, Scully (1992) recognizes that Lipset & Rokkan’s model is not readily applicable to cases such as his chosen one (Chile) but remains steadfast in his belief that cleavages are analytically useful, provided that the concept is redefined to allow for contingencies. David Myers (1973) points out that party politics in Latin America have been influenced
historically by religious, cultural, regional, and socioeconomic cleavages; while Alejandro Moreno (1999) identifies three dimensions relevant to Latin America – political regime, social values, and economic issues. Jorge Castañeda & Patricio Navia believe that “social, ethnic, historical, and even religious cleavages can explain the emergence and survival of different party systems (2007, 56);” in fact, Lipset states that “[i]n the long history of independent Latin American nations, structural cleavages have given rise to parties (2001, 9)”41. Finally, Vicky Randall (2006) contends that the concept of social cleavages has a very limited utility in explaining the social foundations of political parties in the developing world because the former pertained more to a different sociopolitical environment, but she nevertheless admits that Latin America is the only area that resembles the Western European pattern of social cleavage crystallization into political parties.

In closing, cleavages defined as societal differences have weathered criticism and maintained a niche in the study of political parties and party systems. As a matter of fact, they still are the backbone of many case-study and cross-country analyses of party systems (e.g., Rogowski 1987; Dodd 1976; Amorim Neto & Cox 1997; Mozaffar, Scarritt & Galaich 2003; Chandra 2005; Miller & Schofield 2003; and Zielinski 2002).

- Political culture

Another variable that will be discussed at some length is political culture, yet it should not be inferred that I consider it as the most important exogenous factor; rather, I argue that political culture has also received extensive attention in studies of micro- and

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41 Lipset also mentions that most parties created in this way did not (and some still do not) have deep roots in society, but he does not present the case as a denial of the relevance of cleavages.
macro-politics. It is crucial to point out that I emphasize on mass political culture in my treatment of the concept for this project.

Although some believe culture is very complicated to define, it can be safely conceptualized as both a system of meaning and a foundation for political identity. In that latter regard, culture places political behavior in a particular context, connects individual and collective identities, sets boundaries between groups and determines what happens within and between them, provides a set of possible interpretations for actions and their motivations, and represents a supply of resources for mobilization. In short, “[t]he central goal of the culture as a meaning and identity perspective is to understand from the point of view of actors in a particular context why certain actions are undertaken and others are not (Ross 1997).” The concept of political culture has many more-or-less similar definitions (e.g., Elazar 1970\textsuperscript{42}, Danziger 2007, Shively 2007, and Ethridge & Handelman 2008), but I will utilize the one proposed by Gabriel Almond & Sidney Verba (1963): political culture is a distribution of patterns of orientation towards politics that provides a link between individual motivations and the workings of the political system. In simpler words, political culture reflects “the basic norms for political activity in a society (O’Neil 2007, 72).”

The possible cause-and-effect relationship that relates political culture to party system stability is that \textit{stable patterns of party interaction depend on whether citizens accept the concept of party interaction itself as part of what is normal, acceptable, and legitimate political behavior}. In that sense, the influence of political culture over partisan and voter self-interest is that the former gives a justification for the articulation and

\textsuperscript{42} Elazar’s definition is more complex. In his view, political culture encompasses three aspects: Specific perceptions and expectations of political behavior within the polity, recruitment for political positions, and instructions for day-to-day governmental functions (1970, 258).
expression of the latter. That contradicts Ethridge & Handelman’s (2008) assertion that party systems influence political culture; in reality, the inverse is more accurate and underscores the relevance of institutionalization in general and party system institutionalization in particular. In Spain, for instance, the institutionalization of democracy after authoritarianism is due in no small measure to watershed changes in political culture cemented by the horror of civil war and the traumas caused by Francoism, and hastened by constant exposure to political liberalism due to economic opening (Harrison 1992, 73). Without those changes, the Spanish party system would not be institutionalized as well.

The concept of democratic political culture is also very relevant particularly because it defines the justification citizens have to express their rationality and places the self-interest of parties against a set of political values. This type of political culture is associated with a procedural conception of democracy; from Almond & Verba’s analysis, “a democratic political culture should consist of a set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, perceptions and the like, that support participation (1963, 178)\textsuperscript{43}.” There is no explicit indication of where those beliefs and attitudes originate, but it seems likely that they are part of the very notion of democracy, where individuals are expected to acquire and practice the values of loyalty and obedience to the law, and to accept and perform the role of active participants in decision-making (even if it does not always follow that these beliefs will translate into concrete action) (Almond & Verba 1963). Party systems are not a sufficient condition for democracy, but they are a necessary one because they are

\textsuperscript{43} Almond & Verba do not argue for a precise level of political participation that can be considered minimal for successful democratic governance because they consider it impossible to determine, but they correlate the latter with high levels of participation. Also, procedural democracy – as defined by scholars such as Dahl, Schumpeter and Huntington – places the highest premium on periodic elections rather than on full social equality, as the notion of substantive democracy posits.
instances of citizens performing their role as active political participants, thus sustaining the traditional definition of democracy as the sovereignty of the people. Although Downs believes that political parties have a very pragmatic notion of policymaking, citizens base their electoral preferences and articulate the benefits they expect from the party in the government in terms consistent with the values of procedural democracy. That idea is qualified in this project in the concepts of negative and positive votes, which I define in the same way Marcelo Leiras does (Passarello Luna 2008)\textsuperscript{44}.

Electoral abstention, along with blank and null votes \textit{[impugnados]} […] can be interpreted as a rejection of the electoral offer. In general, the distribution of political preferences between the citizens is wider and more complex than the conglomerate of positions that presidential candidacies express. In that sense, candidate offers can be considered as a condensation of the distribution of voter preferences; and blank votes, null notes, and abstentions are a residual whole integrated by citizens whose preferences are not reflected in the electoral offer. […] The lesser the number of citizens that do not cast a positive vote [i.e., a vote stating an unambiguous preference for parties or candidates], the higher the representational effectiveness of all presidential candidacies.

The connection I make between this definition and political culture is that the more negative votes being cast, the more dissatisfied with party politics as a whole voters are. Choosing a president is one instance of rational citizens performing their role as active political participants, and when the beliefs and attitudes that support participation are non-existent voters are more likely to abstain. At the same time, blank and null ballots can be not only a sign of dissatisfaction with electoral choices, but of negative attitudes about party politics in general.

A democratic political culture involves other characteristics. Both Ethridge & Handelman (2007) and J. L. Sullivan & J. E. Transue (1999) argue that in democratic political culture there is toleration; in other words, “[d]emocracy is most likely to take

\textsuperscript{44} My translation. The quote is from an interview made by Passarello Luna. Although Leiras focuses on presidential elections, I will also include negative vote percentages for legislative and local elections whenever possible. Since not every country incorporates all three aspects as part of negative voting, I will specify which ones officially count. All percentages will be calculated from the total number of registered voters for each election.
hold or persist in societies with widespread tolerance for diverse outlooks, including unpopular or dissenting viewpoints (Ethridge & Handelman 2007, 71). Sullivan & Transue (1999) make a more nuanced case for the importance of toleration with their mention and analysis of three determinants – perceptions of threat (groups likely to disrupt normal expectations of orderly behavior are less tolerated than those that do not), the internalization of democratic norms (the deeper they are embedded, the more likely individuals are to tolerate), and individual personality (individuals with strict upbringings and tendency to neuroses or pessimism are less tolerant than those with more permissive rearing, more optimism, and more tendency to accept new experiences). Marxist and fascist parties – the same parties mentioned by Powell Jr. (1981) as indicative of the instability of multiparty systems – are also subject to that toleration even if their positions are unpopular with most voters.

Democratic political culture also includes moderation, accommodation, restrained partisanship, loyalty to the political system, trust in both government and other individuals (Ethridge & Handelman 2007, 71), and the ideas of contingent consent and bounded uncertainty. Regarding the latter two characteristics, voters must accept the fact that any party can win a particular election (hence the uncertainty) and that the gamut of choices is limited to a given number of highly familiar and agreed-upon alternatives (hence the bounds); while at the same time the party in government must show restraint,

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45 To be sure, Schmitter & Karl refer to bounded uncertainty and contingent consent as principles for the feasibility of democracy that are nevertheless inconsistent with toleration, moderation, and compromise. However, if we define political culture as basic norms, bounded uncertainty and contingent consent still have the most influence when they become both a part of individual consciousness and of the accepted beliefs of the polity. In other words, citizens in a democracy must accept them as part of normal behavior if they are to partake in party politics, defined in turn by Schmitter & Karl as “interaction between antagonistic and mutually suspicious actors” ([1991] 2006, 252). They also say that reciprocity between winners and losers must be accepted by citizens insofar as future outcomes remain consistent with the expression of collective political preferences through iterated free elections or negotiations, which is also indicative of political culture. In short, civic habits are a cause of democracy rather than a product of it.
parties in opposition must respect the former’s authority to make binding decisions, and both groups must recognize the brevity of their positions in the partisan power relationship (Schmitter & Karl [1991] 2006).

Furthermore, as I already hinted, Mainwaring and Huntington’s concept of party system institutionalization is attuned with these considerations about political culture; in this sense, the legitimacy given by the mass public to the party system and its rules contributes to its permanence over time and to its ability to make political competition stable and familiar. A closely related aspect are the individual attitudes towards partisanship: Almond & Verba (1963) suggest that democracies cannot exist without a notion of partisanship open enough to enable individuals to express their ideas, but it must also be moderate enough to encourage responsible majorities and a loyal opposition. That notion can materialize in three different types: open (not intensely partisan but still emotionally involved in electoral contests), apathetic (neither intensely partisan nor emotionally involved in elections), intense (emotionally involved in electoral contests and also rabidly partisan), and parochial (emotionally attached to a partisan identity but indifferent towards elections).

In another analysis, Daniel J. Elazar (1970) defines and analyzes three distinctive types of political sub-culture or localized variations of the larger American political culture: individualistic (government action defined as a way to satisfy the necessities of individuals through very limited intervention), moralistic (government as a way to promote the public interest and specific ideas of the good society), and traditionalistic (government action as the maintenance of a hierarchical social order led by self-perpetuating elites). The individualistic sub-culture sees political parties as a way to
articulate, coordinate, and constraint individual interests; the moralistic sub-culture assigns a role to political parties but greatly minimizes expectations for long-term loyalties to party organizations; and the traditionalistic sub-culture eschews political parties in favor of personalistic politics. Although Elazar might have not foreseen an application of his theory to cases other than American communities, the formulation of his sub-cultures opens such possibility because it points to three different rationales for party activity with implications for their interactions with each other. More precisely, the individualistic sub-culture would see party interactions as mimicking what happens within the market (sellers competing for buyers), the moralistic sub-culture would define them as a clash of ideologies (whether static or redefined under particular circumstances), and the traditionalistic sub-culture would conceive them as intra-elite struggles revolving around highly specific disagreements that could be nevertheless of degree.

- Cognitive mobilization

Cognitive mobilization involves a change in individual abilities caused by increased access to formal education and jobs that require higher sophistication and specialization (i.e., the service sector). Both are said to be significant because they enable individuals to interpret political messages on their own and encourage independent thinking, resulting in significant political empowerment (individuals can articulate demands more intelligently, organize more spontaneously and effectively, and depend less on political elites) and increased support for democracy. Also noteworthy is that cognitive mobilization is different from earlier societal transformations such as industrialization and urbanization; unlike the latter, it does not merely encourage
individuals to change jobs or location. It is also more evident in younger age cohorts because they are the main beneficiaries of expanded access to formal education, particularly at the college level (Inglehart 1997). Sullivan & Transue (1999) take Inglehart’s arguments as a foundation for their analysis of the psychological foundation for another necessary aspect of democratic governance – mass participation. In other words, they agree with his statement that cognitive mobilization encourages demands for democracy.

The earliest studies of the political effects of cognitive mobilization tested its relationship to public support for European integration (Inglehart 1970), but its correlation with party politics was analyzed systematically in later research. Those latter studies show that the effects of cognitive mobilization for party system stability are curiously ambiguous. On the one hand, Inglehart (1997) suggests that with cognitive mobilization mass publics (particularly the more educated, the young, and the more politically involved) can shed party labels and think independently from party structures, decreasing the need for party systems. Since voters can now articulate their self-interest independently from political parties, the latter are deprived of the most important element for satisfying their own self-interest – a disincentive for party politics in and of itself. Indeed, an educated electorate evaluates parties more critically and casts votes based on that evaluation rather than on the basis of loyalty to groups such as labor unions, and the volatility of service sector jobs undermines weakens labor unions (Angell 2007, 168). Hence, any pattern of party interactions can be rendered meaningless because the parties might be losing their grip on constituencies. It also relates to party ideology; if cognitively mobilized individuals can dispense with ideology because they have become
more intellectually independent in processing political information (Nevitte & Kanji 2002, 389). That situation could also lead to an incongruence between party ideology and party constituencies that can degenerate into a crisis of representation (Kedar 2005, 186). Nevertheless, what Inglehart seems to suggest is that citizens lose interest in party politics, not in politics as a whole.

On the other hand, Dalton (1984) agrees with Inglehart in part: cognitive mobilization can decrease partisanship, but it does not necessarily mean that political parties will wither away since there is the real possibility of cognitively mobilized individuals (especially in the United States) with partisan commitments by choice, or what he calls “cognitive partisans.” Neil Nevitte & Mebs Kanji make an argument that can dovetail Dalton’s; that is, “[h]igher levels of formal education are […] associated with greater interest in politics, and greater interest supplies the motivation to seek out more information (2002, 389).” Nevitte & Kanji do not assume that the cognitively mobilized will always make partisan commitments by choice out of their need for more information (they could also join interest groups), but the existence of cognitive partisans indicates that political parties are a legitimate outcome of intellectual sophistication. In this sense, cognitive mobilization trains individuals to become informed and active participants of party politics, increasing the need for party systems. Put another way, intellectually-sophisticated voters will be rational voters, prompting parties to become rational as well.

There is, however, no lack of skepticism. For instance, Carol Cassel & Celia Lo’s (1997) quantitative analysis concludes that college education does not influence cognitive mobilization as prior analyses suggest, that political literacy is a product of unrelated
internal traits and external socialization, and that the type of political attitudes associated with higher education are instilled in teenagers before completion of high school. Also, Inglehart’s (1970) causal relationship between cognitive mobilization and support for European integration was heavily criticized by Joseph I. H. Janssen, who argues that structural factors such as past history, date of entry into the European Community, and the influence of political elites have caused varying levels of support for European integration between France, Italy, West Germany and the United Kingdom, notwithstanding their equal exposition to the same processes (1991, 467).

- Levels of interpersonal trust

The possible connection between interpersonal trust and stable party systems is that the former provides a justification for the creation of political parties that will eventually engage in specific patterns of interaction. In this sense, political parties are composed of individuals that trust each other (under terms I will explain shortly) and thus agree to embrace ideologies, coalesce around issues, create platforms, and work together (implicitly or explicitly) towards shared goals and objectives. By the same token, the crystallization of cleavages is facilitated by “dense sociabilities” arising from vertical bonds and membership in horizontal organizations (Valenzuela 1995, 7). Hence, what interpersonal trust entails is the creation of those sociabilities and how do they encourage the coalescing of individuals into political parties. In other words, party identification increases proportionally with levels of interpersonal trust.

An important element of this concept is commonly referred to as the collective action problem, for which Mancur Olson (1965) provides his seminal analysis. That
element is a consequence of the notion of self-interest, and is also based on two major aspects: the definition of an organized group as a collection of individuals sharing a common goal they wish to achieve and for which they come together for, and the definition of that shared goal in terms of an inalienable good. The collective action problem is explained by Olson in the following terms (1965, 1-2)\textsuperscript{46}.

\[\text{The idea that groups tend to act in support of their group interests is supposed to follow logically from the widely accepted premise of rational, self-interested behavior. In other words, if the members of some group have a common interest or objective, and if they would all be better off if that objective were achieved, it has been thought to follow logically that the individuals in that group would, if they were rational and self-interested, act to achieve that objective.}\]

But it is not in fact true that the idea that groups will act in their self-interest follows logically from the premise of rational and self-interested behavior. [...] Indeed, unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests.

What makes the size of the group and the creation of devices so fundamental is that (Ibid, 21)

\[\text{[t]hough all of the members of the group […] have a common interest in obtaining [the] collective benefit, they have no common interest in paying the cost of providing that collective good [i.e., active participation towards achieving the good]. Each would prefer that the others pay the entire cost, and ordinarily would get any benefit provided whether he had borne part of the cost or not.}\]

In this sense, political parties are organized groups in Olson’s definition of the term, and the good those groups wish to obtain is either election or reelection so its members can gain access to the income, prestige, and power associated with public office. Insofar as all members of the party receive any of those perks in varying ways (either the income of public office or the social prestige of being a member of the party in government), they are public goods. What the collective action problem entails for political parties is that not every member will be working actively by his or her own will to achieve those goods, so sanctions or incentives are necessary. The notion of interpersonal trust aims to solve the problem.

\textsuperscript{46} Italics in the original.
Robert Putnam associates interpersonal trust with his concept of social capital, which he defines in turn as social features that facilitate concerted action (1993, 167; 1995, 664-665). Here, interpersonal trust is said to facilitate cooperation, which in turn facilitates trust (Putnam 1993, 171). Equally important are two concepts that transform interpersonal trust into social trust: the establishment of norms of reciprocity that influence or constraint interpersonal behavior, and the existence of networks of civic engagement that bring together individuals of equal condition and foster reciprocity (Ibid, 171-173). The importance of those concepts lies in their capacity to overcome the collective action problem, since reciprocity is expected to discourage the free-rider behavior eloquently described by Olson. The connection between this variable and self-interest as I have defined it in this project is related to what occurs inside parties; that is, the self-interest of individual members is curbed by these expectations of reciprocity. None of this denies the possibility of self-interest as an impulse for action, but expectations of reciprocity constrain atomistic behavior and channel it towards the much larger interest of the whole (Putnam 1993, 88). Curiously, political parties represent both a network of civic engagement that connects like-minded individuals and enforces reciprocity and a type of organization facilitated by reciprocity ties forged within other networks. That connection is hinted at by Putnam himself (1995) in his analysis of the decrease of social capital in the United States.

Furthermore, Almond & Verba (1963) hint at this definition of interpersonal trust by proposing the following: 1. Frequent interaction in group activities and the premium placed on outgoing characters translate into the individual belief that the human environment is safe (i.e., trust), 2. Social attitudes of trust are connected to political
attitudes of “civic cooperation,” defined in turn as the willingness of an individual to work together with other individuals in influencing the government; and 3. The belief in favor of consorting with other people in influencing the government is based in part on the idea that the individual indeed has a network of acquaintances he or she trusts and can count on for such pursuits. In short, Almond & Verba conclude that political activity is connected to social values that place a particular importance to individuals coming together in groups. Putnam builds up from these considerations by defining the “civic community” as something consisting of civic engagement (participation in public affairs); political equality (the idea of shared obligations and rights); solidarity, trust, and tolerance; and the existence of associations defined as structures of cooperation (1993, 87-89).

Inglehart has an interpretation of interpersonal trust that is not dependent on social capital and is actually more similar to contingent consent: interpersonal trust is essential for democracy because it creates the idea of a “loyal opposition” that will obey the rules of democratic politics. In other words, “political opponents […] will not imprison or execute you if you surrender political power to them, but can be relied on to govern within the laws, and to surrender power if your side wins the next election (1997, 172).” Although Inglehart does not say so explicitly, his statement relates to Putnam’s reciprocity norms; put another way, the self-interested behavior of individual politicians and political parties – and, hence, party interactions – are influenced and tempered by the

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47 Putnam (1993) does establish links between his view of interpersonal trust and Almond & Verba’s analysis. First, he considers *The Civic Culture* as part of a school of thought that establishes a causal relationship between sociocultural factors and the performance of democratic political institutions, which Putnam relates in turn with the concept of interpersonal trust. Most importantly, Putnam owes most of the motivation for correlating the notion of the “civic community” and democratic governance to Almond & Verba (1993, 87, note 14).
reversal of fortunes that characterizes democratic politics. A similar argument comes from Schmitter & Karl: “[i]n a democracy, representatives must at least informally agree that those who win […] will not use their temporary superiority to bar the losers from taking office […], and in exchange for this opportunity […], momentary losers will respect the winners’ right to make binding decisions ([1991] 2006, 252).” Almond & Verba also talk about loyal opposition defined in these terms by positing that democratic partisanship should be moderate (1963, 123).

Not all scholars agree with all the details sustaining the causal relationship between interpersonal trust (as a function of social capital) and party politics. Joseph Klesner (2007) agrees with Putnam’s reasoning and concludes that membership in voluntary non-political organizations in Latin America does increase political activism; but he also states that the connection only holds true for labor unions, cultural and education associations, social service collectives, and organizations that focus on health-related matters. Eric Uslaner (2006) goes farther and makes a manifold argument: 1. Party members are in reality less likely to socialize and more likely to display a lax commitment to the organization, 2. “[C]onjuring up a picture of a bygone era when hordes of citizens were involved in party work is an exercise in fantasy (2006, 377);” and 3. There is a significant difference between “generalized” and “particularized” trust. He defines generalized trust as the process by which previously unrelated strangers suddenly have something in common; but adds that in reality it is only learned through the family institution, and that both the reduced time given to activity in non-political voluntary associations and the unlikelihood to meet perfect strangers still makes generalized trust impossible to materialize. Also, political action does not create generalized trust; it rather,
creates particularized trust because it is based on the interaction between people that have something in common before meeting each other (Uslaner 2006, 376-377).

- The state

When considering the state as an exogenous factor, its connection with party system stability is that it can engineer the rules and procedures of interparty competition by reinforcing current patterns or creating new ones through either the direct enforcement of legislation or indirect persuasion. The state is the quintessential example of a structure influencing self-interest; it “form[s] the game board with rules that order political and social life that encourage or discourage certain processes and behaviors over others (Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 164).” Simply put, the state provides incentives or disincentives for the self-interested motives of political parties in a way Maor does not acknowledge (i.e., the external environment that does not count towards the moves and countermoves of the parties). This variable assumes that states are fully democratic and will not restrict or prohibit party politics, but the experience of illiberal democracies (e.g., Mexico under the PRI, and present-day Russia) demonstrates that not every restriction of party activity from the state is wholesale as it happens under authoritarianism or totalitarianism, where political dissent is illegal.

One of the most studied examples of state intervention is the creation of electoral systems (e.g., Rae 1967, Lijphart 1990, Lijphart 1994, Wolinetz 1988, Gabel 1995, Solt 2004, Moraski & Loewenberg 1999, Ordeshook & Shvetsova 1994, Jones 1994,

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48 My translation.
49 In the parlance of scholars of contentious politics, the state provides a “political opportunity structure.”
50 Since it is assumed that electoral systems are created, enforced, and even changed by state institutions, it is for that reason that I associate them with state intervention.
In terms of their connection with party systems, electoral systems – particularly those envisioned for legislative elections – are the procedural ground rules that govern inter-party competition for public office composed of three major aspects: the district magnitude (the number of legislative seats per circumscription to be filled), allocation rules (how votes are converted into legislative seats, of which simple majority and proportional representation [PR] rules are the most common examples), and thresholds (the minimum share of the vote a party has to obtain to fill a seat) (Taagepera & Shugart 1993b). The effects of some of these aspects over the party system are said to be significant: allocation rules limit the presence of small parties, and the district magnitude determines how many parties will compete (Gabel 1995, 205). Still, the logic explaining all research is that “electoral systems cause the party system, which in turn causes parties per se to be as they are (Sartori 2001, 90).”

Electoral systems are not just some of the easiest aspects of the political system to change or engineer, but also have important implications for political stability broadly defined (Taagepera & Shugart 1993b, 2). In fact, Mark P. Jones concludes that although “[t]he sage use of electoral laws can neither save a democracy nor guarantee its survival,” they are “an important component for the overall functioning of a democratic system (1995, 160).” Jones (1995) also acknowledges that presidential systems are very common, but believes that electoral laws can and should provide indispensable stability by creating legislative majorities or near majorities for the sitting president through a

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51 Gabel refers to the allocation rules as “electoral formula.” He does not mention the effects of thresholds on the party system, but they can be connected to the effects of allocation rules. As mentioned earlier, both variables can be said to have an effect on party strength, thus underscoring once again the fact that party interactions are not entirely dependent on the parties themselves.
plurality formula to elect the president, presidential and legislative elections held at the same time, PR rules with multimember districts and a moderate effective magnitude, and a unicameral legislature. In turn, Frederick Solt (2004) diverges from Jones and concludes that electoral systems play a role in the institutionalization of state legislatures in Mexico; more precisely, electoral systems that encourage plurality in the distribution of legislative seats result in legislatures that can serve as effective checks on executive authority, strengthening democracy in the process.

Duverger ([1951] 1966) was the first to identify the causal chain linking electoral systems and the configuration of party systems by proposing his famous “laws:” 1. Simple majority systems create two-party systems because the only relevant parties in this case are those that finish first and second in an election; and 2. PR systems solidify multiparty systems because they admit the representation of one constituency by more than one party based both on a precise number of seats per constituency and a minimum threshold of votes per seat. Though Duverger’s “laws” were intended to be applied in parliamentary systems, Jones concludes that presidential elections with plurality rules resemble two-party dynamics and have less legislative multipartyism, while presidential elections with majority rules have a more visible tendency towards multipartyism (1994, 53). Later approaches have connected Duverger’s “laws” with the effective number of parties as a way to quantify and measure the effects of the former over the distribution of legislative seats (Taagepera & Shugart 1993a).

Sartori gives his own revision; in his view, plurality systems by themselves do not create two-party systems but rather reinforce them. On the one hand, two-partyism can only appear where there are nationwide parties and voter dispersion is significant, while
on the other it cannot occur in polities with constituencies that have a high percentage of voters with deeply entrenched positions. Regarding PR systems, they do exert reductive effects only to an extent – the establishment of thresholds will eventually eliminate small parties with dispersed followers, but cannot by itself remove parties with concentrated pockets of strong support. From those considerations, Sartori presents three hypotheses:

1. Plurality electoral systems will create two-party systems only when polarization is low,
2. “impure” PR will create a moderate multiparty system only when polarization is low; and
3. The more pure PR systems will allow for more parties that will nevertheless create coalitions under conditions of moderate polarization. Still, the driving force behind his reasoning is his concept of relevant parties and the assumption that the most effective electoral systems reduce their total number in the system (2001, 93-95), which connects with the propositions that relate a high number of parties with instability. Rae, in turn, presents a considerable number of faintly similar propositions, of which I will mention those that I consider the most fascinating (1967, 152-154):

- “Electoral laws often limit the number of legislative parties by granting no seats to small parties, especially those which finish last in the popular voting [similarity proposition # 4].”
- “Electoral systems defractionalize parliamentary party systems [similarity proposition # 5].”
- “The effect of electoral laws upon the competitive positions of political parties in legislatures is marginal by comparison to the effect of election outcomes [similarity proposition # 6].”
• “Plurality formulae are always associated with two-party competition except where strong local minority parties exist, and other formulae are associated with two-party competition only where minority elective parties are very weak [differential proposition # 3].”

• “PR [proportional representation] electoral systems tend to be associated with more fractionalized elective and parliamentary party systems than plurality and majority formulae [differential proposition # 6].”

Finally, Lijphart (1994) is more neutral. On the one hand, his study of Western European electoral systems found no statistically-proven causal relationship between electoral and party systems; hence, a change in the electoral system does not result in significant changes in the party system. On the other, the correlation between them is still present because electoral systems do influence the number of parliamentary parties, the possibility of both parliamentary and “manufactured” (coalition-based) majorities, and the creation of majority thresholds.

Wolfgang Müller (1993) mentions other ways in which the state can steer party competition. One of them is through laws regulating the creation of parties and their direct sources of funding; as it occurs with electoral systems, this involves the creation of those laws by the legislature, their execution by the executive, and the motives explaining both actions. A second way is through indirect persuasion in the forms of the regulation of mass media and interest groups, and the political effects of macroeconomic policies – both translate into attitudinal inclinations and the chances particular parties have in disseminating their ideas to the voters. Finally, the composition of the state itself (i.e., the centralization or dispersion of political power, the internal structure of and relations
between the branches of government, bureaucracies, and direct democracy procedures) can also provide or undermine opportunities for political parties to engage in stable patterns of interaction.

- The economic environment

This variable will relate tangentially to the direct effects over political parties and their interactions of a by-product of changing environments – i.e., the pressure to adapt. The assumption is that party systems are determined by conditions neither within the control of political parties nor located in the political system but to which the latter nevertheless have to reckon themselves with. Hence, **party system stability is explained by how existing patterns of interaction are changed by the response of the parties to those contingencies.** The economic environment (particularly economic shocks and the changes in individual attitudes they provoke) seems to be the most decisive of those contingencies.

Burgess & Levistky (2003) connect the organizational characteristics of parties with that type of external influence; in fact, they make the case for exogenous factors as equally important as the characteristics of the parties themselves for studying party behavior. In their view, Latin American populist parties were forced to reckon with the effects of the 1982 debt crisis and given the choice to adapt, but responses were different. The variation in those responses is due to the parties’ incentives for change brought about by the crisis (neoliberal reform vs. continuation of failing policies) and the overall electoral environment (loss or continuance of middle and low-class support), and their organizational capabilities (namely, fluid and autonomous领导ships). As a result of this
interplay, some populist political parties survived and even thrived, while others declined and collapsed.

Michael Coppedge’s analysis is another example of the treatment of this variable by describing and analyzing “political Darwinism.” In the same way living organisms in the natural world compete for limited natural resources, political parties are said to compete for another type of limited resource – votes. Similarly, as living organisms survive or succumb to the law of natural selection, unfit political parties will disappear and the fittest will incorporate some capacity to adapt to the new environment for future iterations of the competition for votes (2001, 184)\(^\text{52}\). Such an evolutionary description of political parties – unique in the literature as it is – would nevertheless justify the view that there is constant change, but even Darwin believed that evolution was a very long and protracted process. In this sense, there is a chance for stability, even for political parties. Coppedge does not make a visible connection between political parties and party systems within this analogy, but it can be safely inferred that the former are forced to adapt to a given external environment, which in turn will determine the nature of their interactions. Still, he also argues that the evolution of party systems depends on the amount of stress they face, the nature of that stress and the resulting emphasis on certain party characteristics, the vulnerability of parties to the stress, and their overall capacity to adapt (Coppedge 2001, 184-185). Coppedge concentrates on Latin American political parties and their response to what suddenly made votes a limited resource – the economically

\(^{52}\) Although Coppedge himself connects his argument to cleavages when he argues that the first mention of the environment as an incentive for the evolution of party systems was made by Lipset & Rokkan (2001, 202, note 13). I will consider the environment as a different explanation because it does not always correspond with societal divisions, as demonstrated by Burgess and Levitsky’s (2003) mention of economic conditions.
crippling debt crisis of 1982; his main finding is that some fell to “political Darwinism” and others did not (Coppedge 2001, 185, table 3)\(^53\).

Coppedge’s idea that parties compete for votes connects his analysis with my interpretation of party systems as defined by the interaction between parties based in part on partisan self-interest; indeed, “political Darwinism” assumes that the supply of votes for which parties compete in order to satisfy their self-interest has diminished. However, it does not say how citizens acquire the self-interested intention of voting for particular parties – that is, what created “political Darwinism.” Nancy Powers (1999) makes an important contribution by arguing that material hardships influence individual political views because governments are evaluated based on assessments of an economic situation. Her analysis is based on the assumption that interests are the very foundation of political behavior\(^54\), and concludes that six conditions must be satisfied in order for any material interest to become a political interest: 1. Material needs must be seen as a constraint on the pursuit of basic human activity in society, 2. That constraint must be clearly intolerable and not subject to trade-offs with the satisfaction of other material needs, 3. Coping with the critical material need\(^55\) must be impossible or at least grueling enough to affect quality of life, 4. A solution must come from the government, 5. Opposition to incumbents that do not solve the critical material need is conditioned to the existence or absence of feasible alternatives that can (or promise to) deliver results, and 6. Those alternatives must not sacrifice other values deemed fundamental. This analysis

\(^{53}\) The exact argument Coppedge makes about APRA is that it maladapted to environmental pressure; that is, it entrenched itself in leftist economic positions while it should have changed course (2003, 191).

\(^{54}\) More precisely, she argues that interests sustain behavior at the government level (e.g., public debate and support for either incumbents or opposition parties) and at the regime level (support for democracy).

\(^{55}\) Powers mentions two kinds of coping mechanisms: non-wage resources, which reduce out-of-pocket costs (e.g., mutual aid initiatives, charity, and state patronage); and assets, which enhance coping capacities (e.g., owning a home, education, and capacity for labor). Those mechanisms, Powers asserts, influence in the articulation of political interests.
complements Downs’s argument that voters compare the future performance of opposing parties (which is necessarily a probabilistic estimate given that no party will deliver on all its campaign promises) (1957, 39), but at the same time takes the latter further by adding the element of hindsight. The missing connection between Coppedge’s analysis and party systems is that those six conditions have an effect on the diminishing supply of votes for which parties compete, giving rise to the Darwinian condition he presents.

I do not disagree with the conclusions of Coppedge and Burgess & Levitsky. Still, what I intend to do differently is to take those conclusions beyond their application to specific political parties; in other words, the question is whether economic concerns exert the same effect in all political parties in the system, not just in leftist or center-left parties. Powers’ analysis goes a long way in answering that question and in making sense of this exogenous factor.

c. An assessment of the exogenous explanation

As a way to provide an overall assessment of the exogenous explanation for party system stability, I argue that sustains my interpretation of party systems as patterns of interaction and complements the self-interest variant of the endogenous explanation. No political party is altruistic; since the prize of political power is not always divisible, it is in the best interest of any party to seize it. In those situations where political power is divisible (for instance, legislative seats in parliamentary systems, which nevertheless entail a very limited distribution), the intention of political parties is to obtain the largest share of that prize so as to have access to the perks of office. However, as argued by Levi (1997) and other rational choice theorists, rational actors are constrained by a larger
milieu\textsuperscript{56}. That milieu, as proposed by Lichbach’s “socially embedded unit act,” involves beliefs that explain the articulation of interests and justify their pursuit (e.g., cleavages, political culture, cognitive mobilization, interpersonal trust) and structures larger than the interests themselves (e.g., the state, and the economic environment).

Such a proposition combining interests with ideas and institutions has been successfully addressed in other contexts; for instance, Amorim Neto & Cox (1997) demonstrate that the number of political parties is not incompatible with cleavages and that the latter is one determinant of how many parties will compose a system. Yet the most important proposition that can be inferred from the exogenous explanation is that party interactions do not happen in a vacuum. It is in such a context that the concept of political parties as “restricted protagonists” can be seen more clearly. In fact, all the variables I mentioned exercise an influence in the pragmatic calculations of political parties because they provide important information they need to base their decisions regarding how to interact with their competitors. As such, both the state and the environment provide political opportunity structures (using the parlance of contentious politics theory) while the state itself creates an institutional background; political culture, interpersonal trust, and cleavages encourage party politics at the individual level; and cognitive mobilization can either encourage or discourage it by reducing any dependence upon partisan identities for political socialization or by giving an outside chance to political parties. All this is consistent with the idea proposed by rational choice theory that rational actors act within constraints.

\textsuperscript{56} Levi also argues that rational choice is not bound by the wealth-maximization assumption of economic analyses and neither requires the assumption of self-interest, but I argue that all three concepts are consistent with each other. In that sense, rationality may assume that individuals and groups strive to achieve a goal and maximize it through effective and efficient means.
If individual exogenous factors can operate simultaneously or in tandem, how could that happen? There are several ways, which taken together should not be understood as a comprehensive list. For instance, since cleavages can be attitudinal in Rae & Taylor’s (1970) definition of them, they can also reflect opinions about economic policymaking; in that sense, individual attitudes can change, the lines of division can be redrawn, and political parties may be pressured to adapt. Also, the analysis of Eastern European electoral systems has drawn conclusions that define them as structures intervening between social (Gabel 1995) and ethnic divisions (Ordeshook & Shvetsova 1994) on the one hand and party systems on the other in the sense that the former tinkers with district magnitudes and the number of parties that compete for office. Similarly, “[o]nce parties and party systems emerged, electoral regimes such as proportional representation [...] tended to [...] stabilize the lines of social cleavage around which parties were initially founded (Scully 1992, 14).” Moreover, the state can contribute to a deepening of democratic political culture by enforcing constitutional provisions that permit the exercise of political rights like freedom of speech and association, which are essential for political parties; in turn, those freedoms can be exercised in the expression of cleavages defined both as social and attitudinal differences.

The larger point is that those connections do not add up to the ability to identify one exogenous factor as being more important than all the others. It is, in a word, the whole concept of causal complexity introduced by Ragin in the following terms (1987, 24-25)\textsuperscript{57}:

Whenever social scientists examine large-scale change (such as the collapse of a polity, the emergence of an ethnic political party, or the rapid decline in support for a regime), they find that it is usually

\textsuperscript{57} Parenthesis and italics in the original.
combinations of conditions that produce change. This is not the same as arguing that change results from many variables, as in the statement “both X and X affect Y […].”

When a causal argument cites a combination of conditions, it is concerned with their intersection. It is the intersection of a set of conditions in time and in space that produces many of the large-scale qualitative changes, as well as many of the small-scale events, that interests social scientists, not the separate or independent effects of these conditions.

Still, the fact remains that we cannot conceive of political parties acting rationally without the inputs provided by the exogenous factors, no matter how independent or interdependent they may be from each other. In the words of Marcelo Leiras, “party organizations must try to win elections under conditions that escape their immediate control (2007, 20)\textsuperscript{58}.”

\textit{A word on electoral volatility}

Before I conclude this chapter, it is necessary to point out that the variable of electoral volatility, or “the aggregate turnover from one party to others, from one election to the next (Mainwaring & Torcal 2006, 207),” is not part of my list of exogenous factors. While the omission is obvious, it was also deliberate.

Elsewhere in the literature about party systems, electoral volatility has been treated as variable in its own right; indeed, Roberts & Wibbels (1999) relate it with multiparty systems and the chances of political stability. It has also been presented either as an indicator of groundbreaking changes in Western European party systems (Pedersen ([1979] 1990) that is particularly pertinent to immediate concerns within parties and voters (Mair [1983] 1990), or as an explanatory variable for those changes insofar as it institutionalizes a specific pattern of interaction (Mainwaring & Torcal 2006). Also, Mainwaring & Scully (1995) argue that institutionalized party systems have lower

\textsuperscript{58} My translation.
electoral volatility than those that are not institutionalized. Still, I argue that electoral volatility is treated in the literature as an explanatory variable and that such an approach is more misleading than not.

To begin with, Pedersen does not seem to make a connection between volatility and motivations for it. My response is that there must be a concrete cause for the aggregate turnover between parties and for the resulting possibility of a major change in the party system. Indeed “[w]ith extreme party-system volatility, such that the major parties in one election case to exist in the next, it may be meaningless to speak of a system (Mainwaring 1999, 24),” but voters must be compelled to unleash that volatility. In other words, a disruption in the connection between parties and their supporters must have occurred for the latter to realign or realign. That is consistent with other treatments of electoral volatility that define it as a measurement of party system collapse in the sense that voting for new parties or for political outsiders is a behavioral by-product of attitudinal inclinations regarding agents of democratic representation such as political parties (Mainwaring, Bejarano, & Pizzarro Leongómez 2006).

An aspect that also sustains my statements pertains to the interchange between the three theoretical strands of comparative politics – rationality, culture, and structure – and how it plays out in studies of electoral behavior, to which electoral volatility is unquestionably connected. The analysis of electoral behavior has always been anchored in the rationalist assumption of utility maximization; in this sense, the turnover between parties associated with volatility obeys to a calculation based on stated interests. Simply put, that calculation occurs when individuals ponder if any one party among many satisfies its interest the most, and the answer to that question will be translated into an
action that will signify alignment, realignment, or dealignment. However, the so-called “paradox of voting” (i.e., why people vote in the first place) presents an important insight: “[a]lthough elections are still in part about interests, interests are as likely to be nonmaterial as narrowly economic (Barnes 1997).” This particular debate relates to what is the most reasonable explanatory variable for electoral behavior (specifically, rationality vs. culture), but both theoretical traditions agree that something must be present when voters create the utility they want to maximize. This also applies to the connection between electoral volatility and party identification, which will be described and analyzed in chapter III.

My response to Mainwaring & Torcal is based on the statistical data they present in support of their argument, which is based on lower-house legislative elections held between 1978 and 2003 (2006, 208, table 18.1). I agree unreservedly with the importance they give to party system institutionalization, but the statistics they present do not do justice to their argument and their overall assessment leaves a number of possibilities unexplored. One point relates to the fact that the United States appears as the country with the least electoral volatility in a sample of 39 countries with a mean of 3.2 from legislative elections held between 1978 and 2002; that finding might be better explained by the fact that the US – despite being multiparty on the surface 59 – has only two relevant parties (to use Sartori’s terminology) and all other parties never had elected representatives during that period (in fact, they never ever had). That might point to how particular electoral rules steer competition towards a specific configuration, as Sartori

59 Though the Democratic and Republican parties are indeed the most important ones in the American party system, it also has a number of minor parties. Some have an existence as independent parties but support Democratic or Republican candidates (e.g., Working Families Party), while others present their own candidates (e.g., Green Party).
(2001) has nevertheless argued. Also, Mainwaring & Torcal’s finding does not seem to take into account factors associated with political culture; mainly, the idea that procedural democracy is an accepted political behavior because it is part of the civic conception of American nationhood. In the spirit of what I have mentioned above justifying my disagreement with Pedersen, it follows that electoral volatility should be better understood not as an explanatory variable of party system institutionalization, but as its outcome variable.

Moreover, there is an inherent danger in conclusions like Mainwaring & Torcal’s – that is, whether two-party systems have the least electoral volatility. The danger within is that such a conclusion could be connected quite well with the number-of-parties variant of the endogenous explanation for party system stability; indeed, statements arguing that “[t]he idea of a system […] implies continuity in the components that form the system (Mainwaring 1999, 24)” complement the hypothesis connecting a certain number of parties with systemic stability (especially Roberts & Wibbels’, which does include electoral volatility). Nevertheless, party system stability does not always correlate with a specific number of parties. According to Mainwaring & Torcal calculations, the link between two-partyism and low volatility is evident in the case of the United Kingdom, but ironically those calculations also show that country to have comparatively more electoral volatility than the United States. Even more surprising is that in countries like Germany, Switzerland, and Spain – which have even higher indices of volatility according to the same calculations – their multiparty systems are by-and-large institutionalized.

60 This neither denies that voter participation is not particularly massive nor does it ignore that many individuals (especially the young) are either skeptical of elections or simply indifferent towards the political process. Nevertheless, most Americans still consider voting as a legitimate institution.
The assessment they give of the Chilean party system also merits close attention. According to Mainwaring & Torcal, Chile has a higher volatility index than the US (16.7 from lower house elections held between 1989 and 2001), which seems to warrant the conclusions that the institutionalization of its party system is not particularly strong. Although volatility in this case is not extreme, it is nevertheless evident and (restating Mainwaring’s [1999] aforementioned statement about extreme systemic volatility) could cast doubts about whether to talk of Chile as having a party system at all. Yet the Chilean party system has received positive marks for its strength (Hakim 2003, 111), its overall stability (Latinobarómetro 2007), and the commitment made during democratization in the 1990s to restore the legitimacy of elections and party politics (Silva 2006, 447-448; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 136)\textsuperscript{61}.

A related aspect is that, according to Mainwaring & Torcal, “the advanced industrial democracies have much more stable party systems than the less developed democracies and semi-democracies (2006, 209),” which cements a causal relationship they see between economic growth and party system institutionalization. The Chilean economy grew significantly since democratization, but the country cannot be classified with the high income group; still, Chile has a party system recognized as a strong one. In all, Mainwaring & Torcal’s connection between economic growth and party system institutionalization gives the impression that the latter can only be found in advanced industrialized countries while the same outcome is at best doubtful elsewhere, but Chile proves that party system institutionalization is not a prerogative of advanced

\textsuperscript{61} We must recognize, however, that Latinobarómetro 2007 found that support for democracy experienced a considerable decrease of 10 percentage points from 2006; links it to a high degree of polarization under the current government. It is still unknown at this point if that has any visible negative effects on party system stability.
industrialized countries. Moreover, post-modernization can do the opposite to party systems: if citizens become more intellectually sophisticated as a result of increased access to formal education and employment in the service sector (something that can only happen in advanced industrialized countries), then there would be no need for political parties as vehicles for political socialization and no need for patterns of interaction between parties as such. Even if the Chilean case could make the following consideration moot, perhaps the issue might have been resolved if there was a cut-off point at which volatility is just too unsafe for institutionalization, but Mainwaring & Torcal do not do so for fear of arbitrariness.

Conclusion

There is no single accepted definition of party systems, but the literature reviewed in this chapter has considered the existence of four characteristics: the number of parties, the interactions between parties, the ideological orientation of parties, and party strength. My assessment of the literature is based on the statement that party systems should be defined simply as patterns of interaction between parties and that their comparative study should concentrate on those interactions rather than on the number of parties, their strength, or their ideology. Numbers, strength, and ideology have a secondary character and are much more pronounced when considered as subsets of the primary aspect of interactions.

Of the variants of the endogenous approach to party system stability, the number of parties has significant limitations and its proposed implications are not always present in all cases. Partisan self-interest is more precise and applicable because it relates to what
party systems should be regarded as, but political parties do not employ their rationality without a reference external conditions; hence, aspects like cleavages, political culture, state intervention and others are just as important as pure pragmatism in determining party system stability. Those exogenous factors could operate in conjunction with others, but in general they offer incentives or disincentives to political parties to exercise their role as rational actors.

The most important thing to infer from this literature review is that interactions are what make the party system; neither can they be understood as functions of how many parties are in the system, nor can they be construed solely as functions of the strategic and rational capabilities of political parties. That is tantamount to saying that the endogenous explanation for party system stability is effective only in part. Moreover, the exogenous factors I propose explain party system stability better than the number of parties because they go to the very minutiae of the interactions themselves, and give depth to any description of political parties as self-interested actors because the larger context can and does influence utility maximization. That, in turn, harmonizes with Mark Lichbach’s “socially embedded unit act,” in which collective norms and structural conditions influence action.

Ultimately, we should think differently about party systems and party system stability if we are to extrapolate our understanding of both concepts to different settings or countries. That is Mainwaring’s (1999) argument. We should not ignore the characteristics of number of parties, ideology, or strength; but defining party systems as interactions and placing that emphasis within the standpoint of exogenous factors provides for a precise, and widely applicable way to understand them. This does not
entail the dismissal of existing party systems theory at all. At the very best, it entails a revision.
This chapter will be devoted to three fundamental tasks: the presentation of my main hypothesis, the explanation of its supporting theory, and the description of the research design I have created for this project. I will start with the following reiterations from the literature review:

1. I defined party systems as patterns of competitive interaction between parties to which the characteristics of number of parties, strength, and ideology can be subsumed into. I later qualified those competitive interactions in terms of strategic qualities that translate into the actions usually associated with electoral campaigning. This explains why I will choose party interactions as an independent variable.

2. I defined party system stability as the continuation of a specific pattern of competitive party interactions over an extended period of time. I will choose this concept as a dependent variable because party system stability is presented in the associated literature as an end in itself and it has important implications for democratic governability.

3. I mentioned that the study of party system stability must emphasize in the search for explanatory variables and causal relationships; hence, I divided the literature on party system stability in emphases on two independent variables: endogenous and exogenous. I concluded that the exogenous variables are of particular importance because they contextualize self-interest and are much more accurate for analysis than the emphasis on the number of parties. I will conceptualize party interactions as a likely causally complex combination of
external inputs that incite party identification and influence partisan self-interest.

In terms of endogenous and exogenous variables, the following table will reiterate the variables in question and their causal relationships they may be related with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of parties</td>
<td>A low number of parties in the system will make it more stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisan self-interest or rationality</td>
<td>Choices made by political parties will increase the possibility of party system stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleavages</td>
<td>A change in the interests aggregated by parties will result in a different pattern of interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political culture</td>
<td>Beliefs that define party interactions are normal political behavior will make party systems stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive mobilization</td>
<td>Increased intellectual sophistication in voters will either reinforce or weaken the need to relate to a party, resulting in the need for party systems or lack thereof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of interpersonal trust</td>
<td>Reciprocity between individuals will facilitate the creation of parties that will engage in specific patterns of interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The state</td>
<td>Influence through direct legislation or indirect persuasion will engineer a pattern of party interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic environment</td>
<td>Party system stability depends on how parties adapt to economic contingencies as materialized by the creation of individual interests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, I hypothesize that *party system stability can be explained by institutionalized party interactions created and sustained by the intersection between exogenous variables and partisan self-interest*. The figure below presents a schematic description of this hypothesis:
This model involves a sequence composed of two interrelated processes. The first is an antecedent condition where partisan self-interest or rationality and exogenous variables can be located, which is similar to Maor’s idea that party systems can be dependent variables. From what has been stated in the literature review, I will assume (like Downs does) that political parties are rational actors (something necessary for the model to have explanatory power because of its empirical plausibility). and that partisan self-interest remains constant since it is a quality present in every political party and vote-maximizing government. My model also shows that the exogenous variables create a party identification in voters that results in the creation of their own self-interest, and the treatment of this intervening variable will incorporate whether or not causal complexity has occurred because there are several exogenous variables to consider. The second process – about which Maor would say that it treats party systems as independent variables – indicates the main causal relationship I will test (interactions causing stability) and assumes that institutionalization imprints the necessary predictability to the party.
system. Finally, since I consider the number of parties, their ideology, and their strength as secondary, those three characteristics will describe the strategic capabilities of parties that underlie their competitive interactions. I will make a more detailed description of this model later in this chapter.

There are some key aspects that I must clarify. First, my hypothesis deliberately takes the form of a causal model, which raises the concern of whether that approach is warranted. Stating my hypothesis in the form of a causal model performs the critical function of specifying a causal process unambiguously; indeed, I believe that specificity goes a long way in explaining probabilistic statements like my hypothesis effectively. The model I present posits that some variables (the two antecedent ones and the main explanatory one) set in motion a series of conditions that will result in particular outcomes; in short, it is not just a matter of stating that A and B are correlated, but also of describing how and why.

The other aspect is that following two examples (which also show specificity) hint that my model may not be the only one – they may not be the only examples, but they represent reasonable alternative models. For instance, an emphasis on the number of parties as the independent variable would presume that a two-system system or a system with two-party dynamics channels party identification to a narrower set of predictable choices, thus reducing electoral volatility and ensuring stability. Also, an emphasis on self-interest would speculate that political parties that act independently from the general environment and create a common agenda can also channel party identification by selecting which perceptual inputs will matter and which will not. Insofar as voters remain identified with a given number of parties interacting in those terms, volatility will be low
because “maverick issues” will decrease considerably; in Maor’s (1997) analysis, it is the appearance of those issues that upsets a prior pattern by provoking splits in existing parties or the creation of new ones. Still, as far as those two alternative models are concerned, the analysis I presented in chapter II explains why they are not as useful as the one I propose: the number of parties has major normative weaknesses and has empirical inconsistencies, while self-interest assumes that parties act in isolation from society. That is why I present the causal relationship depicted in the model above as the most plausible one for explaining party system stability.

Theory

1. The antecedent condition

   a. Partisan self-interest or rationality

   Much of the logic behind this variable was mentioned at length in chapter II, so here I will only provide a brief reiteration. The self-interest assumption argues that parties strive to maximize votes in order to be either elected or reelected, and that voters will display the same rational quality in choosing which political party to vote for. Maor’s (1997) interpretation of Sartori’s argument can be associated with this variable because it claims that vote maximization (i.e., moves and countermoves) happens independently from the larger environment. That proposition is reasonable but inaccurate when considered independently because ignores the crucial character of the external environment and the ancillary influence of factors not within the control of the parties themselves (for instance, Lichbach’s “socially embedded unit act” shows that culture and
structure can influence self-interested behavior). In sum, self-interest represents a necessary but insufficient condition for party interactions.

What does this mean for political parties? Marcelo Leiras cogently states that the parties (and individuals within) must invest time and resources to win elections and do so effectively, but whether the investment will be profitable or not depends on external factors such as electoral rules and social context. Parties are unquestionably rational actors because this investment of time and resources is done with vote maximization in mind, and in that sense Maor’s “‘strategic’ capabilities” are warranted; after all, the idea is to seize political prizes that are scarce (e.g., legislative seats in parliamentary systems) or indivisible (e.g., presidencies). However, as Cruz (1998) mentions, parties are leading political actors whose role is nevertheless limited by their immediate circumstances, which means that their rationality is limited by a series of enabling conditions such as voters with self-interest of their own and a larger setting that encourages or constrains rational behavior. Hence, “party organizations […] adapt to the legal and social milieu where they compete with the resources and lessons accumulated from previous electoral history (Leiras 2007, 20).” What are exactly those conditions varies from one polity to another, but the main idea is that they either facilitate the work of political parties or make it difficult.

b. The exogenous variables and party identification

On the other hand, the consideration of the exogenous variables as part of my model argues that they influence the self-interest of parties (i.e., their motivations). The assumption of rationality still remains constant, but paraphrasing Levi (1997) political
actors act consistently with stated preferences under conditions not within their control, such as the behavior of other actors and larger structural conditions. At the same time, since self-interested political parties depend on voters, *voters have a set of predispositions with which they have created the interest they want to receive from parties*, which in turn acts as a precondition to those parties to win votes. That is consistent not just with Levi’s argument, but also with what Cruz and Leiras propose. The paragraphs below will provide more details.

In the publication that first introduced the concept, Campbell *et al.* (1960) defined party identification as a psychological attachment – something Prewitt & Nie liken to a religious identity (1971, 485) – to a particular political party that is by and large impervious to change except in the gravest of circumstances. These attachments are psychological in the sense that they are implanted at a very early stage in life and relate to the human aspects of cognition and affection to which individuals depend for making sense of otherwise disordered and incoherent images of politics; in other words, “the individual acts toward a world of politics in which he perceives the personalities, issues, and the parties and other groupings of a presidential contest (Campbell *et al.* 1960, 42).”

Political parties are hence valued as “sources of information from which he may learn indirectly what he cannot know as a matter of direct experience” because “the complexities of politics and government increase the importance of having relatively simple cues to evaluate what cannot be matters of personal knowledge (Campbell *et al.* 1960, 128).”

To be sure, there have been criticisms levied against Campbell *et. al.*’s argument. For instance, Edward Dreyer has proposed that psychological attachments to political
parties are not impervious to less dramatic circumstances such as changes in population or the electorate and what he calls “short-term political forces” (1973, 713-714). In turn, Morris Fiorina defines party identification as a function of hindsight (i.e., the performance of incumbents up to election time) and expectations for the future (i.e., an appraisal of what the parties promise in their campaigns) (1981, 74-76). A more recent critique of Campbell et al. – already mentioned in chapter II – argues that party identification (or what was referred to as electoral choice) cannot be limited to economic reasoning (Barnes 1997). Still, regardless of how party identification is defined, there is little or no disagreement with the fact that “[f]or the individual, partisan identity is the main organizing variable leading to his voting choice (Prewitt & Nie 1971, 486).”

While I am influenced by Campbell et al.’s analysis, I do not assume – like they do – that party identification will remain the same from childhood. In fact, individual interests are not fixed in time and can change (Wolinetz [2006] makes a somewhat similar claim). Even if we accepted that a partisan identity preexisting or parallel to material interests influences in how they are translated into political interests (as Powers [1999] argues), there is the implicit assumption that partisan identity does not change, which does not consider partisan dealignment. Campbell et al.’s main proposition is very reasonable, but mine takes it further precisely by including the possibility of partisan dealignment; after all, if we agree with Prewitt & Nie and say that party identification is similar to a religion, it does not necessarily occur that being raised and educated under a particular religion will lead to a close observance of it later in life. I also go beyond Campbell et al.’s emphasis on the short-term voting decision, which assumes that party
identification is significant only during electoral campaigns and wanes dramatically in-between. I argue that party identification can be something more permanent.

It is along the lines of Prewitt & Nie that I propose a connection between party identification, exogenous variables, and party interactions that relates to something also mentioned by Fiorina and Campbell et al.: the act of voting is not limited to a blind allegiance to a party, but also involves a process of individual judgment. In other words, although party identification can operate as an element of bias (Campbell et al. 1960, 133), it is also related to assessments or evaluations of parties, their platforms, and their candidates. As concluded by Prewitt & Nie (1971, 486),

[w]hat a citizen’s partisan identity does is to organize his more immediate evaluations. Citizens do not come to each election in a neutral frame of mind; they come predisposed to favor one or another candidate as well as his positions on the issues. In short, in a world where information is difficult to obtain and imperfect when obtained, partisan identity becomes an organizing precept enabling the citizen to behave consistently with his basic political predispositions without expending great efforts in either seeking information or reaching a voting decision.

My interpretation of that statement is that those predispositions are influenced by the exogenous variables; ultimately, they become the self-interest voters wish to obtain from any political party. Downs believes that policymaking is incidental to self-interest, but in these terms it is more reasonable to think of party politics as a market where producers (parties) and consumers (voters) strive to maximize their utility (parties look for votes, voters look for policies). If the producer wants to maintain a steady stream of profits (votes) in order to remain in business (remain in government) and satisfy the interest of shareholders (party members that look forward to the perks of office), then a product (policies) must be created and must also be to the satisfaction of consumers; otherwise, the consumer will deny the profit to that producer and transfer it to a different one (a rival political party that wants to seize government). This possibility necessarily presupposes
competition between producers for the favor of predisposed consumers – or between parties for the favor of predisposed voters.

If it is assumed that self-interested voters have predispositions that influence their identification with particular self-interested parties, the question then becomes where do those predispositions originate. I argue that they are created through the agency of exogenous variables, as shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exogenous variable</th>
<th>Effects on party identification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleavages</td>
<td>Societal differentiations will compel individuals to identify with representative parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political culture</td>
<td>A political system in which parties are legitimated will encourage individuals to identify with a party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive mobilization</td>
<td>Increased intellectual sophistication through employment in the service sector and increased access to formal education will either make party identification unnecessary or incite individuals to identify with parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of interpersonal trust</td>
<td>The reciprocity encouraged by sociability traits and networks of trust will compel individuals to maintain a party identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The state</td>
<td>Provides structural incentives or disincentives towards individual party identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic environment</td>
<td>The economic situation of individuals makes them articulate political interests that will result in party identification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, the *exogenous variables create voter self-interest, through which party identification develops*; indeed, Kitschelt & Zechmeister (2003) define party systems as arenas where voters screen and decide on partisan alternatives. In terms of possible causal complexity, party identification may be created through a number of combinations, but although party identification is a function of individual reasoning and reflection it cannot be separated from the larger milieu. In turn, that milieu provides a background and incentives – or sometimes disincentives – for that identification to develop.

This interpretation of party identification as dependent on exogenous variables creating voter self-interest addresses a number of important aspects. One of them is
mentioned by Juan Carlos Torre: there is a difference between a member (*adherente*), who has the most embedded affiliation with the party; and a sympathizer, who bases his or her affiliation in less stable terms. I do not disagree with Torre in principle, but the creation of either degree of partisanship has the same starting point, which is what I describe in my interpretation of party identification. In this case, the concept has both an individual and an aggregate dimension: many previously unrelated individuals will go through that process, but the end result is that like-minded individuals could join together in political parties. Likewise, my interpretation addresses the criticism that citizens are seen to invariably choose political parties, belittling organizations such as interest groups and social movements. I do not argue that political parties are more relevant for the political system than social movements or interest groups; rather, I concentrate in one legitimate possibility out of many for the expression of political views. In any case, not every issue can be reduced to an exchange between the state and an organized group of individuals without a party identification because the nature of some issues can only be construed as demands for a particular allocation of scarce values binding to all members of the polity, and that makes political parties more suited and prepared than social movements for competition for state power through periodic national elections. In short, social movements and interest groups behave more like political parties when they embrace agendas that can be considered partisan (Puhle 2002).

c. The appearance of the patterns of interaction

The antecedent condition is complete after partisan self-interest and the exogenous variables combine. From the micro-political standpoint, “the stronger the
individual’s sense of attachment to one of the parties, the greater his psychological involvement in political affairs (1960, 143).” That sense of attachment is vividly described in the following description of the overall environment before the 2006 Peruvian presidential elections (Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 106):

As it happens when there are elections in Peru, gradually – as months go – the social environment is more dominated by the course of the campaigns. It could be said that the environment heats up, and public opinion echoes disputes and political debates and is mostly aware to developments. That syndrome of apathy and lack of interest in politics that exists in some is eventually left behind […]. In this case, increased interest is nevertheless closely associated […] to the efforts of groups and candidates to make themselves known and convince voters.

In macro-political terms, individual psychological involvement in political affairs results in parties that develop bases of social support (Lipset 2001); in other words, when citizens have a party identification, there will be links between a political party and its supporters, and party systems will remain relevant as a direct consequence.

The role of political parties as restricted protagonists (Cruz 1998) is also fundamental for the antecedent condition to go full circle because the effect of the exogenous variables over partisan self-interest is that parties must capture the attention of voters with an interest of their own, so parties have to reckon with variables not necessarily within their control. That can be seen more clearly if we consider how interactions subsume the three other characteristics of party systems:

---

1 My translation. The authors add that voting in Peru is mandatory and that the media plays a critical role in this process.
Table 1.3: Effects of party identification over the secondary aspects of party interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of parties</td>
<td>Relates to politics as a market (different opinions about what is politically feasible channeled by different party organizations that strive to win the favor of voters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party strength</td>
<td>The ability or inability of a party to win voters will either increase or decrease its chances to overcome rivals for political power; parties will portray themselves as the most representative of individual demands, and build organizations that will expand their recognition (organizational strength) and facilitate the deepening of social roots (affective strength)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party ideology</td>
<td>When relevant, it is a weapon in vote maximization and the overall competition for office, but it has to convince self-interested voters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, party identification sets the stage for party interactions by making political parties socially relevant and party systems possible, and in turn political parties will decide on how their competitive interactions will take place.

2. Creating stability

Along with party identification, another variable that will play an important (and perhaps the most crucial) role in my model is institutionalization, namely the institutionalization of party systems. Before describing what is that role, I will make a brief theoretical discussion.

a. Institutions and institutionalization

Though they could be seen as either politically consequential repetitive behavior, agreed-upon formal rules, or standardized procedures (Rothstein 1996, 145-146), institutions are in general “sets of rules (and sanctions) that structure social interactions and whose existence and applicability are commonly known within the relevant community (Levi 1997, 25).” Likewise, they are “humanly devised constraints that shape
human interaction” that can be both formal [e.g. actual rules] [...] and informal [e.g. conventions] [...] (North 1990, 3)\(^2\)” and influence individual action by specifying who are the legitimate actors and how many there are, arranging possible courses of action, and providing information about the intentions of the actors (Rothstein 1996, 146). Institutions are also defined by how deep are they embedded in the collective consciousness of the polity and not easily dislodged – that is, institutions are legitimate (O’Neal 2007, 14). For that reason, “they do not change as quickly as underlying preferences and power distributions (Levitsky 2005b, 183).”

There are two different ways to reify those legitimized constraints: culture and economic reasoning. The culturalist view argues that they integrate the individual with a larger social environment not just by determining interests, but by creating them in the same way they generate identities and understandings. The economistic view defines institutions as mechanisms for interest aggregation that determine the exchanges that occur between the actors, which ultimately are the ones who set their preferences and arrange them rationally before interacting. In that sense, actors are allowed to think strategically, but must also observe the boundaries imposed by the institution (Rothstein 1996, 147-148). Both approaches have their flaws: the former does not determine the origin of individual preferences and deduces them from behavior, and the latter does not explain why different actors interacting with the same institution can have different

\(^2\) This definition of institutions could be applied to culture because the latter defines boundaries and can be defined as a series of shared conventions, but Rothstein is doubtful about whether culture imposes the same constraints on behavior institutions do because culture is highly informal. Culture cannot be equated to an institution because it is a subjective construct whereas institutions are not, but I agree with North’s definition; in fact, culture defined as a shaper of interactions underlies the concept of political culture in general and democratic political culture in particular. By the same token, the culturalist tradition of comparative politics argues that culture defines interests in terms of identity. Finally, if we remember Lichbach’s “socially embedded unit act,” institutions do have a cultural component: since culture can also be a system of meaning, any institution will indeed be meaningless if it is not anchored in a shared understanding of the world.
preferences (Rothstein 1996, 148). Yet the economistic approach makes the most sense when analyzing party systems because it is consistent with North’s definition of institutions and with party interactions determined in part by the self-interested motives of parties.

Regardless of how we interpret these constraints on action, the desired condition is that they become embedded and valued for their own sake. Huntington has defined this process as institutionalization, or “the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability (1968, 12).” Institutionalized organizations and procedures have four characteristics (Ibid, 13-22):

- **Adaptability:** Institutions are stable when they can adjust to changing conditions in terms of length of existence (chronological), changes in leadership (generational), and when the institution becomes larger than the function it is designed to perform (functional).
- **Complexity:** Institutions are stable when they incorporate many subunits that can maintain the support of members, and if they have a variety of purposes.
- **Autonomy:** Institutions are stable when they are not mere appendices of narrower interests.
- **Coherence:** Institutions are stable when there is agreement on their boundaries and procedures.

In all, institutions are expected to create the conditions for the following (Huntington 1968, 24):

> political institutions have moral as well as structural dimensions. A society with weak political institutions lacks the ability to curb the excesses of personal and parochial desires. [...] Morality requires trust; trust involves predictability; and predictability requires regularized and institutionalized patterns of
behavior. Without strong political institutions, society lacks the means to define and to realize its common interests. The capacity to create political institutions is the capacity to create public interests.\(^3\)

b. The institutionalization of the patterns of interaction

In the case of party systems, their institutionalization is crucial because my definition of party identification has two requisites: the space for the emotional involvement of voters with party politics must be free (Almond & Verba 1963), and political alternatives should be differentiated enough to elicit a meaningful choice (Coppedge 2001, 181). The possibility of polarization shows the need to control this emotional identification with politics; after all, the expression of partisan attitudes should be moderate enough to provide a secure political environment (Almond & Verba 1963) and competition for power must respect the boundaries of governability (Coppedge 2001, 181). In the words of Samuel Huntington, “[p]olitics is a Hobbesian world of unrelenting competition among social forces – between man and man, family and family, clan and clan, region and region, class and class – a competition unmediated by more comprehensive political organizations (1968, 24).”

Party system institutionalization means that there is a widespread agreement on the legitimacy of a particular pattern of interactions, resulting not just in predictability and familiarity but in the crucial preconditions for party identification mentioned by Almond & Verba and Coppedge. In that sense, party systems are a creation of and an influence over political parties (hence what I consider a leviathanesque character). Scott Mainwaring agrees with Huntington, but he (1999, 1995 [with Scully], and 2006 [with Torcal]) does not describe how institutionalization occurs. That does not mean that there is no answer at all. The first step in finding it is identifying the four criteria for party

\(^3\) This concept is ostensibly different from interests defined in rational / economic terms.
system institutionalization (Mainwaring & Scully 1995, 4-6), which I will mention along with Huntington’s four characteristics of institutionalization in general⁴:

- **The nature and rules of competition must show regularity**: Institutionalized party systems have parties with relatively long life spans, which indicates standardized patterns of interaction. The diminution of electoral volatility is crucial in this outcome (chronological adaptability).

- **Political parties must have roots in society**: Political parties with firm roots in society structure political preferences over time and regularize voting behavior. This is tantamount to arguing that there has to be connections between party organizations, citizens, and interests (coherence).

- **Political parties must be accorded legitimacy**: The major political actors must realize that the electoral process is the most reasonable way to gain access to government; hence, political parties become pivotal agents in that process (coherence).

- **The internal organizations of political parties must be autonomous**: It assumes that political parties should outlive the narrow interests that created them in the first place, and relates to organizational coherence and routinized internal procedures (generational and functional adaptability, autonomy, and complexity).

Since party system institutionalization aims at making the competitive interactions between parties predictable, I assume that the exogenous variables that helped create those patterns in the first place also contribute to that predictability. In

⁴ My juxtaposition of Huntington and Mainwaring & Scully is rather arbitrary and perhaps conjectural, but intends to make connections that the latter (who base their argument on Huntington’s) never did.
other words, I posit that the same effects imprinted by the exogenous variables in the creation of a pattern of competitive interactions between parties (e.g., links with society, embedded beliefs, translation of economic demands into political demands, etc.) can also be defined as sources for the legitimacy of party systems. The following restatement of the criteria for party system institutionalization will provide details on the exact effect of the exogenous variables over party system stability:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exogenous variable</th>
<th>Expected effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clevages</td>
<td>Focus on immediate concerns at the attitudinal and behavioral level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(parties with roots in society)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political culture</td>
<td>Democracy as having an inherent set of norms that encourage and sustain participation in public affairs <em>(parties with legitimacy)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive mobilization</td>
<td>Either discourages or encourages the adoption of partisan identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(parties with roots in society, parties with coherent and autonomous organizations)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal trust</td>
<td>Creates reciprocity norms that will sustain concerted partisan action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(parties with roots in society, parties with coherent and autonomous organizations)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The state</td>
<td>Will provide procedural or structural incentives or disincentives for interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(parties with coherent and autonomous organizations, parties with legitimacy)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic environment</td>
<td>Adaptation of parties to new citizen demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(parties with coherent and autonomous organizations, parties with roots in society)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Mainwaring & Scully’s criteria for institutionalization are in *italics.*

There is, however, one criterion that is noticeably and deliberately absent: regularity in the nature and rules of party competition through the control of electoral volatility. Although Mainwaring & Scully choose Pedersen’s index of electoral volatility as the measurement for their first criterion of party system institutionalization, the reservations I expressed in chapter II regarding electoral volatility as an explanatory variable for party system stability remain in place. At this point, I will restate them briefly: electoral volatility could very possibly be a by-product of external conditions, is open to misinterpretation when applied to certain cases, and it cannot be separated from the imprecise number-of-parties variant of the endogenous explanation. However, the
lifespan of party systems will still be considered as a way to ascertain how regular the pattern of interactions is because it pertains to the familiarity and predictability of patterns of interaction.

In conclusion, my model involves a sequence in which party interactions are created first and later institutionalized. The relevance of rationality – as represented by partisan self-interest – is not questioned or ignored, but it is rather coupled with the exogenous variables as an encouragement or discouragement for vote maximization. I also argue that the exogenous variables make those patterns of party interactions familiar, predictable, and valued for their own sake.

c. A short excursus: Should the concept of institutionalization be expanded?

The purpose of this excursus is to ponder whether the exogenous variables institutionalize political parties and party identification in the same way they institutionalize party systems. I will start with the institutionalization of political parties.

To be sure, the possibility of political parties being institutionalized by the exogenous variables is very reasonable; in that sense, the links between parties and society, embedded beliefs, the articulation of economic demands, and all the other effects of the exogenous variables can be said to make political parties familiar and legitimate. Nevertheless, I did not consider the institutionalization of political parties as part of my model chiefly because Campbell et. al. Fiorina, Prewitt & Nie, and Dreyer do not consider party identification in the same terms as institutionalization; that is, they assume political parties in general to be already legitimate and that what really matters is that
voters identify with a particular party. In short, the concept of party identification concentrates on the exercise of voter self-interest and not on a legitimization process. Most significantly, I made the same assumption when creating my model.

Even if we accepted that party institutionalization matters much more than what it seems, I still conceptualize it as a means to the end of party system stability and not as an end in itself. The exogenous variable of political culture does state that political parties in general are considered to be legitimate, but I argue that this legitimacy facilitates the institutionalization of a party system. As I already stated, party systems should not be seen as the mere sum of its parts, and my main hypothesis implies that what has more critical repercussions to the stability of the political system are institutionalized patterns of competitive interaction and not the mere existence of institutionalized parties. Even Mainwaring & Scully (1995) consider the social roots of political parties (which can be tantamount to the familiarity and legitimacy associated with institutionalization) as a step towards the creation of stable party systems. Also, the institutionalization of parties does not always coincide with fully liberal democracies; in fact, illiberal democracies also have patterns of inter-party competition between legitimized parties, as the case study of Venezuela will prove.

I also assume that party identification does not need to be made legitimate because that process is already familiar. Indeed, Fiorina defines party identification in terms of individual hindsight, which in itself is part of the innate human capacity to rationalize. In my model, party identification has already played a role in the creation of the pattern of competitive interactions, so I believe that voters are already identified with a party the moment the pattern institutionalizes. Still, I will talk in the conclusion of this
project about the possibility of feedback loops in which it could be reasonably argued that the institutionalization of the party system encourages the legitimization of party identification through exogenous variables. Moreover, since what I am analyzing are party systems, systems theory may provide valuable insights. I will return to the latter point in the conclusion of this project.

Research design

The research design for this project will focus on four Latin American party systems (Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, and Chile) and employ a qualitative approach that combines what Ragin (1987) refers to as the case-oriented and variable-oriented approaches. The four cases will be looked at separately utilizing both approaches at the same time, but there will also be a cross-country comparison based on the variable-oriented approach from which I will make my conclusions. This methodology will allow for an analysis of causal complexity and, at the same time, be consistent with more traditional patterns of causation; in either case, the aspects of dealignment and the malleability of party identification (not just in the sense of switching parties but in the sense of sudden lack of involvement in party politics) will have the most impact in the case studies. The reasons why I chose qualitative methodology and the approaches in question will be discussed later, but first I will talk explain my selection of cases.

1. Case selection I: Why Latin America?

Latin America contributes to our general knowledge of party system stability in a fundamental way: paraphrasing my treatment of party system stability in chapter II, it
does not involve the maintenance of a specific configuration but of any institutionalized pattern of interaction between parties. Party system stability is taken for granted in Western Europe (upon which the most seminal literature on party systems and party system stability places its attention) and the United States, but public opinion surveys in Latin America reveal that a majority of respondents see political parties as one of the least respected political institutions in the region. In short, party system stability is a major concern.

Some will argue that party system stability in Western Europe is not necessarily taken for granted, as shown by polls taken in the European Union since 1999 that reveal a continuing trend towards mistrust of political parties. The following table demonstrates its comparability with similar attitudes in Latin America:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>LA</th>
<th>EU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avg.</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.75</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latinobarómetro and Eurobarometer

Latin Americans seem to trust political parties more than European Union citizens even if the difference is very narrow, but their rounded percentages are similar (18%). Yet there is a critical difference between both regions. Before revealing this difference, I will show

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5 The year 1999 was chosen as the starting point because although Latinobarómetro has measured the variable of trust in political parties since its first survey in 1996, Eurobarometer did not do so until 1999. Eurobarometer issues its reports twice a year, so many of the percentages are averages. Latinobarómetro issued a single report for 1999 and 2000, and for that reason the average calculated from Eurobarometer data includes those two years simultaneously. No Eurobarometer data was found for some waves; hence, some percentages were taken from a single wave. The Latinobarómetro numbers combine “satisfied” and “very satisfied” responses.
how much satisfied are Latin Americans and citizens of the European Union with the performance of democracy:

Table 1.6: Satisfaction with how democracy works in Latin America and the European Union (in percentages)\(^6\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>LA</th>
<th>EU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latinobarómetro and Eurobarometer

With those statistics presented, I will now correlate them with the variable of trust in political parties\(^7\):

Table 1.7: Correlation between trust in political parties and satisfaction with democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Statistical significance (two-tailed)</th>
<th>R(^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.762</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We should be very careful with those statistics because the correlations are not statistically significant and variation is not explained satisfactorily; still, the link between trust in political parties and satisfaction with democracy is more plausible in Latin America than in the EU, judging from its higher statistical significance and correlation coefficient. The interpretation I give of those statistics is that fluctuations in popular support for party systems (to use Lane & Ersson’s terminology for a while) do not undermine satisfaction with democracy within the EU, but in Latin America “[t]he nature of party systems affects […] the legitimacy and survival of […] the democratic regime […] (Coppedge 1998, 564).”

\(^6\) Latinobarómetro includes “satisfied” and “very satisfied” answers. The Eurobarometer counts all positive responses as “satisfied.”

\(^7\) The correlations presented were calculated using SPSS. For the regressions from which the R\(^2\) was obtained, the variable of trust in political parties was treated as the independent variable.
I will now give a historical background that puts those numbers into perspective.

a. Latin American politics after the “third wave”

Latin America – with the exception of Costa Rica and Venezuela – was at one time under non-democratic regimes; most countries were under military rule\(^8\). Generally speaking, those non-democracies placed obstacles of one type or another on party politics, ranging from prohibitions and repression to a suspect use of state institutions. Starting in 1979, there was intense and relentless pressure from many sides (e.g., guerrilla insurgencies, the thawing and end of the Cold War, economic crises, etc.), after which democratic transition was initiated through transformation (when the non-democratic regime unilaterally initiated it [e.g. Brazil and Guatemala]), transplacement (when the regime and its opposition negotiated it [e.g Uruguay and Honduras]), or replacement (when the regime collapsed and its opposition immediately seized political power [e.g. Argentina]). It is under those circumstances that Latin America – except Cuba, Mexico and Panama\(^9\) – became part of the “third wave” of democratization (Huntington 1991).

The most immediate effects of democratic transition were twofold: first, the possibility of military rule receded dramatically at the same time Latin American democracies made efforts to institutionalize; and second, the prospects for party systems also improved substantially in comparison with the period shortly before the onset of non-democratic regimes. In all, democratization changed political conditions to the point

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\(^8\) Huntington does not mention the case of Paraguay, which was also under non-democratic rule (Alfredo Stroessner’s dictatorship). He does include Mexico under the Partido Revolucionario Institucional as a type of non-democracy, but because there was party competition in place and opposition parties were successful (albeit very infrequently) it is more accurate to describe it as an illiberal democracy.

\(^9\) Neither Mexico nor Panama were part of the “third wave” because their highest point by 1990 (the end point of the wave) was liberalization and not full democratization. According to Huntington, Panama democratized after the US invaded the country in 1991 (Huntington 1991). Cuba, as we all know, continues to have a non-democratic political system.
of precluding a coup and gave party politics renewed energy and legitimacy because the failure of military governments to spark economic growth during their time in power, the renewed strength of right-wing parties (which gave a political voice to conservative sectors within democratic legality), and a reduction in the “supply’ of coup-makers” (i.e., a lack of willingness within the armed forces to take over the state out of concerns for professionalism) made military rule less appealing than before (Domínguez 1997, 110-111). However, that optimism would not last too long.

Democratization came hand in hand with the foreign debt crisis of 1982. Prior to it, Latin American economies were based on import-substitution industrialization (ISI), which called for active state intervention to encourage domestic demand and production, protectionist policies, and increased public spending. While ISI did not encourage an articulation of demands independent from corporatist structures, it did transform specific social sectors (i.e., the middle and working classes) into highly influential political actors. What spelled the end of ISI was that prices for Latin American commodities traded internationally decreased; and international lenders increased interest rates, making loans more difficult to repay (Hershberg & Rosen 2006). Facing near economic collapse, Latin American governments were forced to adopt neoliberal economic policies that radically

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10 The international context (i.e., the end of the Cold War) should not be ignored as well. As Jorge Castañeda explains in his book Utopia Unarmed, the demise of the Soviet Bloc undermined the emotional appeal of Latin American Marxist organizations and forced them into a flux. Since historically the biggest fear amongst economic and political elites (and what made them support military coups) was the very vocal and obsessive left-wing rhetoric for redistribution and social reforms (Weyland 2004, 141), the demise of the Soviet Bloc meant the loss of the latter’s most crucial encouragement. As a result, the threat from the left decreased and, hence, resorting to extra-constitutional methods became unnecessary. Also, the onset of neoliberal economic reform – encouraged by the international community and global economic organizations – reinforced pressures towards the promotion and preservation of democracy (Weyland 2004, 141).

11 Import-substitution industrialization started in the 1930s as a localized response to the global economic crisis of those years, based on the protection of domestic industries that would produce articles that were once imported from abroad (Drake 2006, 30). Before democratization, it was the hallmark of economic policymaking in Latin America except for countries like Chile and Argentina, which followed the neoliberal approach.
changed the ethos of economic policymaking and the political landscape; in that latter regard, though neoliberalism made democracy possible by strengthening external checks on governments and diminishing internal threats (Weyland 2004), it also provoked a sense of disarray in the middle and lower classes (Hagopian 1998, 107, Domínguez 1997, 104) either because socioeconomic elites vigorously supported – and thus discouraged opposition to – neoliberalism or because state predominance in the economy disappeared (Hagopian 1998, 107-108). In any case, it was the start of the crisis of representation\textsuperscript{12} that has affected Latin American political parties ever since (Hagopian 1998; Domínguez 1997; Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez 2006).

As operationalized by Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez, the crisis of representation involves both an attitudinal and a behavioral aspect. Attitudinally, citizens perceive that “the putative terms of the principal-agent relationship of delegation are being broken (2006, 15);” in that sense, the demise of ISI was a major indicator of those attitudes since “citizens’ perceptions of being adequately represented hinge on whether they believe the representatives are acting on behalf of some vision of the public good or of the citizens’ interests (Ibid).” That attitudinal aspect eventually transmutes into the behavioral aspect, where citizens can either withdraw from electoral participation, vote for new parties or for political outsiders, embrace anti-systemic popular mobilization, or form revolutionary movements (Ibid). Either way, both the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of the crisis of representation entailed a great challenge to Latin American party systems.

\textsuperscript{12} Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez refer to it more precisely as the “crisis of democratic representation.” Newman (2001) argues that the debt crisis challenged the “socio-political matrix” comprised by the state, social actors and political parties.
The first symptom of the crisis was that leftist and center-left parties changed their political programs and revised their ideologies in the face of the new economic conditions (Coppedge 2001; Burgess & Levitsky 2003; Domínguez 1997, 112; Hagopian 1998, 108; Hershberg & Rosen 2006, 8); that motivated party establishments to silence alternative views, but it also provoked defections and the creation of new parties (Domínguez 1997, 104-105). Yet eventually, the appeal of neoliberalism did not correlate with its expected delivery of concrete benefits, and its consequences would extend beyond the sphere of the Latin American left. In general, the impression was that neoliberal policies did not stimulate the same economic growth attained during ISI (Hershberg & Rosen 2006, 10-11), and that economies were grossly mismanaged and even geared towards the benefit of the few at the expense of the many (Hakim 2003, 109). In addition, negative externalities such as the attrition of the social welfare structure created by ISI (Hershberg & Rosen 2006) and a significant decrease in the quality of democracy (Weyland 2004) became painfully apparent. It is true that in more recent times the defects of neoliberal economics have pushed the issue of redistribution into left and right-wing parties (Hershberg & Rosen 2006, Reygadas 2006, Latinobarómetro 2006), but the opinion remained – and still remains – that all political parties were in disgrace. Here is where the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of the crisis of representation come into a plainer view.

That crisis is exemplified by two situations. The first of these has been consistently mentioned in the Latinobarómetro surveys: the lack of trust in political parties. A time series in the 2006 wave found that the percentage of trust in political parties between 1996 and 2006 has never risen above a peak of 28% reached in 1997 and
was as low as 11% in 2003. Furthermore, Latin American political parties were also said to be “aloof and an alien and self interested sector that offers no possibility of a shared future (UNDP 2004)” and have even been defined as “weak links” in political systems (Colburn 2002). What is even more surprising is that political parties are less trusted than the military institutions that once led most non-democracies (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2007) – something unthinkable at the start of Latin America’s “third wave.” Latin Americans still vote, but the electoral events held between 2006 and 2007 were influenced by both the rejection of traditional parties and an increasing reliance on options outside the party system, while in the process Latin American presidents have become substitutes for representation (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2007).

The reasons for all that are not hard to find, and two of them stand out. One is that the economic problems left unresolved by neoliberalism undermined the expectation placed by Latin Americans on their elected leaders to spark economic growth and uphold political rights. That problem cannot really be blamed simply on failed expectations because the imperatives of neoliberal reform did victimize political parties by reducing accountability, government responsiveness, and access to patronage (Weyland 2004); but “the inhabitants of the region are not different from the Romans – they expect bread and circus (Lagos 2005)\(^{13}\).” The issue of political corruption is another worrisome aspect; while only 19% of Latin Americans had knowledge of individual acts of it in 2007 (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2007) and the issue itself might not be directly connected to neoliberal economics, illegal maximization of utility on the part of elected leaders (which would ideally spark increased support for opposition parties) leads to a massive lack of interest in party politics as a whole (Davis, Ai Camp & Coleman 2004). That

\(^{13}\) My translation.
sense of disappointment against the political class also contributes to increase the mistrust against political parties and deepens the crisis of representation.

The second situation is one consequence of the first: the appearance of politicians who claim to represent citizens who are dissatisfied with traditional political parties (e.g. Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil). In other instances, elected leaders have resorted to plebiscitarian rule or direct democracy procedures in order to expedite the implementation of policies (e.g., Carlos Ménem in Argentina), thus bypassing parties as instruments of representation. In both cases, there is the possibility for the onset of illiberal democracies; while they do not exclude party competition and are thus not authoritarian, they do not lead to democratic consolidation and represent the reappearance of the personalist ruler – not in a traditional dictatorial sense, but under the guises of neopopulism (defined in turn as a type of leadership suited to neoliberal economics and procedural democracy that reinterprets an electoral mandate from ‘the people’ [Weyland 2004, 149])\(^\text{14}\). Although countries like Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay have elected presidents representing traditional party systems, the tendency of electing outsiders has not disappeared (Latinobarómetro 2007); the election of Rafael Correa as president of Ecuador in 2006 is a case in point.

For many Latin Americans, electoral competition constraints their capacity to exert meaningful influence over decision-makers; in a word, Latin Americans are neither apathetic nor enthused with traditional forms of political participation – including

\(^{14}\) The roots of neopopulism can be traced to populism, a political ideology very common in Latin America during the 1930s and 1940s. It has been defined from a number of perspectives: historical (its coincidence with massive industrialization), sociological (social mobilization in the midst of the demise of oligarchies), economic (redistribution and state intervention), ideological (a dichotomy between popular and privileged social sectors), and political (the mobilization and enfranchisement of those popular sectors by personalistic leaders) (Mayorga 2006, 134-135).
political parties – as they are with contentious politics (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2006, 23). Contentious politics are not negative in themselves, but what the opinion implies is that they are valued more positively than institutionalized party politics as a way to aggregate and advance interests. The issue then becomes whether contentious politics will be considered as the only reasonable alternative; that does not seem to be the case throughout the region, but the crisis of representation could have another outlet in increased political mobilization outside the party system. Social movements, grassroots organizations, and other forms of non-partisan mobilization are legitimate instruments of interest aggregation and articulation, but as I mentioned earlier not every issue can be reduced to a give-and-take between the state and non-partisan groups. Most importantly (and paraphrasing Sartori) the danger is when contentious politics leads to paralysis or to ill-calculated reforms that end in failure. Considering the very tumultuous political history of Latin America from its independence to the start of the “third wave” (and notwithstanding recent examples of successful grassroots mobilization, such as Bolivian indigenous groups), contentious politics have led more often to governability problems and the type of political instability that once set the stage for non-democratic regimes.

One particular debate serves to further underscore that statement. William I. Robinson (2006a and 2006b) is very skeptical of procedural democracy and considers it a reification of rule by elites (i.e., polyarchy), in which there is a continuation of the long-standing political subordination of popular sectors. Given Latin America’s long history of political inequality and poverty, grassroots mobilizations are indeed justified by some as alternatives to party systems, which in turn only serve to reinforce political and socioeconomic exclusion. Michael Coppedge (2006) does not disagree with Robinson’s
definition of procedural democracy as polyarchy, but nevertheless believes that it actually gives political tools for the disenfranchised to articulate, aggregate, and materialize political demands. In a region where the consolidation of democracy has proven to be more elusive than not, Coppedge’s statement is a call for cooler heads to prevail. It is within such circumstances where the deficit of institutional supply affecting Latin American polities becomes more worrisome for democratic stability in the region, and also why the reinforcement of party system is imperative to solve this problem (Latinobarómetro 2006, 23). The view of party systems as institutions becomes obvious, and their institutionalization is hence essential.

In closing, the last three decades of political evolution in Latin America have seen the manifestation of two situations – the resumption of party politics after non-democratic rule, and the political consequences of the switch to neoliberal economics translated into a crisis of representation. The repercussions of the crisis for party systems are significant, since the strategic capabilities of political parties will be meaningless without individuals identified with a party organization, and as a result there will not be any incentives for making patterns of interaction legitimate. Party system stability is only one of a number of components for democratic consolidation in Latin America (along with sustained economic growth, equitable distribution of wealth, coherent and stable government structures, rule of law, an active and independent civil society, and the inclusion of historically marginalized social sectors), but democracy cannot be sustained on the longer term without stable patterns of interaction between political parties.
2. Case selection II: Why Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, and Chile?

The selection of Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, and Chile as case study subjects was governed by a series of general methodological considerations. The first of these is about how comparable are the chosen countries, and for that matter the most similar systems design (MSSD) is a useful tool.

As understood within comparative politics, MSSD “is based on matching up and then comparing two or more systems that share a whole range of similarities (political, social, demographic, economic, cultural, and so on) but also differ in at least a couple of important respects (Lim 2006, 34)” As applied to my project, the first part of MSSD relies on three characteristics shared by the four chosen countries:

- **Prior military rule:** The regimes I will consider here were in power between 1948 and 1958 in Venezuela, between 1968 and 1980 in Peru, between 1976 and 1983 in Argentina, and between 1973 and 1989 in Chile. All either constrained or prohibited political parties, as Huntington (1991) describes; and one of the first actions toward their full demise was the revival of party politics. The underlying assumption is that military rule placed more severe restrictions on party politics than personalistic regimes or one-party states (for instance, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional monopolized the Mexican political system, but opposition parties were never actually barred from competition).

- **Economic crises and neoliberal reform:** The four countries faced the effects of an economic crisis at one time or another, for which neoliberal reform was implemented as a corrective. Some countries had slightly different

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15 Parenthesis in the original.
experiences; in Argentina, the economic crisis occurred during the waning days of its military regime and the democratic government that came later reversed much of its negative effects through heterodox policies, but that did not prevent a deceleration during the late 1980s. By then, a new government (Menem’s) changed the orientation of economic policy toward neoliberalism. The Chilean military regime implemented neoliberal reform as a response to the 1982 debt crisis, and the democratic governments that came later continued with those policies. Venezuela and Peru experienced the dislocation produced by the 1982 debt crisis as democracies, but Peru implemented neoliberal economics after 1990.

- **Contrasting attitudes toward political parties**: The 2006 and 2007 waves of Latinobarómetro made public a number of findings about popular attitudes towards political parties in the chosen countries: 1. Venezuelans, Chileans and Argentines thought that voting was efficacious for change in percentages that exceeded the Latin American mean, but not Peruvians; 2. There is agreement among the four countries that democracy could not exist without political parties, although Chileans and Peruvians agreed with less enthusiasm than Venezuelans, Argentines, and Latin America as a whole; 3. More than half of respondents in the four countries believe that voting is necessary for citizenship, though only Argentina surpasses the Latin American mean; and 4. There is also an agreement among the four countries in giving a negative evaluation to the performance of political parties, with Venezuelans and
Argentines occupying the extremes. The table below presents the percentages for each country.

Table 1.8: Opinions about political parties and voting (in percentages)

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<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: Latinobarómetro 2006 and 2007. Note: Years for which specific information was obtained are indicated in the column headers.

In addition, a 2002 consultation with Latin American political and economic leaders (including those from the four countries) revealed that political parties were said not to be fulfilling their roles (UNDP 2004).

Regarding the second part of MSSD, the key difference between the cases – as shown below – is that some of them remained stable while others did not.

- The Chilean party system, as mentioned in my critique of Mainwaring & Torcal, is considered one of the most stable in Latin America.

- The Argentine party system was also evaluated positively at one point, but the political and economic crisis of 2001-2002 almost destroyed it. The system did survive, but not unscathed; some analysts believe that the current system is an amorphous one.

- The Peruvian party system has been much criticized for its continuing lack of institutionalization, especially after Fujimori’s presidency.

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16 Latinobarómetro 2007 found that only 22% of Latin Americans gave a positive evaluation to political parties. No percentages by country were included in that report.
The Venezuelan party system was hailed time and again before 1998 as the foremost example of stability, yet its protracted but dramatic collapse shattered that image. While there are no visible signals of breakdown as it occurred before, analysts constantly argue that the current nature and rules of party competition in this system (to use Mainwaring & Scully’s own terms) are dysfunctional.

Knowing the values of the main dependent variable before determining its causal relationship with independent variables may raise the concern of whether bias in the selection of the cases has been committed. The second set of considerations I followed in choosing the four cases addresses that concern. Passionate cases have been made against choosing cases on the basis of the outcome variable because it skews findings (Geddes 1990, Landman 2003) and shuns the inter-case variation necessary for establishing strong causal inferences (King, Keohane & Verba 1994\(^{17}\)), but I support recent and persuasive arguments against that suggestion. One of those was proposed by Gerardo Munck, who posits the following (2004, 114)\(^{18}\):

Because qualitative work often assesses causal effects through an analysis of covariation, [King, Keohane & Verba]’s insistence that studies include variation on both the explanatory and the dependent variable is, of course, relevant to qualitative researchers. However, many qualitative researchers make causal inferences by focusing attention centrally on processes and decisions within cases. […] If this close analysis of processes and decisions focuses only on cases where the overall outcome being explained (e.g., war or revolution) has occurred, then it may be called a no-variance design. Qualitative researchers see such studies as making a key contribution in the research process, helping to generate the kind of insights into causal mechanisms without which the analysis of covariation is incomplete.

In turn, David Collier, James Mahoney & Jason Seawright make a similar argument: on the one hand, no-variance designs bias the results of regression analyses towards perfect correlation, but on the other (2004, 99)

\(^{17}\) More precisely, King, Keohane & Verba are conscious that selection on the explanatory variable is unrealistic in qualitative studies and it may be useful to do the opposite, but still insist on caution when adopting that approach (1994, 149).

\(^{18}\) Parenthesis and italics in the original.
qualitative analysis frequently make nonzero causal claims on the basis of no-variance designs. This occurs because, in the hands of qualitative researchers, these essentially become a different kind of design. Whereas from the perspective of regression analysis these may be no-variance designs, from the perspective of qualitative researchers the cases selected may well provide excellent opportunities for within-case analysis. [King, Keohane & Verba]’s condemnation of this pattern of case selection fails to consider this alternative approach.

Furthermore, “many studies that are seen to lack variance on the dependent variable actually do exhibit variance” because “the study of cases over time naturally introduces variance on the dependent variable (Munck 2004, 114, note 15).” Finally, the fact that the cases I chose display values of the dependent variable does not say how those values were obtained. It is precisely on the “how” upon which this project makes the most emphasis in (hence my partial reliance on case studies, as I will mention later); in other words, my no-variance design by itself does not tell how those party systems stabilized or destabilized and what were the causes. My model and choice of methodological tools, when applied to the chosen cases, can identify those processes.

A third and final consideration relates to the size of the sample. Simply put, I chose only four cases so as to occupy a prudent middle ground between single-case studies and large-N studies. Paraphrasing Coppedge (1998), there is a trade-off between each: single-case studies are useful for detailed descriptions that can trace causal mechanisms but are not particularly suited for generalization, yet on the other hand large-N studies are good for establishing generalizations but overlook case description. I, however, strongly believe that samples larger than just one case but smaller than a large N provide an opportunity to create generalizations based on theory testing while permitting researchers to look at the nuances of each case. There are other advantages to small-N studies, as well (Collier, Mahoney & Seawright 2004, 100):

19 In contrast, Todd Landman (2003) contends that single-case studies can create generalizations if their methodology and findings can be extrapolated to other cases or contexts.
If one takes a realistic view of the genuine sources of leverage in causal inference, qualitative no-variance designs employing cross-case comparison and a small N are, in a fundamental respect, similar to small-N with variance on the dependent variable. Both rely on examining causal ideas in great depth through the internal analysis of individual cases.

3. Methodology

Despite the use of bivariate regression analysis in some of the preceding pages, this dissertation project is primarily qualitative – that is, I will not use statistical methods to test my hypothesis. The case-oriented and variable-oriented approaches will be used within that qualitative approach. Both will supplement each other, but are also placed within a particular structure: the main hypothesis will be tested through the variable-oriented approach, but the case-oriented approach will assemble the data that will be utilized in the former.

The first mention of the two approaches was made by Ragin in his analysis of causal complexity, and I will briefly return to it as an introduction. One aspect of causal complexity is how to identify the possible combinations that underscore large-scale social phenomena, especially since in Ragin’s (1987) estimation causal complexity is difficult to pinpoint due to the lack of sufficient empirical facts and the impossibility of experiments, but at the same time the multifarious character of large-scale social phenomena calls for quasi-experimental analyses. Hence, Ragin proposes the variable-oriented and case-oriented approaches as alternatives to experimental methods in identifying causal complexity. Both approaches aim at generalization, but in the former the scope is broader and there is a reliance on testing hypotheses derived from comprehensive theories. In comparison, generalizations in the latter are narrower and are the product of the comparison of holistic cases (1987, 31-32). Despite their differences, I will utilize both approaches for testing whether or not party system stability is a product
of causal complexity in the chosen cases, and also as a part of more traditional hypothesis-testing. In that latter sense, the case-oriented approach will show if and how the main causal relationship I proposed at the beginning between interactions and party system stability has materialized in the individual cases, while the variable-oriented approach will make more systematic comparisons and arrive at more substantive generalizations.

a. Why qualitative methods?

The first questions that might be asked about my methodology are why I chose qualitative methods over quantitative methods and, more particularly, how does the former fit with my stated aim for this project. A discussion the qualitative-quantitative dichotomy within political science (whether real or alleged) is valuable for answering both questions.

I hinted at a small part of my case for the utility of qualitative methods when discussing case selection, but here I will make arguments more closely related to the larger methodological debates in the discipline. King, Keohane & Verba suggest that qualitative research can provide findings with convincing statements of causal inference if it employs the methods of “[p]recisely defined statistical methods that undergird quantitative research,” which are considered in turn to be more widely applicable (1994, 6); while the intention behind that statement is for qualitative research to employ quantitative standards rather than actual tools, their clear prescriptive overtones in favor of quantitative logic are very evident. Sure enough, quantitative methods should not be purged from the discipline because an obvious advantage they have (and that I recognize)
is that they provide scientific rigor and are naturally suited to large-N studies, yet qualitative research can be just as rigorous. Hence, I wholeheartedly share the opinion that King, Keohane, & Verba’s suggestion is tantamount to subordinating qualitative research to quantitative methodology and minimizes the former’s evident contributions to social inquiry (Collier, Seawright & Munck 2004, 49). I find the latter statement very convincing not just because it argues for a methodologically diverse political science, but also because of a limitation of quantitative research – namely, its lack of a sense of process.

In regard to scientific rigor and causal inferences, Munck argues that “qualitative analysts have their own well-developed tools for addressing many tasks discussed by [King, Keohane & Verba]. These tools certainly do not solve all of the problems faced by researchers any more than quantitative tools do. Yet these qualitative tools deserve a central place within the standard repertoire of methodological practices (2004, 106).” Proponents of quantitative methodology advance the claim that it provides certainty and accuracy, but Munck’s statement concludes that qualitative methods in themselves can provide them as well. I will describe in more detail the actual qualitative tools used in this project at a later moment, but for now it will suffice to say that my research design in general includes (and overlaps) some of the ones proposed by Munck – within-case analysis, process tracing, a no-variance design, the assessment of deterministic causation through testing the hypothesis against probabilistic alternatives, and case studies (2004,
In this sense, qualitative methods can be as useful as quantitative methods at effectively stating causal inferences.

Another justification for my choice of qualitative methodology is that King, Keohane & Verba’s suggestion in favor of quantitative standards ignores what the former can do for accomplishing a goal that quantitative methods cannot do – detailed description (Collier, Seawright & Munck 2004, 49). Putnam’s (1993) study of social capital in Italy is a case in point: while regression analysis was a useful tool for him to make his case, he also made the implicit acknowledgement that quantitative data only told half of the story – that is, it confirmed the facts, but did not answer why were they so and how did they appear. For this reason, he included a non-quantitative historical account of why civic traditions were stronger in the northern half of Italy than in its southern half as part of his analysis. In sum, quantitative methods indicate correlation and causation, but do not explain any of them by themselves.

The same point applies to the comparative study of party system stability because it is precisely the point presented by Coppedge (1998) and Mair (2006a) regarding the use of time-series comparisons of elections and statistical tools like the effective number of parties, respectively. In a word (and paraphrasing both scholars), quantitative methods do not reveal all the details of party system stability and instead make cross-country comparisons superficial. That criticism is crucial because if we are to explain party system stability we must take a firm hold of exactly how the relevant variables unfold, which is something quantitative methods are not designed to do. In other words,

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20 I will treat case studies, the within-case analysis and process tracing as equivalents of the in-depth interview / participant observation / qualitative content analysis tool Munck proposes to complete the research step of measurement and data collection.
quantitative methods lack a sense of process. It is upon those considerations that I base my choice of qualitative methods as the research structure for this project.

b. The case-oriented approach

Those considerations also justify my choice of the case-oriented approach as part of the methodological tools I will use. While Coppedge is not particularly enthused by case studies (1998, 563), case-oriented comparisons target cases for their intrinsic value and produce historically grounded and limited causal generalizations of political phenomena (Ragin 1987, 35). Even more precisely, the type of case-oriented comparison I will employ is what Mahoney (2003, 360) and Collier, Mahoney & Seawright refer to as within-case analysis, in which “diverse forms of internal evidence about causation […] are brought to bear on explaining a single, overall outcome within that case (2004, 93).” What makes the within-case approach practical for this project is one of its ancillary techniques – process tracing. As applied to this project, process tracing is particularly useful for unraveling causal complexity, especially since it is particularly geared towards finding causal mechanisms (Mahoney 2003, 363; McKeown 2004, 141). In other words, this tool will look closely at how the exogenous variables could combine – if at all – and create party system stability (or collapse) in each of the four cases, though the actions of just a single variable could also be identified through this approach as well. It is through this approach that the aspects of partisan dealignment and the malleability of party identification will be assessed. Most importantly, it is the kind of case interpretation provided by both the within-case approach and process tracing what is sorely absent from

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21 For Coppedge, this is part of a trade-off with qualitative methods; however, he still encourages the search for explanations even if this trade-off will make them hard to substantiate (1998, 563-564). My research design will attempt to minimize the disadvantages he sees in qualitative methodology.
quantitative methods; as I already mentioned, numbers may matter, but they do not explain outcomes by themselves. Moreover, the reduced size of my sample precludes statistical procedures and makes the case-oriented approach more feasible.

The use of within-case analysis in general and of process tracing in particular also means that I will follow the logic of comparative historical analysis. In fact, such analysis is warranted for this project because the evolution of party systems in Latin America is connected to historical developments (Castañeda & Navia 2007, 56), and for that important reason each case study will include a historical analysis – as brief as possible – that will describe precisely that evolution in the chosen cases. Although their role in the case studies will be minor vis a vis the actual comparison, these analyses will include historical data limited to what has the most direct and decisive significance for party politics, including economic and social development. Closer attention will be given to certain pairs of party systems identified by year: 1958 / 1998 (Venezuela), 1980 / 2001 (Peru), 1973 / 1983 (Argentina), and 1964 / 1989 (Chile). Those pairs represent the party system in place before the last non-democratic interlude and the current system, and were chosen for reasons related to the variable-oriented approach I will explain momentarily; the cut-off point between one party system and another will be an episode of non-democratic rule. The aspects uncovered by the historical analyses are critical insofar as they identify behaviors, situations, or tendencies within those party system pairs.

c. The variable-oriented approach

While I have established that quantitative methods will be largely absent from this project, the need for their ancillary hypothesis-testing rationale stems from the fact that
King, Keohane & Verba do have an important point – that is, the case-oriented approach by itself is not enough to formulate substantive generalizations for political behavior. Furthermore, Ragin cautions against proposing excessively deterministic models and instead encourages researchers to “check each case to see if the model in question offers a plausible picture of the case (2004, 137).” As a way to be cognizant of those two points, this project will also utilize the logic of variable-oriented comparisons, which is “concerned with assessing the correspondence between relationships discernible across many societies or countries, on the one hand, and broad theoretically based images of macrosocial phenomena, on the other (Ragin 1987, 53).” A connection can be made between this approach and cross-case analysis, in which “the research focuses on instances of the outcome being studied that are located in two or more different cases (Collier, Mahoney & Seawright 2004);” either way, the most significant advantage of this approach is connected to the possibility of variation between countries (or lack thereof).

The variable-oriented approach will be utilized as part of the case studies and as the main approach for the subsequent cross-case comparison. In either instance, I assume that the exogenous factors are nominal variables (hence my constant description as “exogenous variables”) because their frequency will be assessed through the close examination of the case studies and the cases could be classified in categories originating from those frequencies. Likewise, since nominal variables are not quantifiable, their variation will be in the form of a “yes or no” statement – either the variable is present in a particular party system, or it is not.

The party system pairs that will be analyzed more closely in the case studies will be compared in each of the explanations, variations, and variables mentioned in chapter
II. By doing that, I will assess Coppedge’s (1998) assertion that party systems in Latin America exhibit a high degree of variation within as well as vis-à-vis each other. The conclusions I will draw from the intra-case comparisons will refer to the likely causes of party system stability and collapse and the possibility of causal complexity for each individual case. Those conclusions are also crucial for the cross-country party system comparisons I also intend to do for the purpose of testing my hypothesis; in that aspect, I will also consider the party system pairs described above and what has been mentioned in chapter II, but the party systems will be compared against each other. For that, I will regard MSSD as the closest variant of the variable-oriented research. This comparison will lead the way to the most important generalizations of the project, related to the results of the test of my model and either proving or disproving my hypothesis. The connection between the within-case approach and the cross-country approach I make here is consistent with what Collier, Mahoney & Seawright argue in their defense of quantitative methods: while cross-country studies are not useless, they can actually generate stronger causal inferences when bolstered by the within-case approach.

Conclusion

This chapter has formulated a multivariate hypothesis whose complex causal relationships will be tested with empirical evidence. The causal relationships in question connect party system stability with party interactions influenced by both endogenous and exogenous variables. My research design features eclectic qualitative methods. The hypothesis-testing logic of quantitative methods is helpful, but qualitative tools such as
the within-case approach and process tracing are especially useful, as I will demonstrate in the four detailed case studies that follow.
Chapter IV
VENEZUELA: FROM EXCEPTIONAL CASE TO CAUTIONARY TALE

For many decades, scholarship in Latin American politics has touted Venezuela as an exceptional case (Coppedge 2005, 289). It was understood and perhaps unquestionably accepted that what made Venezuela so exceptional were its privileged status, its lack of racial and class divisions, and its successful democracy (Ellner & Tinker Salas 2007, 5). In fact, Venezuelan democracy was so thriving that it was hailed as a proverbial “tower of strength” by researchers such as John Peeler (1998) and Scott Mainwaring & Timothy Scully (1995). The source of that strength is manifold, but it included an electoral system that contained political conflict, center-leaning and representative political parties that were independent from interest groups and forged ties with the population, and a political commitment in favor of democracy from the political class (Ellner & Tinker Salas 2007, Tanaka 2006, 48).

Everything changed by the time of the popular riots known as “caracazo,” which set in motion a series of events that culminated with the election of Hugo Chávez as president in 1998. Although the latter destroyed Venezuela’s exceptionalist reputation, the party and political systems were actually oblivious to the defects of the procedures employed over the decades to make them so strong and admired (Ellner & Tinker Salas 2007), which made in all for a “pathological kind of political control (Coppedge 1994b, 2).” Nowadays, the literature about Latin American politics regards Venezuela as a case in point for democratic breakdown, representing at the very least “a significant challenge to the scholarship on political institutions and representation (Roberts 2003, 39).” A major conclusion from that literature is that the party system that was so lionized is now being considered as one explanatory factor for the demise of Venezuelan exceptionalism;
in a word, the intricacies of that system sowed the seeds of its own destruction. These facts make us ask three questions: how those events happened, why, and what are their implications for our knowledge of party system stability in general.

This case study will answer those questions by means of the methodology described in chapter III – the combination of the case and variable-oriented approaches. For the case-oriented approach, I will incorporate a historical narrative of the Venezuelan party systems of 1958 and the present one. That narrative will be preceded by a shorter description of party politics in Venezuela up to 1958, which is imperative for a complete comprehension of the reasons why the party system prior to the current one was established as it was. For the variable-oriented approach, I will compare the party systems of 1958 and 1998 as a way to determine whether or not my main hypothesis (interactions producing stability) has unfolded in this case and, if it does, how did it occur. Likewise, I will pay attention to the exogenous variables I already introduced and how do they combine with the self-interested motives of parties.

The main conclusions I propose are the following: 1. The exogenous variables with the most influence over partisan self-interest are political culture and the state, with a third factor – cleavages – present in the current party system; and 2. There is causal complexity as well. In the party system of 1958, the intersection between political culture and state intervention created the pattern of interactions for which this party system became known for and contributed to the institutionalization of the party system, but also set the stage for its demise. In the current party system, current opinions regarding certain parties, sociopolitical divisions that were played out, and existing electoral rules have combined to embed the party system. There are, however, dissimilarities in how
embedded are both party systems as a result of those combinations: although it can be
said that the 1958 and current party systems are not perfectly institutionalized, the former
is closer to the ideal type than the latter.

It should be obvious by now that I consider Venezuela to have a party system
(i.e., party interactions) even though the political system is controversial and inter-party
competition is constrained. Some scholars of party systems may disagree with my
statement, given that the political system upon which it is related has been described as a
“tyranny of the majority” (Coppedge 2003) and that an underlying assumption from Peter
Mair’s definition of party systems as interactions (2006a, 65) is that the composing
parties are actually allowed to compete. The reality, however, is that political parties in
Venezuela are allowed to compete; as a matter of comparison, party politics is prohibited
in totalitarian and authoritarian systems because of the possibility of disagreements with
the political powers-that-be; but in reality, as Michael Coppedge points out, Venezuela
does not fit the definition of either political system – despite opinions inside and outside
the country to the contrary – and, rather, is more similar to Mexico during the decades
where the Partido Revolucionario Institucional was in power (2006, 37-38). Venezuela is,
in the end, an illiberal democracy; in fact, the “tyranny of the majority” and Chávez’s
political dominance are always subject to voter approval in periodic elections in which
opposition parties – however limited by the structure in place – are still allowed to
participate (Corrales 2006). Even more revealing is the fact that opposition parties have
won several electoral contests; the most recent example is the referendum held in
December 2007, in which opposition parties successfully campaigned against Chávez’s
attempt to amend the national constitution (although they were not the only ones that did so).

I will make two final comments. First, this is primarily a story of three political parties – Acción Democrática (AD), Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente (COPEI), and Movimiento Quinta República (MVR). Venezuela has had – and still has – many political parties with varying lengths of existence, but scholarship in Venezuelan politics is dominated by two topics: the rise, fall, and current existence in the fringes of AD and COPEI; and the changes wrought after the appearance of MVR. For that reason, this case study will follow this apparent convention, though it will not ignore the role – sometimes pivotal – of other parties. Finally, I neither intend to make an apology for the current Venezuelan political system nor make a case for regime change; instead, I will remain true to the facts. While an analysis of the subject is timely and could reasonably be connected to any study of its party system (including mine), my focus will be on party politics only.

*The tale of a late-comer*

The first political organizations in Venezuela appeared just after its independence from Spain in 1821, but nevertheless they were factions rather than organized parties. For this reason, we cannot talk of party interactions at this stage. Still, the context that contributed to the creation of those factions was the incorporation of Venezuela into a federation of emancipated South American territories known as Gran Colombia. Opposition against it appeared almost immediately, as sectors within the city of Caracas – which eventually became the national capital – led the demand for a secession that
eventually occurred in 1830 (Morón 1963). Still, Venezuela was by and large a latecomer to substantive democratic governance (Coppedge 2005, 290) and even to the procedural one; as Guillermo Morón (1963, 152) posits, the lack of a strong foundation for political citizenship created insurmountable obstacles for the creation of political parties in our contemporary understanding of the concept. In fact, it would not be until about a century later that Venezuela saw the appearance of its first real political parties.

By 1840, political activity evolved into a divide between the pro-Catholic and periphery-located conservatives and the secular and Caracas-located liberals (Molina and Pérez 2004, 105). Despite mirroring two of Lipset & Rokkan’s Western European social cleavages and their shared character as incipient factions, both tendencies were in reality organized vehicles for the control of state power more than political parties with concrete ideas for resource allocation (Morón 1963; Sonntag 2001, 145; Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens 1992, 177). Whereas in countries like Argentina, Peru, and especially Chile the idea of political parties – at least in a rudimentary way – was a reality, in Venezuela it was still non-existent at this stage. Even if both factions were able to interact like political parties, state power was not institutionalized throughout Venezuela and was rather fought for between warlords who dominated specific regions. As a result, Venezuelan politics was characterized by political pacts between those warlords and the politically emasculated landed elite of the colonial period (Morón 1963; Peeler 1998, 57). Added to this was that the Andean region (the southwest) became the destination of most of the total population of the country at that time because of the newfound prosperity brought by coffee production. Economic and demographic prowess translated into political
power, as Andean warlords imposed a hegemony that would last for decades (Peeler 1998)¹.

However, warlord rule would be undermined by fundamental socioeconomic changes that occurred well into the 20th century. By the 1920s, Venezuela’s oil industry—dominated by foreign companies but with considerable royalties being paid to the Venezuelan government²—began to flourish and encouraged the creation of new infrastructures and social groups that later undermined the clientelistic politics that became a foundation of warlord rule, and also accelerated state building to its conclusion (Peeler 1998, Kornblith and Levine 1995, Morón 1963). It also transformed Venezuela from an agrarian into a budding industrial society: oil profits inflated the exchange rate, undervalued crop exports and undermined the power of the landed elite, created politically assertive middle and working classes, sparked a wave of internal migration from rural areas to the cities, and encouraged the creation of multiclass political parties (Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens 1992, 177; Hellinger 2006, 475; Ellner & Tinker Salas 2007, 6). The year 1928 marked the beginning of the end of warlord rule when a group of students protested against the regime of Juan Vicente Gómez, the most notorious of all; they were arrested but later liberated after more protests, though they were forced into exile afterwards. Among those students was Rómulo Betancourt, who would become a pivotal political leader in succeeding decades. His plan to replace Gómez and warlord rule incorporated three aspects: the nationalization of the oil industry, the use of those profits for economic development and social welfare, and the

¹ Partisan activity resurfaced for a brief time in 1890, when the anti-caudillo Democratic Union was founded. That group was crushed after 1898 (Morón 1963).
² Those royalties invariably made their way into the hands of Juan Vicente Gómez, who was the ruling warlord at that time and redistributed them to his cronies (Hellinger 2006, 474).
inception of electoral politics (Hellinger 2006, 475). Suddenly, the passing of Gómez in 1935 and the breakout of political violence against the remnants of warlord rule forced Betancourt (who was returning from exile at the time) to accelerate the realization of this political plan out of fears of a civil war. Nevertheless, it was the start of a new political era (Peeler 1998; Kornblith and Levine 1995; Hellinger 2006, 475).

The most significant aspect of the immediate post-warlord years was a period of feverish political mobilization that occurred roughly between 1935 and 1945, all while the new government tried to navigate a middle course between the left and the remaining supporters of the deceased Gómez. Three political parties were a product of that process – the Venezuelan Communist Party (*Partido Comunista de Venezuela*, PCV), Unión Republicana Democrática (URD), and Acción Democrática (AD). Of the three, the most influential was AD, founded by Betancourt in 1941 under the doctrine he created during the late 1920s. Relations between some of these parties were less than cordial; AD and PCV were bitter rivals for the support of labor unions, but AD prevailed because it displayed a more skillful ability to mobilize. In 1945, AD seized power after collaborating in a military coup led by middle-ranking military officers, and brought four of its members to a civilian-military junta. Although the executive branch was shared between the military and civilians, Rómulo Betancourt – the top leader of AD – was appointed head of state. Thus began a tumultuous three-year period known as *trienio adeco*, when the government established universal suffrage\(^3\), protection to labor unions, a free and secular school system, and the active intervention of the state in the economy, among other policies. Still, vocal criticism against the government came from the PCV, who resented AD encroachments in labor unions; and from the business sector, which

\(^3\) Voting was severely restricted up to that point (Molina & Pérez 2004, 105).
grew increasingly concerned about union mobilization. The latter rallied alongside Rafael Caldera, a long-time Christian Democratic activist who created the Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente (COPEI) in 1946 with the blessing and full support of the Catholic hierarchy. Though AD was more pragmatic than zealous in its enactment of its political agenda (Hellinger 2006), what would later ensue was a political clash with COPEI in which both were even supported by different sectors of the military (middle-level and ranking officers, respectively) (Dietz & Myers 2003, 6; Myers 1973, 61; Peeler 1998; Sonntag 2001, Kornblith & Levine 1995; Coppedge 2005, 290; Coppedge 1993, 256; Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens 1992, 192).

That clash came to a head in 1947. The first incident occurred when AD called for a constitutional assembly and utilized its political muscle to gain the majority in it (78% of the vote and 86 seats), dominate the drafting proceedings, and alienate many in the opposition. The most serious incident occurred after the presidential elections held in December of that year, when novelist and AD candidate Rómulo Gallegos was elected. In the midst of the environment of the Cold War, which regarded politicians like him and Betancourt as Marxist in the view of the United States, rumors of a military coup became rife⁴. After less than a year in office, and after the refusal by both AD politicians of an offer made by labor unions to create militias to defend the government, Gallegos was overthrown in a coup and substituted by a military junta led by Marcos Pérez Jiménez, an Andean army general. One of the first decisions of the new government was to ban AD and PCV and to permit the constrained existence of COPEI and URD, although full

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⁴ Betancourt struck a deal before Gallegos’s election with US oil companies to share profits, for which he was thought of as a reformist by some in the American foreign policy establishment. The Cold War changed that perception (Hellinger 2006, 476).
prohibitions were later imposed on both parties as well (Kornblith & Levine 1995, 42-43, Coppedge 2005, 290; Molina & Pérez 1998, 5-7; Monaldi et. al. 2006, 11).

Consensus and collapse: The party system of puntofijismo

1. From multipartyism to two-partyism (1958-1973)

The political class of the trienio adecó (especially AD and COPEI) now understood that compromise and contingent consent were crucial for stability, but they also had to weather the dictatorship: Pérez Jiménez dissolved the junta in 1952, and proclaimed himself head of state. The regime then resorted to political assassinations and implemented policies that clashed with vested economic interests; as a result, the military and the business sector withdrew their support. On January 1958, while Communists and young AD sympathizers were leading a strong resistance (filling the void left by the forced exile of both Caldera and Betancourt), disaffected military officers staged a failed coup. Despite that, popular rejection of the regime was too much to bear, forcing Pérez Jiménez to flee the country (Sonntag 2001, 148; Hellinger 2006).

Putting aside their prior rivalry, AD and COPEI soon believed that there had to be a way to restrain polarization, impose control to political activity (Kornblith & Levine 1995, 44), and institutionalize a party system. With that in mind, both parties made a preliminary agreement to share power and keep divisive issues out of the limelight (Coppedge 2005, 290), engaging later in more substantive negotiations (of which URD also took part⁵). The result was a written agreement known as Punto Fijo Pact (Pacto de Punto Fijo), signed by the top leaders of the three parties – Betancourt, Caldera, and

⁵ The PCV was not included because AD, COPEI and URD thought it would not be supportive of democracy, and also that incorporating the Communists would jeopardize support from the United States (Myers 1998, 504).
Jóvito Villalba (URD) – on October 31, 1958. The pact established a number of ground rules all parties promised to follow: to respect the results of the next general election, to consult each other on sensitive issues, to share patronage, and to create an overall sense of cooperation that would prevent one-sided policymaking, to draft a new constitution that would institute the civilian control of the military, to invest oil profits in social initiatives, and to adopt import-substitution industrialization as the principal economic model. The new constitution, drafted by a constitutional assembly composed of eight representatives from AD, four from COPEI and URD, three from PCV, and three independents, was enacted in 1961 (Peeler 1998; Kornblith & Levine 1995; Sonntag 2001; Myers 1998, 504; Monaldi et al. 2006, 10-11; Hellinger 2006, 477).

Punto Fijo could not materialize without the support (or at least the acquiescence) of two key political actors. The landowners were not sympathetic to AD’s peasant-friendly policies, but decided not to oppose the pact after it was suggested that the pace of land redistribution would be slow. In turn, the military was still influenced by the ethos of the defunct dictatorship and was not entirely supportive of the new regime, but guerrilla activity and popular support for democracy changed all that (Myers 1998, 505). Contributing to the legitimization of the new political system (known by scholars of Venezuelan politics as puntofijismo) was that the country was urbanizing, rural political arrangements were destroyed, and certain electoral blocs became more volatile, resulting in the modification of the party system of the trienio adecó (Molina & Pérez 1998, 1). There was guerrilla violence during the 1960s as a response against puntofijismo, but it diminished by 1967 (Myers 1973, 78).

Alongside Punto Fijo, there was the Advenimiento Obrero-Patronal, under which business disputes would be solved without resorting to strikes, lock-outs or other pressure tactics (Sonntag 200, 148-149).
At first, both AD and COPEI had to face significant organizational challenges (Myers 1986, 123) and many voters still supported Pérez Jiménez (Coppedge 1994a, 45). However, the first general election under puntofijismo were held as scheduled (in December 1958) and Rómulo Betancourt easily won the presidency, but he immediately set up a coalition government with COPEI and URD (Coppedge 1994a, 44). The election became a “blessing in disguise” to both parties – Betancourt received almost half of the total vote (49.1%), COPEI was strengthened by the efforts of presidential candidate Rafael Caldera and its mid-level leadership, and URD gathered enough votes for the second-place showing of its candidate, Wolfgang Larrazábal (Myers 1986, 123-125, CNE [2000a]). The effective number of legislative parties was set at 2.57 (Monaldi et. al. 2006, 21), suggesting the appearance of two great legislative blocs (AD and COPEI) and a minor one (URD). Most importantly, only 7% of registered voters abstained from the election.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, the number of parties that participated in presidential elections increased (7 in 1958, 9 in 1963, and 16 in 1968) (CNE [2000a])\(^7\), but it was because the threshold for the creation of political parties – set by the Law of Political Parties (Ley de Partidos Políticos) of 1964 – was too high (Kornblith & Levine 1995, 59; Kornblith 2004, 135). Splits inside the major parties also contributed to this situation; URD was divided between leftist and conservative factions at the height of the 1958 presidential election, and Larrazábal – who did his best to put them behind during his campaign – abandoned the party right after his defeat. Though a more destructive

\(^7\) Most of these parties – known as “electoral phenomena” – were created around the exceptional qualities of a single person and gave their support to candidates from the major parties. Kornblith & Levine (1995) posit that Admiral Larrazábal’s candidacy, as well as some others, must be seen in this light. This picture is different for legislative and local elections.
schism would occur afterwards, URD always depended on the appeal of candidates rather than on more important considerations, and Jóvito Villalba exercised an excessive control of the party organization. Inside AD, Betancourt also imposed a very tight control, but he nevertheless did not want his party to be the center of a one-party state. He often consorted openly with COPEI and Rafael Caldera, irritating many AD followers; nevertheless, critics were expelled from the party (Coppedge 1994a, 45; Myers 1986, 126). In the 1963 presidential election, AD candidate Raúl Leoni defeated Rafael Caldera (COPEI) for the presidency by an almost 13% vote margin (32.8% against 20.1%) (CNE [2000a]).

The electoral system in place deserves a closer look. Voting was mandatory for citizens 18 years of age and older, and procedures were supervised by the Supreme Electoral Council (Consejo Supremo Electoral, CSE) – a nine-member board appointed by the national legislature which included party representatives and individuals with no partisan affiliation. The election of the president was by a simple majority, and all sub-national units (states or estados) and the Federal District – where Caracas is located – were represented by two senators and at least two deputies. The number of deputies per state varied with population, and one seat was equivalent to 50,000 constituents. Most legislators were elected by popular vote and the deputy seats were subject to PR, but a quotient system was also in place for the distribution of additional seats. Former presidents were also elected automatically as senators-for-life. Voters were presented with party slate cards (a “large” one for president and a “small” one for legislators), and votes were cast by placing the chosen cards in the ballot (Myers 1973, 69-76). There were no elections for state governors or mayors because they were all political appointees.
(Tanaka 2006, 57), but the members of state and municipal legislative bodies were elected by popular vote under PR rules (Myers 1973, 74) even if they were elected simultaneously with national legislators. Finally, the Law of Political Parties, Public Meetings, and Demonstrations (Ley de Partidos Políticos, Reuniones Públicas y Manifestaciones) of 1964 established in its Chapter II the threshold of 0.5% of the local voter registry as the minimum for the creation of a regional political party (Art. 10) and its registration in 12 or more regions as the threshold for national party status (Art. 16) (CNE [2008]).

AD and COPEI managed to create strong affiliations all across Venezuela (Molina & Pérez 1998, 10) and were this in a position of superiority over their weaker contenders in the left and the right (Myers 1973). Proof of that was the 1968 presidential election: COPEI’s smart campaign and the creation of the Movimiento Electoral del Pueblo – which siphoned votes from AD – resulted in the former’s first major electoral victory and in Caldera finally being elected president by a thin margin – 29.1% against 28.2% (Myers 1973; Gil Yepes 1981, 54; Molina & Pérez 1998, 8, table 3; CNE [2000a]). However, AD and COPEI received the largest share of the vote (Myers 1986, 127; Molina & Pérez 1998, 8, table 3), confirming their ability to court a very diverse constituency, create coherent national organizations, and muster monetary resources to wage effective presidential campaigns (Kornblith & Levine 1995, 57). Indeed, AD and COPEI amassed from that point on about 90% of the total vote for president (Kornblith &

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8 Structural factors such as the electoral system (which diverted electoral support to AD and COPEI, also contributed (Molina & Pérez 1998). Its fullest effects on the party system will be discussed in the next part.
Levine 1995). Meanwhile, the right-wing parties languished, and the PCV experienced a major split in 1971 when a number of members embittered by the party’s Marxist dogmatism left it in protest and created Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), which embraced electoral politics more enthusiastically, adopted internal pluralism, and engaged in a non-antagonizing brand of politics, though it also forged ties with the military (Gil Yepes 1981, 54). The PCV would nevertheless remain in existence.

The 1973 presidential election, in which AD candidate Carlos Andrés Pérez was elected president with 48.7% of the vote (CNE [2000a]), solidified overwhelming voter support for AD and COPEI (Myers & Martz 1997) and inaugurated the era of two-party politics in earnest. Indeed, both parties were the only ones able to obtain more than one million votes for their presidential candidates, while the most successful candidacy of either one of the smaller parties received less than 200,000 votes (CNE [2000a]). Although it could be reasonably argued that the two-party system was actually established in 1968 with COPEI’s victory, the two-party dynamics of the Venezuelan party system – for which it became widely and more recognized for – was now in place (Myers & O’Connor 1998).


There have been many interpretations of this new phase of the Venezuelan party system, but they all agree that it was multiparty in theory but two-party in practice.

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9 Fragmentation did not disappear entirely, but this does not disqualify that Venezuela became a two-party democracy at this time since small parties were never able to contest the joint hegemony of AD and COPEI.

10 More exactly, Myers & Martz argue that AD and COPEI were supported by the Venezuelan professional class rather than by citizens as a whole, but they present that finding as evidence for the argument about a larger aspect of political culture – whether or not “a supportively dominant political culture serves as a legitimating buffer for the political regime (1997, 336).”
Michael Coppedge argues that Punto Fijo encouraged a spill-over of the party system into society as a whole – a partyarchy (or what he characteristically calls the “adecopeyano” establishment) characterized by the gradual ideological transformation of AD and COPEI from their initial positions to more centrist ones, an internal party discipline that was tight and closely monitored, the co-optation of civil society by both parties, consensus-seeking, close ties between the parties and the military and entrepreneurial classes, and the complete predominance of electoral competition (Coppedge 1994a, 41-43; Coppedge 2003, 172). Such a preeminence of political parties might have been seen as a deleterious monopolization of political activity, but Scott Mainwaring & Timothy Scully (1995) classified the Venezuelan party system of puntofijismo as a institutionalized one because it had all the defining characteristics – it was socially embedded and organizationally coherent, it had institutionalized parties with a clear identity and consistent shares of electoral support from one election to another, and registered low electoral volatility. David Myers, in turn, described this party system as having four basic elements: a total number of parties that followed a “two-and-a-sixth-plus” configuration, attempts to court the left-of-center (especially in economic issues),

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11 Adecopeyano refers to the eponyms coined to the members of AD and COPEI – adecos and copeyanos, respectively.
12 At the top echelons of both parties, their national executive councils formulated and enforced party rules and decisions without the possibility of appeal, and kept a watchful eye over “areal organizations.” They also checked on patronage machines and rewarded loyalty heavily (Myers 1986). Steve Ellner (1984) argues that the rank-and-file of both parties was influential, connecting to the idea that in aggregative majority party systems the internal diversity of parties encouraged the articulation of political positions (Powell Jr. 1981); but those two statements contradict Coppedge because partyarchy gave few opportunities (if any) for independent thinking inside AD and COPEI.
13 Coppedge bases his partyarchy argument in comparison he has made with Robert Dahl’s concept of polyarchy (1994b, 19-20). Partyarchy is not too dissimilar with Dahl’s concept, but occurs when political parties control the selection of candidates, existing electoral laws limit voter choices, legislative blocs vote as a single group to fulfill the requirements of a strong party discipline, political parties penetrate organizations outside the party system, and the media is politicized.
14 More exactly, AD and COPEI made up the “two” because they are have the most possibilities of winning presidential races, while leftist parties comprised the “sixth,” and rightist parties took the remaining “plus.”
an emphasis on the floating vote, and the incorporation by the major parties of the mentality and strategies of North American and Western European political parties in their desire to win elections (1986, 127-131). The party system also seems to conform to some of the characteristics of aggregative majority party systems – the strongest party systems are usually of the two-party kind, where parties are very similar in terms of sources of voter support, appeal to a wide constituency, and lean towards the political center (Powell Jr. 1981). Nevertheless, voting participation – expected to be low in such a system – was actually high in Venezuela, averaging an abstention rate that never surpassed 10% (Kornblith & Levine 1995, CNE [2000a]).

Partyarchy is explained by a number of important factors. One is that the voting population increased since 1968. Another is that Venezuelan society experienced a process of homogenization so deep that it defused old societal divisions and facilitated the joint political dominance of AD and COPEI. As such, socioeconomic development undermined the regional differences of yesteryear, making the task of national penetration by both parties much easier (Kornblith & Levine 1995). Indeed, puntofijismo and socioeconomic development contributed to neutralize the structural cleavages that characterized politics during the trienio adecó (the poor vs. other socioeconomic classes, Caracas vs. the periphery, urban vs. rural Venezuelans, and traditional vs. modern culture) (Myers 1998).

A third element is the electoral system. Although the Organic Law of Municipal Government (Ley Orgánica del Régimen Municipal) of 1978 instituted separate elections for municipal legislative bodies, the system as a whole made the effects of the

15 Powell Jr. (1981) also argues that aggregative majority party systems have parties that encourage internal diversity; but according to Coppedge that would not be case within either AD or COPEI.
adecopeyano partyarchy even more extensive. AD won two of the three presidential contests held during the period (1973 and 1983), consistently mustered majorities in the Venezuelan Senate (except in 1978, when it tied with COPEI), and never lost the majority in the Chamber of Deputies (Kornblith & Levine 1995); yet both AD and COPEI amassed 80% of the total legislative vote since 1973 (Coppedge 1994a, 41), and 86% of the presidential vote. The connection between that predominance and the electoral system is that the latter enabled parties to exercise a great degree of control over the framing of issues and the selection of candidates (Kornblith & Levine 1995), increasing their possibilities of victory; in fact, electoral rules placed more emphasis in the presidential election than in other elections, which in turn served to consolidate the complete control of candidate selection by party leaders (which were invariably the presidential candidates as well). All legislative candidacies were regarded as offerings from the party leader, while it became accepted behavior to show support for the presidential candidate by voting for the entire legislative slate (Myers 1973, 76-77). Furthermore, there were corruption schemes (e.g., manipulation and vote stealing) that invariably benefited the major parties (Coppedge 1993, 265; Coppedge 2003, 181-182). The silver lining – if any – was that electoral rules encouraged periodic and peaceful political competition between contrasting political alternatives (Myers 1973, 77-78). One of those was the 1978 presidential election, in which COPEI candidate Luis Herrera Campins was elected president with 46.6% of the vote (CNE [2000a]).

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16 This number was obtained by averaging the percentages obtained by the presidential candidates of both AD and COPEI in the 1973, 1978, and 1983 presidential elections as offered by the CNE (2000a). Though those candidates received votes from the registered members of minor parties, only the votes obtained under the AD and COPEI labels were counted.
A final but no less important factor underlying the Venezuelan partyarchy was oil profits; although government deposits and borrowing from banks provided assets (Hellinger 2006, 480), the oil industry provided most of the funds used by the major parties (Kornblith & Levine 1995, Myers & Martz 1997). This phase of the Punto Fijo party system was also characterized by a closer connection between the “adecopeyano establishment” and oil interests, which was defined by two aspects: 1. Oil profits made the Venezuelan government wealthy enough to afford many domestic interests (Myers & Martz 1997), and 2. The oil industry was nationalized in 1976 with the creation of Petróleos de Venezuela, Sociedad Anónima (PDVSA) (Boudin, González & Rumbos 2006, 111; Hellinger 2006, 479). In all, the effects of oil profits were twofold: shoring up party constituencies through patronage\(^{17}\), and revenues to sustain increased social spending (particularly under Carlos Andrés Pérez in the 1970s) (Hellinger 2006). In both cases, the result was the same: a secured source of voter support. Moreover, AD and COPEI had virtually no differences regarding oil policy (Ellner 1984).

Partyarchy not only had implications for the exchanges between major and minor parties, but between AD and COPEI: between 1967 and 1971 there were less instances of severe party friction than during a period spanning from 1976 to 1980. The second period is characterized by the rise within both parties of leaders that advocated for more ideological differentiation (Pérez in AD and Luis Herrera Campins in COPEI), but its only instances were only found in conflicts for patronage because the more substantive differences that characterized both parties in their early years were already gone. (Ellner

\(^{17}\) Roberts (2003) believes that the ties between the major parties and their constituencies were indeed more corporatist than purely clientelistic.
There was also a *quid pro quo* relationship between the two major parties at this point: AD ignored COPEI’s use of the national bureaucracy for the latter’s benefit, and COPEI in return permitted AD to keep its own bureaucratic encroachments (Myers 1998, 506).


Partyarchy also presented a series of serious problems that were left mostly unattended. First, the blurring of ideological distinctions between AD and COPEI left voters without real political choices. Second, politicians, bureaucrats, and businessmen connected to both parties tapped from the country’s monetary assets in corruption schemes that often went unnoticed thanks to a climate of impunity fostered by consensus-seeking, encouraged by an equally corrupt and powerless judicial system. Third, the ever-presressing control of political polarization corporatized civil society into AD and COPEI, depriving the former of its independence. Even so, none of the parties made an honest effort to incorporate other social sectors, particularly the poor and informal workers. Fourth, strong party discipline stifled the open discussion of new initiatives within the major parties and fatally undermined horizontal accountability. Finally, on top of the fact that voters saw traditional parties as too concerned with electoral motivations, the electoral system reinforced a dynamic of exclusion in which the control over candidate selection by the national leaderships of AD and COPEI and the exorbitant costs of political campaigning (as well as party discipline) alienated party constituencies and contributed to “the oligopolization of the political game,” causing an increase in voter...

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18 See also Coppedge 1994a, 45-46; 2003, 172; Myers & O’Connor 1998; Sonntag 2001, 149-150; Myers 1998, 507; and Roberts 2003

At the same time, decreases in oil and per capita income and the Latin American debt crisis of 1982 derailed economic development. Although the debt crisis did not quickly, it forced Herrera Campins to deplete PDVSA savings and enact neoliberal economic reform – mainly, the devaluation the national currency (a decision known popularly as “viernes negro” or “Black Friday”), and cuts in government spending. Neoliberal reforms were not popular in Venezuela19, but they initiated a reversal from prior developmentalist policies and cost the presidency to COPEI. AD candidate Jaime Lusinchi was elected president in 1983 with 56.7% of the vote (CNE 2000a) under the popular expectation that a change in government would alleviate the crisis, but foreign debt kept increasing, inflation also spiked, and there was also a balance of payments deficit (Myers 1998, 507-508, Coppege 2005, 314; Hellinger 2006; Lander 2007, 22).

Carlos Andrés Pérez, who governed Venezuela during the height of the 1970s oil boom, was elected for a second term in 1988 with 52.8% of the vote, but the crisis worsened even more. In what has been regarded elsewhere as the implementation in earnest of structural adjustment (Tanaka 2006, 57), he enacted an IMF-sponsored austerity program that required the reduction of import taxes and tariffs, another currency devaluation, more spending cuts, privatizations, and incentives for foreign investment. The public perceived austerity as unnecessary and reacted swiftly: on February 27, 1989, Caracas and other major cities saw the most violent popular riots in 30 years (the “caracazo”), which were violently contained by the military at the cost of 300 dead.

19 Popular support for neoliberal reform was small in part because the state was not entirely willing to relinquish control of its heavy industries, the banks depended on transactions with the government, and speculation was too lucrative for wealthy Venezuelans to dispense with (Hellinger 2006, 480).
Perez’s policies managed to spark a spectacular economic recovery, but opposition was so unshakable that some 5,000 protests would be held in the next three years. Pérez became isolated from the mass public and even AD (its bureaucracy resented being left out of government decisions) (Kornblith & Levine 1995; Tanaka 2006, 58-59).

Economic slowdown had two other repercussions. First, societal division became wider and deeper: in conjunction with rising poverty and a broadening income gap, exclusion and segregation became more commonplace, resulting in both the decay of social institutions and in the creation of a culture based on illegality and even violence. Second, it affected PDVSA, which always saw itself as a meritocratic organization within a heavily corrupt government\textsuperscript{20}. By 1981, the Venezuelan government earned 71 cents for every dollar in profits generated by PDVSA; but by 1983, it started to invest profits in overseas ventures rather than transfer them to the government. That undercut in the sources of patronage for both AD and COPEI, but it also deepened the economic crisis. What combined social decay and the actions of PDVSA into an explosive situation was that Venezuelans were accustomed to the standards of living created by economic growth and modernization (Lander 2007, 22-23) and that in the midst of all that AD and COPEI entrenched into their practices and stubborn belief that their leaders were infallible (Coppedge 2005, 313; Mayorga 2006, 140). The parties also had the support of the professional class and labor unions (Myers & Martz 1997; Morgan 2007, 95), but that would eventually decrease.

It was at this time when voters started to realign. Some gave support to parties created within the system such as left-wing La Causa Radical (LCR), created by former\textsuperscript{20} Boudin, González & Rumbos nevertheless argue that PDVSA always worked without any accountability to the state (2006, 111).
left-wing guerrillas as a vehicle for the mobilization of industrial workers and the urban poor. Others joined personalistic political parties (Hellinger 2006, 478; Economist Intelligence Unit 2007; Corrales 2001; Coppedge 1994a; Coppedge 2005, 313; Kornblith 2004, 135; Roberts 2003, 48-51). A few began talking about a “democracy of citizens” that would substitute for the illegitimate “democracy of parties” (Lander 2007, 24). Others who were committed democrats started to think that an occasional coup was a good idea for the mitigation of political problems (Myers & O’Connor 1998). Electoral abstention also rose considerably – only 3.5% abstained to vote in 1973; but 12% abstained in 1978 and 1983, and 18% did so in 1988 (Coppedge 2003, 174; CNE [2000a]). Whatever the form dealignment took, it became obvious that voters broke their ties with the major parties.

This is not to say that there were no attempts to address existing flaws: in 1984, president Lusinchi established the Presidential Commission for State Reform (Comisión Presidencial para la Reforma del Estado, COPRE), which purported to major changes in political institutions (Kornblith & Levine 1995, 61; Tanaka 2006, 57; Lander 2007, 25). Yet it would not be until the run-up to the 1988 election – when AD and COPEI presidential candidates included the issue in their campaigns – that both parties gave the idea of party reform any real consideration; nevertheless, there was no real commitment

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21 The anti-systemic challengers to Venezuela’s partyarchy can also be seen from a larger standpoint: neopopulism in the Andean region. Though it has been given more-or-less different definitions (e.g. Weyland 2004, Duarte Villa 2005), its appearance in Venezuela has been explained through structural weaknesses within national political classes. In the case of Venezuela, AD and COPEI “were not capable of fulfilling the promises of democracy […] that would effectively concretize in the creation of a welfare state” or of providing meaningful solutions to what motivated existing feelings of rejection (Duarte Villa 2005, 147).” I believe that this is another way to explain Coppedge’s “moral outrage.”

22 My translation.
or willingness to engage in it (Ellner 1996; Mayorga 2006, 145). By June 1992, the most crucial of COPRE’s recommendations (internal elections or primaries and their supervision by external bodies, the reduction and public reporting of party spending, limits on campaign finance, and referenda at the state and local levels) were not implemented (Coppedge 1994b, 165, table 7.1).

A second and more willingly implemented set of recommendations resulted in the enactment in 1989 of popular elections for state governors and mayors (Tanaka 2006, 57; Molina & Pérez 1998, 18). Minor parties saw a chance – between 1989 and 1995, MAS won all the gubernatorial elections of Aragua state and successfully contested AD and COPEI in other states (CNE [2000b]), bringing its total number of elected governors to 10 (2 in 1989, 4 in 1992, and another 4 in 1995) (Tanaka 2006, 62, table 2.6). Also, LCR won three gubernatorial elections, and one independent candidate was elected (Ibid). Still, the adecopeyano oligopoly was only broken partially: during the same period, COPEI won all the gubernatorial elections in the states of Miranda and Falcón; AD dominated in Apure, Monagas, Táchira, and Trujillo; and both parties won the most state elections – 31 for AD and 18 for COPEI (CNE [2000b], [2004]; Tanaka 2006, 62, table 2.6). Furthermore, intraparty divisions worsened (Tanaka 2006, 57), and some municipal elections were held a second time after substantiated allegations of fraud (Coppedge 2003, 181-182).

No measure of reform seemed to reverse the opinion of many voters that AD and COPEI became unrepresentative and untrustworthy (Coppedge 2005, 291; Sonntag 2001).

23 Ironically, Pérez tried to modernize AD under a new political base assembled through his charismatic qualities (Tanaka 2006, 58).

24 At voting stations, the major parties divided all the votes cast for the minor parties amongst themselves, but there were no known cases of fraud before the 1988 presidential elections (Coppedge 2003, 181).
160). COPRE did provide an opening, but the seeds of mistrust were sown too deep for reforms to make any transcendental impact; in that latter sense, the reforms did not address the deeper issues related to the crisis of representation (Lander 2007, 24). Rising discontent reached the highest point yet in 1992, when President Pérez was the target of two separate military coups. The first coup, carried out unsuccessfully on February 4, was led by army lieutenant colonel Hugo Chávez and his Movimiento Revolucionario Bolivariano 200 (MBR-200)\textsuperscript{25}, followed by uprisings in three other major cities. The second coup, executed on November 27, had no central figures and was not as popular as Chávez’s, but it equally undermined the legitimacy of the government (Kornblith & Levine 1995).

The long-standing issue of corruption only worsened the situation, as \textit{adecopeyano} politicians took advantage of oil profits for their personal benefit. Ongoing media reports even connected Pérez (as well as Lusinchi, his predecessor) with such practices\textsuperscript{26}, and for that reason Pérez was forced to resign and impeached in 1993 (Kornblith & Levine 1995; Coppedge 1994a; Coppedge 2003; Myers & O’Connor 1998; Duarte Villa 2005; Myers 1998, 510; Boudin, González & Rumbos 2006, xviii-xix; Dietz & Myers 2003, 7). Venezuelans were now – in the words of Coppedge (2005) – morally outraged and yearning for “throwing the bums out” because they blamed the “\textit{adecopeyano} establishment” for plundering oil profits (Coppedge 2003, 173) and mismanaging the economy\textsuperscript{27}. Furthermore, a survey made in May 1992 revealed that

\textsuperscript{25} MBR-200 was created within the Venezuelan military (Sonntag 2001) and had a strong foundation on the political ideas of Venezuela’s national hero, Simón Bolívar; hence the name.
\textsuperscript{26} Tanaka argues that this accusation was dubious and that it is connected with the desire within AD to oust Pérez from the government (2006, 59).
\textsuperscript{27} Coppedge (2003) mentions that there were events outside of Venezuela’s control, such as the external causes of the 1982 foreign debt crisis and a decrease in oil prices that suddenly diminished windfall profits spent in \textit{adecopeyano} policies. Nevertheless, he also points out that blunders in economic management
26% were still supporting AD, 24% supported COPEI, and 38% had no party affiliation. Amongst 404 upper and middle class respondents, the numbers were 26%, 27%, and 34%, respectively. Within 996 workers and poor surveyed, the numbers were 27%, 23%, and 40%, respectively (Myers 1998, 512). In comparison, Chávez’s February 1992 coup received the support of between 26 to 32% of Venezuelans (Coppedge 1994a) – not massive, but considerable.

The presidential election of 1993 thus became a life-or-death issue for both AD and COPEI, which now saw their political dominance in real danger. Besides the enacted reforms, the two parties (along with MAS) took internal decentralization more seriously than before. AD and COPEI also rejuvenated their top leadership; their presidential candidates were upstarts Claudio Fermín (AD) and Oswaldo Alvarez Paz (COPEI) – both of them advocates of political openness and economic liberalism with considerable grassroots support28. Yet they were not as idolized as ex-president Rafael Caldera, who by the time of Chávez’s coup broke with – and was expelled from – COPEI and publicly decried the “adecopeyano establishment.” With the support of MAS and other parties, Caldera formed Convergencia Nacional (CN) and ran for president, winning with 30% of the total vote (though 40% abstained). Although AD and COPEI reclaimed their dominance in the national legislature, the “adecopeyano establishment” was severely damaged: Caldera and LCR candidate Andrés Velázquez gathered more than half of the presidential vote to the 47% captured by Fermín and Alvarez Paz. Both adecopeyano candidates and their supporters were eventually marginalized, and Fermín was expelled.

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worsened the problem. In short, what happened was not a case of economic breakdown undermining the Venezuelan democratic regime generally, but popular understanding.

28 Tanaka argues that both Fermín and Alvarez Paz represented the push within their parties for decentralization, which was nevertheless a source of more internecine struggles (2006, 60).
from AD (Coppedge 1994a, 52-53; Coppedge 2003, 174; Coppedge 2005, 315; Sonntag 2001, 151; CNE [2000a]). It was likely that the Venezuelan party system changed from two-party to multiparty rather than collapsing (Tanaka 2006), but in reality the situation was much different.

One of Caldera’s trump cards was spearheading the complete renovation of the CSE, renamed Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE) and staffed from then on with non-partisan civilian employees; but he also slowed down the pace of party democratization – not because he opposed it, but because he saw it as an outlet for destabilizing positions (Ellner 1996, 91). Caldera first departed from neoliberal economic reform, but his policies to ameliorate the continuing crisis were erratic. In time, he grudgingly and haltingly implemented structural adjustment policies that caused economic stagnation. The GDP increased in 1997, but after a drop in oil prices and a new economic crisis Caldera lost most of his support (Weyland 2003, 827-828). Policy failures also affected MAS (which was part of the government coalition) at the same time LCR saw a challenge to Andrés Velázquez’s leadership by a group that eventually left the party in April 1997 and formed Patria Para Todos (PPT) (Tanaka 2006, 61).

Meanwhile, Hugo Chávez made a transition from coup leader to political leader, after being encouraged to embrace electoral politics by long-time leftist leader José Vicente Rangel (The Economist, 1/11/07). Ironically, Chávez always had a deep mistrust for political parties since his 1992 coup, when leftist parties failed to organize a general strike to support it (Economist Intelligence Unit 2007); and he even considered them as corrupt and pernicious institutions (Mayorga 2006, 135). Still, after being pardoned by President Caldera in 1996, he decided to run for president under his own party:
Movimiento Quinta República (MVR). MVR originated in 1994 as the electoral arm of MBR-200 (the military faction behind the 1992 coup) and won the support of a number of left-wing parties thanks to the efforts of Chávez’s brother and leftist activist Adán (Economist Intelligence Unit 2007). Eventually, what became MVR was created without any knowledge by the government because it was deemed it too unimportant to warrant close scrutiny. In more general terms, MVR’s ideology is based in the premises of pan-Latin American nationalism, republicanism, a centralized state, a full-fledged political revolution, and the possibility of a dictatorship when circumstances deemed necessary. In terms of policy goals, it proposed economic independence, equitable distribution of wealth, an assertiveness of national sovereignty, and the creation of a multipolar world system that could counter the influence of the United States (Boudin, González & Rumbos 2006, 8). True to Chávez’s real opinion of political parties and party systems, MVR was on an abstentionist stance until 1997 (Tanaka 2006, 62-63).

MVR had its electoral baptism by fire in the presidential election of 1998, the first to be held under the new Organic Law for Suffrage and Political Participation (Ley Orgánica del Sufragio y la Participación Política, LOSPP); enacted in 1997, LOSPP prescribed the automatization of the electoral system, the depolitization of the electoral process, absentee balloting for Venezuelans living abroad, and referendums for crucial national issues. Chávez had considerable popularity at first, but the front-runner was Irene Sáez Conde, a former beauty queen and a non-adecopeyano mayor. However, the failure of Caldera’s economic policies and his enactment of budget cuts – among other

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29 Chávez was prohibited by law to use Simón Bolívar’s name for partisan purposes (Hellinger 2006, 482); however, the name was well suited for its foundational political ideas. MVR claimed to work for the establishment of a “Fifth Republic” (hence the inclusion of Roman numeral for five, V) that would follow a historical pattern set in 1811, after Venezuela's declaration of independence from Spain (Boudin, González & Rumbos 2006, 35).
issues – contributed to increase voter support for Chávez. AD and COPEI were weaker than ever: lacking strong candidates of their own, they gave their support to Henrique Salas Römer, the presidential candidate of Proyecto Venezuela (PV). LCR participated as well but was weakened by its prior internal disputes, and MAS was also internally divided at one point. The final results were significant: although AD and COPEI retained their legislative dominance and won the most states races in local elections held before the presidential vote, Chávez clearly outdistanced Salas Römer by obtaining more than half of the total vote running for a coalition known as Polo Patriótico (MVR, PCV, PPT, MAS, and other minor parties). Electoral abstention was of 36% (Tanaka 2006, 61; Hellinger 2006, 485-486; Kornblith 2004, 120; Coppedge 2003; Coppedge 2005, 315; Sonntag 2001, 152; CNE [2000d]).

In the end, the adecopewayano political class took the lessons of trienio adecop politics too much to heart; the political agreements that anchored puntofijismo – including those that governed party interactions – did not accommodate for a much modern society and became too inflexible (McCoy 1999, 75). The result was that by 1995 the “adecopewayano establishment” had transformed into “a pale copy of post-1973 two-party domination in which each major actor attracted diverse social support (Myers 1998, 496).” Even more importantly, Venezuelan voters felt that AD and COPEI violated popular trust and in response withdrew support to them; widespread dissatisfaction with the flagship parties of puntofijismo fragmented the party system, minimized party ideology, dispersed party strength, redefined party interactions, and became a blank check for MVR.
Under a new establishment: The current Venezuelan party system

There was no possibility of a political understanding between the “adecopeyano establishment” and MVR as there was between AD and COPEI in 1958. On the one hand, Chávez was intent on taking political power away from both parties, which were widely blamed for the ongoing economic crisis (Coppedge 2003, 175). A part of his intentions was that although Chávez demonstrated an initial willingness to play by democratic rules he also claimed to have legitimacy from sheer charisma (Mayorga 2006, 138). On the other hand, though their combined legislative bloc tried at first to avoid direct confrontations and they were seriously divided internally, AD and COPEI were also unwilling to acquiesce to the presidential agenda.

Chávez requested emergency powers for enacting economic measures soon after he took office but the legislature refused, setting the stage for a clash that AD and COPEI were nevertheless not even prepared to fight (Coppedge 2003; The Economist 4/17/99, 39). Legislative rejection of Chávez’s request only served to further encourage his desire for political transformation, as he called in April 1999 for a two-part referendum that would create the National Constitutional Assembly (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, ANC) (The Economist 4/17/99, 39). Although Chávez unilaterally determined the rules of the referendum (ignoring the input of a special panel on the subject) and participation was of only 32%, the proposals won with 85% of the votes cast and MVR won the majority of seats when they were open for election in the following July. Added to the seats

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30 The vote in this referendum was on two separate but related proposals: the permission to summon the National Constituent Assembly, and the creation of electoral procedures for the election of its members (Coppedge 2003:167).
31 The exact numbers (which were averaged) were 87.8% for question one with 33% abstention, and 81.7% for question two with 30.8% abstention. Venezuela’s National Electoral Council calculated abstention at 37.7% (CNE [2000]).
obtained by MVR allies (19 earned by MAS, 5 obtained by PCV, and 9 taken by PPT), the Polo Patriótico coalition won 122 of the 131 seats open for election. The rules for that second election permitted candidates to run under one of many different labels (party tickets, social movements, or as independents) and enabled voters to cast as many votes as there were contested seats per district, but their most decisive effect was that they openly benefited Polo Patriótico and undermined adecopeyano candidates, who had to run as independents and were able to get only 4.7% of the seats and 34.5% of the total vote. The new constitution was ratified in December 1999 by 72% of the total vote, although it only represented 30% of the registry (Coppedge 2003).

The 1999 Constitution became the institutional death nail for puntofijismo. The national legislature (renamed National Assembly) retained PR rules and seat thresholds, but it was made unicameral. All territorial entities were given the right to elect three deputies each with their alternates, all of them serving five-year terms with the opportunity to be re-elected for two additional terms (Arts. 186 and 192). The president would now be elected for a period of six years with the chance for immediate reelection for an additional term (Art. 230); and could also change the composition and functions of all ministries, dissolve the National Assembly, propose bills, and call for referenda – all that in addition to the traditional prerogatives of office (Arts. 204 and 236). The constitution also created the office of vice-president and defined it as a close collaborator of the president; it would be subject to the latter’s power of dismissal, but had the power to propose the removal of ministers (Arts. 236, 238 and 239)\(^\text{32}\).

Although the Law of Political Parties, Public Meetings, and Demonstrations of 1964 was not repealed, Article 67 of the constitution recognized the freedom of association of citizens into “political groups” (agrupaciones con fines politicos) barred from state funding and compelled to adopt democratic methods of direction and organization, including the celebration of internal elections for leadership positions. Vote continued to be universal, secret, direct, mandatory, and granted to both citizens of at least 18 years of age and naturalized aliens; but voters were also given the power to demand accountability from elected officials (Arts. 62-64 and 66). Finally, indigenous peoples were enfranchised and given the opportunity to run for public office under what was contained in a transitory constitutional disposition that became part of the electoral statutes by 2000, by which the National Assembly would have three indigenous deputies and states with indigenous population would have representation from ethnic communities in their local assemblies (Kornblith 2004, 134).

The electoral system would still be supervised by the CNE, now composed of five persons not linked to political parties – three from the civil society, one from law schools or political science departments, and another from the Citizen Power (Poder Ciudadano) – appointed by two thirds of the legislature for seven year terms. Appointments can be terminated by the legislative branch with prior notification from the Venezuelan Supreme Court, and are made separately: the civil society representatives are

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33 Ibid.
34 Miriam Kornblith (2004, 134) argues that Chávez had it approved out of pragmatic purposes, and that the agenda itself does not include substantive reforms.
35 Under Article 136, the Citizen Power is incorporated as a part of the overall government structure and shares the same status of the traditional branches of government as part of the larger National Power (Poder Nacional), itself a subdivision of the Public Power (Poder Publico). Under articles 273-279, it has the obligation to prevent and prosecute violations of public and administrative ethics, and is composed of the offices of the Public Defender (Defensor del Pueblo), the General Prosecutor (Fiscal General), and the General Comptroller (Contralor General).
chosen at the start of each legislative period, and the others at its midpoint. The representatives from the civil society can have six alternates, and the others can be substituted when necessary by two each (Arts. 292-296). In theory, those mechanisms were intended to make the electoral system much more accountable than under _puntofijismo_, but the new constitution also placed the CNE in the same level as the traditional branches of government (Molina & Pérez 2004, 108) and, in practice, was subject to the intervention of Chávez. One such instance occurred in January 2000, when more than 100 electoral officials were dismissed because of their membership in non-MVR parties. Another instance happened in the following February, when the board was reshuffled out of rumors that one of its members supported a political opponent (Coppedge 2003). LOSPP, which was left untouched, mandated that 30% of all national and local candidacies had to be given to women, but that disposition was not willingly enforced (Kornblith 2004, 134).

The first elections under the new electoral and political systems – known popularly as “mega-elections” because all elected offices were contested in one day – were scheduled for May 28, 2000, but the event had to be postponed until July 30 because the CNE was unprepared. AD, and COPEI presented no presidential candidates of their own but ran rather personalistic local campaigns in an attempt to distance themselves from the disgraced _puntofijismo_. Both parties (as well as CN and PV) managed to win a number of states, but Chávez easily won the presidency with almost 60% of the vote (Coppedge 2003; CNE [2000a]; CNE [2000b]; Molina & Pérez 2004, 111-113) in what was an indication of negative party identification and a favorable opinion of his first presidency from all social sectors (Molina & Pérez 2004). In fact,
whereas in 1973 45.9% of voters said to align with AD, COPEI or even MAS, only a staggering 10.8% were still part of either party by the time of the “mega-elections” (Kornblith 2004, 114, table 2). Other post-electoral analyses were less conciliatory: the electoral system was manipulated due to a lack of institutionalization caused in turn by an overlapping of rules from the prior political system with those enacted after 1999, while the combined majority-PR rules for the legislative elections served to reduce the legislative representation of AD, COPEI, and other parties and to augment the MVR bloc (Kornblith 2004).

Between 2001 and 2005, AD and COPEI were at their weakest yet vis a vis Chávez and MVR. AD and COPEI joined forces with other partisan and non-partisan organizations and formed Coordinadora Democrática (CD) in 2001, but although the coalition was already affected by fragmentation the discredit of both parties spilled over to non-partisan opposition groups and compromised them. Also, AD (which had 23 legislative seats at this time), COPEI, and other opposition parties decided not to participate in the legislative elections of 2005 out of concerns with an allegedly faulty voting system, unwilling as well to take part in an election organized by the CNE. The electoral boycott was a boon for MVR and its allies, which won all the contested seats. (The Economist 12/1/05; Hellinger 2006, 486-487; The Economist 7/16/05, 35; The Economist 12/9/05; Economist Intelligence Unit 2007; Boudin, González & Rumbos 2006, 58; Hellinger 2006, 486-487). All along, Chávez faced a coup in April 2002, a general strike in PDVSA the following December, and a recall election in 2004, all concocted by the opposition. Yet he survived all those challenges and, in the process,
consolidated his power and popular support (Hellinger 2006, Coppedge 2005, 292-293; *The Economist* 1/1/03, 27-28; *The Economist* 9/13/03, 34; CNE [2004]).

However, MVR was shaken by three splits caused by its own internal fragmentation, itself a by-product of a sharp increase in membership after the 1998 election. The first split occurred in February 2000, when three party notables (all part of the February 1992 coup) defected after making public their disagreements with Chávez. One of them, Francisco Arias Cárdenas, campaigned for president in the “mega-elections” as the candidate of a coalition composed of LCR and a number of smaller parties, receiving the support of fellow dissidents Joel Acosta Chirinos and Jesús Urdaneta (Coppedge 2003, 183; Molina & Pérez 2004, 112). The second split involved MAS, which was never given cabinet posts after Chávez’s 1998 victory and became increasingly critical of his intransigence with the opposition; as a result, MAS was separated from Polo Patriótico in May 2001. Some *chavista* stalwarts nevertheless forced the division of MAS in 2002 and created Podemos (Economist Intelligence Unit 2007). MVR leader Luis Miquilena – the target of an accusation of corruption by Acosta Chirinos during the 2000 feud – had the central role in the third split, which resulted in the former’s exit from the coalition and the formation of Solidaridad, which eventually allied itself with the opposition (Ibid).

Adding to the internal fragmentation of MVR was its organizational weakness and ideological hollowness. Rather than consolidating a single organization, the party saw the creation of smaller groups with the likely acquiescence of the top leadership, including a reincarnated MBR-200 and some armed bands (*coordinaadoras*). Furthermore, unlike AD and COPEI in their prime, MVR did not build any links with
society, leaving that task to independent groups of supporters known as Bolivarian Circles (*Círculos Bolivarianos*). Organizational weakness had an effect on mobilization: after the 2005 legislative election, even Chávez himself believed that he was not able to mobilize all his supporters. In fact, the number of actual voters in that election was very low – 25% according to the CNE, or 20% according to the opposition (Coppedge 2003, 183; *The Economist*, 12/8/05; Economist Intelligence Unit 2007). In ideological terms, MVR was not sustained by a coherent political ideology notwithstanding its basis on the political ideas of MBR-200. Instead, party ideology was dependent on three aspects: the personal charisma of Chávez, the armed forces, and oil profits (Economist Intelligence Unit 2007).

Chávez also found an enemy in PDVSA. During the 1990s, as part of its strategy of transferring profits away from the government, the company commandeered the powers of the Ministry of Mines and Energy (the government agency that has active ownership over it) and offered contract proposals to prospective partners. The government was now earning only 39 cents for every dollar in oil profits by 2000 (Boudin, González & Rumbos 2006, 111), but PDVSA accumulated $10 million in debt by the time Chávez took office. Chávez nevertheless accused PDVSA of selling off national patrimony for the sake of economic privileges, ordering its foreign affiliates to pay dividends to the company and, when its leadership opposed, had it replaced. Venezuela’s oil barons never forgave him and played an active part in the failed coup and general strike of 2002 (Hellinger 2006; Boudin, González & Rumbos 2006, 111-112), but from then on Chávez’s control of PDVSA was complete. Still, oil profits were utilized from the very beginning to fund Chávez’s ambitious but expensive social programs for
the poor (“missions” or misiones) (*The Economist*, 3/13/04; *The Economist*, 12/9/05; *The Economist*, 11/29/07). Although that might be different from how oil profits were disbursed during *puntofijismo*, it did have the same effect – attitudinal support for MVR, *chavismo*, and Chávez himself (*The Economist*, 3/13/04). However, some things did not necessarily change with MVR’s victory – increasing oil profits (as well as corruption) have uncovered new sources of wealth for bankers, intermediaries, and individuals with connections to the government (i.e., the “Boligarchy”), widening the income gap between 2000 and 2005 (*The Economist*, 8/9/07)

The opposition, made significant gestures towards unification just in time for the December 2006 presidential elections thanks to Manuel Rosales. A former member of AD, Rosales was elected governor of Zulia state in the 2000 “mega-elections” as the candidate of his own political party – Un Nuevo Tiempo Contigo (UNTC) (CNE [2000b]; *El Universal*, 8/8/06) – and developed a broad power base. (*The Economist*, 11/9/06; CNE 2006). AD decided not to participate in that election as a protest against Chávez, but more precisely to show their displeasure with an electoral event they considered fraudulent from the outset.

Still, Rosales’s campaign focused on some of Venezuela’s current problems – crime, unemployment, and housing shortages – and even promised the redistribution of 20% of oil profits to the country’s poorest sectors (a proposal that capitalized on the popular opposition to Chávez’s handouts to other countries). Chávez was on the defensive (*The Economist*, 11/9/06) for the first time ever, but won the election with 63% of the vote. Rosales (who ostensibly could not capitalize

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36 Curiously, Latinobarómetro 2005 found that only 21% of Venezuelans knew of repeated cases where individuals received privileges for being associated with the ruling party.

entirely on the country’s current problems [The Economist, 12/1/06]) gathered 37%. Electoral abstention decreased to 25% – a much lower percentage than in the 2000 “mega-elections,” but still considerable (CNE 2006).

Taking advantage of the absolute majority he obtained in the presidential election, Chávez chose to co-opt all the parties that composed the Polo Patriótico into the Partido Socialista Unificado de Venezuela (PSUV), created with the intention of setting in motion the political agenda for the “21st century socialism” (Economist Intelligence Unit 2007) – primarily, the transformation of the economy on socialist and “humanist” lines (e.g. the nationalization of “strategic” sectors, and more restrictions on private enterprise), and political changes said to further empower citizens (The Economist, 1/10/07; The Economist, 11/29/07). The decision galvanized the divisions within chavismo, as Chávez’s staunch supporters – particularly MVR – agreed to the directive while other parties (Podemos, PCV, and PPT) were skeptical (The Economist, 3/8/07). The proposal of constitutional amendments that would expedite “21st century socialism,” chiefly among those the augmentation of presidential authority, intensified those divisions by distancing Podemos from the chavista camp (The Economist, 11/15/07), even though the group insisted that it still supported the government (The Economist, 11/1/07). The amendments – presented in two blocs – were rejected in a referendum held in December 2007 50.7% to 49.2% and 51% to 48.9% (CNE 2007), forcing Chávez to recognize that some three million Venezuelans who voted for him in 2006 did not participate in the referendum (The Economist, 12/4/07)38. While civil society organizations were the most visible, the existing parties took sides in the referendum

38 The exact figures in relation to the total voter registry put abstention at some 7 million voters (44.1%) (El Universal, 12/3/07).
campaign – AD, COPEI, MAS, UNT, Podemos, and other parties actively participated in
the referendum as proponents of the “no” option (El Universal, 11/28/07; El Universal,
12/1/07; El Universal, 11/5/07; The Economist, 12/4/07); while PCV and PPT
campaigned for the “yes” option (El Universal, 11/20/07) despite their prior skepticism
about joining PSUV.

The aftermath of the referendum became the starting point for preparations
towards the local and state elections of November 2008. The first move was made by
opposition parties: an agreement was reached last January by nine opposition parties –
including AD, COPEI, LCR, UNTC, MAS, and PV – by which they would present
unified candidacies39. A second step towards unity was proposed by COPEI last May in
the form of a national agreement based on eight points: autonomy for Venezuelan
states40, anti-crime policies, the alleviation of poverty, the protection of private property,
the purging of all ideological premises from the education system, an inclusive social
security system, the eradication of political corruption, and the continued rejection of the
constitutional reforms proposed in the referendum41. While unification was hailed as a
positive step by all parties, there were concerns regarding lingering disagreements42 that

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39 COPEI Partido Popular, “Organizaciones políticas acordaron unidad nacional
(http://copeipartidopopular.blogspot.com/2008/01/organizaciones-politicas-acordaron.html).”
40 Zulia state became a proponent of regional autonomy from the Venezuelan state. From the standpoint
of the opposition, it is a reminder that the Venezuelan constitution recognizes the federal character of the
country (COPEI Partido Popular, “COPEI propone acuerdo nacional para salvar a Venezuela
(http://www.partidocopei.org.ve/web/xnews.php?newsid=41),” although it must be remembered that this
state is also an opposition stronghold. On the other hand, Chávez and his supporters have branded the pro-
autonomy movement as secessionist (“Elecciones internas del PSUV serán el primero de junio.” Cadena
41 COPEI Partido Popular, “COPEI propone acuerdo nacional para salvar a Venezuela
(http://www.partidocopei.org.ve/web/xnews.php?newsid=41).”
42 Ibid., “Léster Rodríguez invitó a deponer actitudes partidistas y respetar el acuerdo unitario
slowed the pace of candidate selection; in fact, the allied parties imposed onto themselves the deadline of July 15 for completing the process of candidate selection, but they were able to do so for only nine states days before the date. In turn, PSUV held an event deemed unprecedented by Hugo Chávez himself: the celebration of primaries on June 1st; 14 candidates were automatically elected after obtaining the minimum 50-plus-1 percent of the vote, while other candidacies would be chosen by the party leadership because no contender reached that threshold. Some hailed the primaries as exemplary for domestic and global party politics, but there were allegations of fraud in the primaries held in Monagas state.

The last that can be said about Venezuelan party politics is that it is currently in a form of statis, as shown by the results of the local and state elections: with 65% of the voter registry participating, MVR / PSUV won the most races, but the opposition won 5 state governorships (including the two most populous, Miranda and Zulia) and the mayoralty of Caracas. The opposition claimed victory, but Chávez insisted that the returns were an exhortation to continue with his political project. On February 2009, Venezuelans voted in favor of a constitutional amendment that permitted the indefinite reelection of the president in what is considered by and large as the first step towards

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44 “Oposición tiene acuerdo en 9 estados y muchos líos en otros.” Cadena Global (July 12, 2008), http://www.cadenaglobal.com/herramientas/imprimir.asp?not=182602. This was the situation by the summer of 2008.
another presidential candidacy for Chávez in 2012. A number of opposition groups have seen these results in several ways: as a justification for creating a more unified anti-
chavista bloc, as an opportunity to broaden political support, or as an encouragement to re-engage with the political process. Still, what the current environment seems to show is that chavismo remains dominant but has lost momentum, while its opposition continues to be in a position of relative weakness and disarray despite important electoral gains.

Theory and evidence in the Venezuelan case

1. The party system of puntofijismo
   a. The antecedent condition

The self-interested motives of the parties that existed in 1958 (AD, COPEI, URD, and others) were still there when the party system of puntofijismo was established; after all, they were organizations that strived to maximize votes. There were also two other aspects that influenced heavily: existing ideas about democracy, and the experience of the trienio adecó. On the one hand, the individuals that established the 1958 party system were individuals who belonged to a generation of activists who opposed warlord rule during the 1920s and 1930s and were committed to procedural democracy. On the other, those same individuals suffered the consequences of the unrestrained polarization of the trienio adecó; while the main goal was not exactly to win the perks of office as opposed to establish a particular political agenda (given the socioeconomic background of post-warlord Venezuela), their competition for votes was excessively polarizing to the point of

creating instability, setting the stage for the dictatorship. Indeed, the purpose back then for AD and COPEI was to keep the nearest rival at bay; paraphrasing Facundo Galván (2006), this competition for power was along the lines of a political cleavage that was not just ideological, but also of intensity. Lack of political compromise was thus the main cause of the instability that preceded the military coup of 1948, and that was what the political class of the trienio learned.

By the time Pérez Jiménez was forced out of power, long-standing support for democracy and party politics combined with that lesson to create one crucial mind-set: if contingent consent and loyal opposition were not observed at first, Venezuelan political parties had to do so now at all costs. In other words, the quest for votes (utility maximization) had to occur within unavoidable limits set by democratic governability. That mind-set anchored the commitments to political consensus that governed all the interparty agreements of democratic transition, especially Punto Fijo; it resulted in a powerful influence over the rational motivations of parties (especially AD and COPEI) because they were intent on observing not only the norms of loyal opposition as defined by both Almond & Verba and Inglehart, but consensus-seeking.

That attitude in favor of a much less polarized political system was at its most visible in the exogenous variables of political culture and the state, which channeled the rational motivations of all parties (in the case of AD and COPEI, they were channeled into a virtually collegial structure). Insofar as the commitment to democracy was deeply embedded in both the political class and society at large, it became part of political culture; indeed, procedural democracy and the legitimacy of political parties were successfully instilled into the mass public during the first years of the 1958 party system.
That gave a context for all parties to maximize votes. Furthermore, that commitment to procedural democracy was deep enough to make military coups option less attractive precisely by making political parties the preferred vehicle for the expression of political interests (i.e., the rational motivations of voters). The most effective tool for reinforcing those beliefs was the Venezuelan state, particularly the electoral system; in that sense, the system was not only designed to promote partisanship, but to engineer competition to a point where it could push aside any possibility of polarization and make utility maximization much more restrained than before.

Political culture and state intervention via the electoral system became the main elements for party identification in the party system of *puntofijismo*; in other words, *citizens were encouraged to identify with a political party (preferably with either AD or COPEI) out of accepted political beliefs and structural incentives*. Venezuelans hence incorporated the notion of being active participants in decision-making processes and consequently adopted partisan identifications that were particularly strong thanks to the encouragement of partisanship by the electoral system. Partisanship (in Elazar’s sense) was indeed intense since voters were emotionally involved with electoral campaigns and party organizations, especially with AD and COPEI.

The pattern of competitive interactions resulting from the interaction of exogenous variables and the partisan self-interest became a reason for which *puntofijismo* was celebrated for. In terms of the number of parties, a political culture sympathetic to party organizations and low legal thresholds for the creation of political parties made it possible for a considerable number of them to appear. Yet thanks to another aspect of Venezuelan political culture – consensus-seeking – and to electoral rules party
competition also became an oligopoly sustained by AD and COPEI, notwithstanding subsequent reforms. In terms of party strength, AD and COPEI were the strongest parties in terms of votes, organization, and affective attachments, resulting in lopsided competition. Nevertheless, representational strength was irrelevant since there were no long-standing societal divisions that could be captured by party organizations. In that sense, the divisive atmosphere of the trienio adeco was transformed by the acceptance of procedural democracy and socioeconomic development, as Myers (1998) and Kornblith & Levine have concluded. That also connects with the aspect of party ideology: there were political parties that mobilized around sociological considerations and utilized their ideologies as tools in the competition for office (e.g., PCV, MAS, and LCR), but neither AD nor COPEI made a pragmatic use of ideology when competing against each other or other parties. Moreover, consensus-seeking resulted in the transformation of both parties into centrist organizations and, more importantly, made them very similar to each other. In turn, most of the other parties were “electoral phenomena” without any discernible ideology (e.g., CN and PV). In sum, paraphrasing Mair, the party system of 1958 displayed alternation in government between the highly familiar options of AD and COPEI, but both parties closed most access to it to the other components of the system.

b. Institutionalization and party system stability

The following percentages of positive and negative votes reveal important details that pertain directly to the institutionalization of the pattern of competitive interactions that characterized the 1958 party system:
Table 2.1: Positive vs. negative votes – Venezuelan presidential elections (1958-1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative (abstentions + null votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Positive vs. negative votes – Venezuelan legislative elections (1958-1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative (abstentions + null votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993 Senate</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993 Deputies</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998 Senate</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998 Deputies</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3: Positive vs. negative votes – Venezuelan municipal elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative (abstentions + null votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4: Positive vs. negative votes – Venezuelan state elections (1989-1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative (abstentions + null votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52 There were municipal elections in 1989, but the CNE did not calculate the absolute numbers of abstained voters, valid votes, null votes, and electoral population.
### Table 2.5: Positive vs. negative votes – Venezuelan mayoral elections (1989-1995)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative (abstentions + null votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Adapted from Kornblith & Levine (1995) and CNE ([2000c] and [2000d])

### Table 2.6: Positive vs. negative votes – Average for 1958 Venezuelan party system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative (abstentions + null votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayoral</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What these numbers show is that Venezuelans were indeed involved with elections and party politics, although there are many nuances to mention. One is that the highest percentage of positive votes can be found in presidential elections because they were given the most primacy by the electoral system. Another nuance is that voters cast less positive votes in state and mayoral elections. The effects of the electoral system could also be behind this situation, especially since the main cause for the high percentage of negative votes was abstention – as much as 5 million in all elections held (CNE [2000d]). The celebration of state and mayoral elections also coincided with the decadence of the party system, so it could be argued that electoral rules alone were not the main cause.

There was also a tendency towards a decrease in the percentage of positive votes in all elections since 1983, coinciding with the demise of the party system; however, it was not enough to decrease the percentage of positive votes below 50% for most elections. The events that occurred between 1983 and 1998 reduced the percentage of positive votes during puntofijismo to 60%, but it is still more than half of all voters. In all, though Mainwaring & Scully have argued that the party system of puntofijismo was fully...
institutionalized, the numbers actually indicate that **the party system was partially institutionalized**: on the one hand Venezuelans had an interest in party politics that signals a legitimacy given to parties and their roots in society, but on the other volatility increased at a critical point. The explanation for this level of institutionalization lies within partisan self-interest and the exogenous variables of state and political culture.

Concerning self-interest, AD and COPEI determined what was politically relevant through their shared policy agenda, as Maor’s (1997) view of Sartori would argue; and there were no “maverick issues” for a considerable time. This is tantamount to a sense of cooperation that Ware associates with party interactions; indeed, the two parties agreed not just to institutionalize procedural democracy, but to enact the same decisions regarding the oil industry and (until the 1980s) the same same developmentalist economic policies. Both parties still competed for votes, but within an atmosphere more conducive to stability than during the trienio. In short, **the collusion of AD and COPEI in policymaking was a conscious choice they made in the context of competition for votes.** Indeed, there was virtually no ideological or programmatic polarization between both parties. In turn, the self-interested motives of the other parties substantiates Bakke & Sitter – that is, **they institutionalized the party system by legitimizing party politics, encouraging the solidity of party organizations, and establishing links between the parties and society.** Nevertheless, Sartori’s (1969) assumption – i.e., parties operating independently from the external environment – is applicable in the party system of puntofijismo because the rational capabilities of the parties were not displayed independently of the external environment.
In the case of AD and COPEI, the fact that they shared an agenda was part and parcel of the mind-set that gave origin to the political principles of *puntofijismo*. Considered thus, both parties were not exactly “restricted protagonists” as Cruz would define them because they took the initiative in incorporating the trauma of the *trienio adeco* and Pérez Jiménez’s dictatorship as a starting point for creating those principles. Vote maximizing on the part of AD and COPEI was not related to substantive aspects as it was the case during the *trienio adeco*; rather, it was centered on control of the patronage machinery (as I will explain later). In the case of the other parties, many of them did not necessarily share the prevailing political agenda (MAS, LCR, and CN had evident programmatic and even doctrinarian disagreements with AD and COPEI) but still had to acquiesce to the structure in place. Regarding “maverick issues,” there was not an apparent weakening of AD and COPEI’s agenda-setting role that could result in the creation of new parties, but the demands they left unattended by both parties – if we consider them as “maverick issues” – were instrumental in the creation of CN and PV, which splintered from COPEI. Those issues, however, were also present in the creation of LCR and MVR, which were not splinter groups of either AD or COPEI.

Since political culture and the state sustained the mind-set that gave origin to *puntofijismo*, the institutionalization of the party system should be seen as dependent on those two factors as well. In the case of political culture, *citizens accepted party politics as part of acceptable and legitimate political behavior*. This acceptance manifested in part by the belief in democracy defined by participation in public affairs, which legitimizes political parties; in that sense, it is reasonable that attitudinal support for AD and COPEI was based on the understanding of party politics as a way to initiate
meaningful political change (which relates to Downs’s notion of why voters are self-interested political actors). At the same time, attitudinal support for both parties was also based on oil-based patronage\textsuperscript{53}; the utility being derived from the government was not just simple policymaking, but also part of the resources of the state. In general, the distribution of party goods – whether public, private, or club goods – results in an allegiance to particular parties that evolves into social linkages; while they extend beyond dependence on largesse, they also create expectations about the continued distribution of goods as a result of incumbency, reinforcing partisan loyalty (Calvo & Murillo 2005, 220-221). As far as the major parties are concerned, they had access to oil-based patronage (hence, it became a party good of sorts) and competed for votes for the purpose of seizing control of it, always respecting the rules of democratic governability (i.e., no polarization). In other words, oil-based patronage underscored identification with either AD or COPEI, and explains why adecopeyano partisanship was so intense, as well as why the percentage of positive votes between 1958 and 1998 is high.

Regarding political sub-cultures, the founding fathers of puntofijismo wanted to set up the party system partially on moralistic grounds; that is, it was supposed to reflect competition between different ideas of the good society. When consensus-seeking was added to those principles, there was a different type of sub-culture that resembled more closely the traditionalistic type because the disagreements between AD and COPEI were merely of degree. Politics during the first decades of puntofijismo were not really personalistic because party organizations still mattered, but political elites were self-perpetuating thanks to patronage. Personalistic politics made an appearance in the latter

\textsuperscript{53} Social policies such as those implemented by Carlos Andrés Pérez in his first presidential period – paid for by oil revenues – might have had a similar effect.
years of the system, but through some of the “electoral phenomena” (Rafael Caldera in CN and Henrique Salas Römer in PV). Any misgivings or opposition towards AD and COPEI at that time might have been eased with the dispensation of patronage, but their sources were being cut by a sagging economy.

State intervention institutionalized the party system by providing structural incentives for party interaction. More precisely, voters were compelled to identify with parties (preferably with AD and COPEI) by a state that reinforced the existing pattern. One way was through direct legislation, since the CNE provided partial funding to political parties (it might have also given AD and COPEI additional assets to dispense to their constituents and “ancillary” organizations in civil society). Yet the most significant example was the electoral system: it did not only facilitate incorporation and legitimized the political system (Kornblith & Levine 1995, 59), but also influenced the configuration of the party system. Shortly before Chávez’s election, the legislative district magnitudes were of 8.8 for the lower house and 2.0 for the higher house, with an average of 7.6 (Inter American Development Bank 1997, 127, table 2.1); as a result, the lower house had 5 absolute parties and 4.73 effective parties, and the government party had 0.24 legislative seats – the lowest in Latin America after Ecuador (0.23). Also, puntofijismo combined plurality and PR formulas, making Venezuela ostensibly a multiparty system and partially confirming Rae’s sixth and third differential propositions – PR systems are associated with fragmented party systems, and plurality rules create two-party systems. However, the tendency of PR systems to favor larger parties (Parrish, von Lazar & Tapia-Videla, 257) and existing rules for legislative elections had the long-term effect of reducing the aggregative effects of PR; indeed, the results of all legislative elections
between 1958 and 1998 show that AD and COPEI combined have elected the most legislators. It is hence a confirmation of Rae’s fourth similarity proposition (i.e., electoral laws will give no seats to small parties, particularly to those that finish last in an election).

With that, the electoral system consolidated partyarchy, confirming Müller’s argument connecting state action with the composition of party systems. Sartori’s (2001) first hypothesis – plurality systems will create two-party systems and PR when polarization is low – is confirmed by this case since the zeal to curb polarization that was transfigured by Punto Fijo facilitated the inception of adecopeyano two-partyism. Contrary to what Lijphart (1994) argues, there is a closer connection (or perhaps a causal relationship) between the electoral and party systems during puntofijismo. In all, the rules enforced by the electoral system – the ban on immediate presidential reelection, the absence of term limits for legislators, concurrent presidential and legislative elections, and PR – contributed to institutionalize the party system by inducing cooperation and reducing the stakes for political competition (Monaldi et. al. 2006, 12), except for patronage.

In sum, the party system of puntofijismo addressed the general concerns underlying institutionalization, and in a way it was successful. However, the picture is different if we employ Huntington’s criteria. Some aspects are positive; for instance, the system was adaptable in chronological terms because of the longevity of AD, COPEI, and most of the other parties. It was also generationally adaptable because at least AD and COPEI experienced changes in leadership. There was also coherence because party politics was widely accepted as the most legitimate way for deciding political
competition. It may be unlikely that parties other than AD and COPEI would have agreed to their role are “restricted protagonists,” but it is likely that all parties composing the 1958 party system understood that this coherence made competition much more predictable than before. In any case, none of those parties expressed reticence by boycotting elections altogether. MVR may be an exception: it remained on the sidelines for a time, but by 1998 it decided to become a part of the system (if only with the stated intention of undermining it).

However, what explains the collapse of the 1958 party system is that **it lacked autonomy, complexity and functional adaptability**. The electoral system did reduce the stakes of party competition and promote partisanship, but also created the conditions for low complexity because partisanship was restricted to two acceptable options – either AD or COPEI. Political culture sustained party politics, but some of its norms (i.e., consensus-seeking) became ends in themselves, undermining functional adaptability. Both situations also contributed to diminish institutional autonomy since the system became part and parcel of the narrower interests of the two major parties. Taken together, lack of autonomy, complexity, and functional adaptability explain why the percentage of positive votes in all elections (even in state and mayoral elections) decreased by 1998 from its highest levels in the 1960s and 1970s. In the final analysis, it was not that the electoral system and political culture destroyed the system from within, but that they were not made flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions, paraphrasing McCoy. The party system of *puntofijismo* was better institutionalized than its *trienio adeco* predecessor, but it was still not perfect.
2. The party system of *chavismo*

   a. The antecedent condition

   In the case of the current party system, the antecedent condition was set in motion by the popular reaction to the anomalies that were condoned by *puntofijismo* and by its relegation of certain critical issues; in a way, they became “maverick issues” insofar as the major parties had no serious intention of incorporating them. In that sense, party identification by 1998 involved political culture, the state, and cleavages. Pertaining to the state, its many units (especially the electoral system) represented a structure that operated for the self-interest of AD and COPEI and not for the self-interest of voters, particularly at a time when the economy was in crisis. Those disappointed voters, in turn, were compelled to take sides with parties such as CN and LCR in 1993 and MVR in 1998; in that sense, partisanship was open. Yet that displeasure was demonstrated through the existing electoral system; although Venezuelans rejected AD and COPEI, voter abstention did not rise to the point where citizens became not involved with elections anymore. AD and COPEI remained as the largest legislative blocs and retained most state governments in both the 1993 and 1998 elections, but the fact that they lost two consecutive presidential races is enough to suggest that the “*adecopeyano* establishment” was broken. In sum, *the control of the state by two political parties with decreasing credibility and an electoral system that already encouraged partisanship provided an incentive for voters to identify with – and switch their vote to – other parties.*

   Why Venezuelans expressed their discontent with AD and COPEI through the electoral system both parties created? The answer can be found in political culture; that
is, Venezuelans did retain an interest in electoral events even during the moments when the *adecopeyano* party system was collapsing. Most importantly, *Venezuelans did not relinquish their role as active participants and still regarded parties as vehicles for advancing their misrepresented (or not-represented) self-interest*. This does not mean that the terms of support for procedural democracy did not diminish; they did, but under a different set of conditions that influenced party identification. The full extent of that support for procedural democracy can be seen in the aspect of party system institutionalization, but as far as the antecedent condition goes it was deep enough to discourage military coups by making parties the preferred vehicle for political expression; in fact, “partisanship was the main causal factor in Venezuelan political behavior (Molina & Pérez 2004, 105)” and “[p]arties successfully claimed legitimacy on the basis of their ability to advance claims to social justice [and] political freedom (Crisp & Levine 1998, 32).” Moreover, as Myers & O’Connor have stated, the political and economic crisis of the late 1980s and 1990s made coups more appealing, but that preference was conditioned to their being used as a way to correct the flaws of the political system and not as a way to substitute democracy. In fact, the two 1992 coups were not overwhelmingly supported (about 1 in 3 supported the February coup, and the November uprising had even less support).

Chávez’s electoral victory in 1998 occurred at a moment when electoral abstention was on the rise (Crisp & Levine 1998, 34); still, the 36% level of abstention in that presidential election also suggests that 64% of voters participated in it – more than half of the registry. More importantly, the percentage of valid or positive votes (59%) was much higher than the percentage of null votes (6% of votes cast and 4% of the
electoral registry). It may be argued that systemic flaws under *puntofijismo* such as corruption were the main cause for high abstention, confirming Davis, Ai Camp & Coleman’s main finding about the effects of corruption on party politics (i.e., disengagement from party politics); however, that finding only explains the rejection of AD and COPEI. Indeed, neither does it clarify Venezuelans voted in considerable numbers nor does it give all the details on why Chávez won so convincingly⁵⁴. In reality, corruption – as a flaw condoned by consensus-seeking under the “*adecopeyano*” oligopoly and left unattended by the major parties – incited people to vote for MVR. Also, Jana Morgan’s well-argued analysis identifies reasons at the attitudinal level for why Venezuelans estranged themselves from the Punto Fijo party system (lack of incorporation into and negative views of the major parties, dissatisfaction with incumbents, expectations of better performance by new partisan alternatives [2007, 94]), but a decrease in attitudinal support for procedural democracy is not one of those reasons. In fact, part of the support Chávez received in 1998 came from *committed democrats* who were nevertheless openly dissatisfied with Punto Fijo (Canache 2002, 83)⁵⁵. The key to understanding this conundrum is that procedural democracy – as a better alternative than military rule – was still valued (Crisp & Levine 1998, 34), and in that sense there is causal complexity involved: a crippled economy and the need to break with the decades-

⁵⁴ Hellinger (2006) argues for the existence of rent-seeking politicians that eventually took over the leadership of AD and COPEI and did not share the principle of moral rectitude of leaders like Betancourt and Caldera.

⁵⁵ Canache also argues that the other component of popular support for Chávez in 1998 were uncommitted democrats (i.e., the ambivalent towards democracy) because “[p]eople who are sympathetic toward violent militancy also should be sympathetic toward violent militants (2002, 84).” In reality, uncommitted democrats should have supported a third coup (as Myers and O’Connor [1998] would expect) rather than to vote for Chávez in regular elections, and even so the idea of a coup would be for correcting the mistakes of Venezuelan democracy rather than destroying it from the inside. In my opinion, the main reason Chávez was elected was deep dissatisfaction with Punto Fijo and its political parties (especially AD and COPEI) rather than lack of support for democracy.
long electoral dominance of those deemed responsible for the crisis were channeled through the realization that the most powerful tools for expressing “moral outrage” were within democratic legality (i.e., voting for parties that were seemingly more representative of voter self-interest) and not outside of it (i.e., another military coup). It is interesting to point out that Inglehart & Welzel’s analysis of the 1990 World Values Survey – made about a year after the “caracazo” – found that Venezuelans scored low on self-expression values (their preferred indicator of attitudinal support for democracy), but also that 50% of them supported democracy (2003, 74, figure 4).

In terms of political sub-cultures, the transit from *puntolijismo* to *chavismo* was characterized by an individualistic sub-culture; deeply dissatisfied with the “adecopeyano establishment,” the voters chose Chávez and MVR as the best purveyors of the goods they desired. There are chances for moralistic party politics within the party system of *chavismo* because of the political cleavage between it and its opposition, but personalistic campaigns have also made an appearance: AD and COPEI politicians campaigned independently from their respective machines in the 2000 “mega-elections,” and the 2006 presidential election was largely contested between Chávez and Rosales more than between MVR and UNTC.

Finally, two other concerns – besides corruption and other systemic anomalies – appeared as the economic and political crises unfolded: the nature of the political system and the economy. Moreno (1999) describes them as democratic / authoritarian and economic left / right cleavages, but they did not generate enough polarization to cause a crisis of governability. Their main effect was as “maverick issues” because they influenced party identification by creating a particular self-interest within voters that
underscored their dealignment away from AD and COPEI, depriving both parties of the
votes necessary to satisfy their own self-interest (i.e., control of the patronage machine).
This is very important to consider because, as Burgess & Levitsky mention in their
specific analysis of AD, “[p]arties that do not respond to environmental changes are
likely to suffer membership loss, diminished access to resources and political decline
(2003, 885)\textsuperscript{56}.” By 1997, Venezuelans had clear and contrasting attitudes regarding
economic policy and democratic governability (Moreno 1999, 116, table 4.2), yet as
Coppedge (2005, 313) and McCoy (1999) propose the Punto Fijo system and its major
parties did not adapt to the times. Given that unwillingness to adapt to new citizen
demands, voters identified with parties other than AD and COPEI. The cleavage
dimensions mentioned by Moreno represented serious weaknesses that the major parties
could have used as opportunities for change (hence their character as “maverick issues”),
but none were made because of the “overlearning” of the lessons of the trienio adeco.
These dimensions are not sociologically based, but \textit{they compelled individual voters to
align with parties that represented their own side}, especially since AD and COPEI did
not aggregate them.

In view of the facts, the election of Chávez in 1998 paved the way for a change in
the pattern of competitive party interactions in Venezuela. The system acquired visible
ideological dimensions and remained as a multiparty one in terms of the number of
parties, but instead of being dominated by a two-party oligopoly it would be sustained by

\textsuperscript{56} The statement points in part to the need to adapt to the electoral environment but I argue that it cannot be
solely dependent on electoral considerations or, more generally, partisan self-interest. In any case, changes
in the electoral environment such as those represented by volatility do not happen in a vacuum; as I
mentioned in chapter II, voters must be compelled to align, realign, or dealign out of reasons external to
party membership or ideology. In this sense, I also argue that cleavages are the most sensible indicator of
changes in the electoral environment.
a hegemonic party. In terms of strength, the findings are mixed: MVR / PSUV, AD, and COPEI are seemingly equal in terms of representational strength if we define the existing divisions as an attitudinal cleavage (more on that later), but AD and COPEI may not be just as strong in affective terms because they still carry the stigma represented by the “moral outrage.” More exactly, the rejection of both parties prior to the 1998 election was made irreversible by Chávez’s rhetoric; hence, both parties have not been able to recover the strength they had under the prior political system. In turn, MVR may not be just as strong in organizational terms given its continued reliance on the charisma of Hugo Chávez, but its continued electoral strength gives it an advantage over AD and COPEI. In sum, alternation in government is almost non-existent and the opposition to chavismo has very few access points to it despite innovation in government alternatives. The results of the 2008 local and state elections – as I stated before – present a picture of a government party that lost momentum, but that does not mean its predominance is about to end.

b. Institutionalization and party system stability

The following percentages of positive and negative votes for all elections held until 2006 may suggest to some that the crisis of the party system of puntofijismo has rendered party politics as a whole obsolete:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative (abstentions + null votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1958-1998</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.8: Positive vs. negative votes – Venezuelan legislative elections (2000 and 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative (abstentions + null votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1958-1998</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.9: Positive vs. negative votes – Venezuelan state elections (2000 and 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative (abstentions + null votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1989-1998</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Adapted from Carr (2008d); IFES (2008b) and CNE (2000c, 2004, and 2006)

Table 2.10: Positive vs. negative votes – Average for current Venezuelan party system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative (abstentions + null votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1958-1998 (presidential + legislative + state)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although these averages were calculated from fewer elections than during *puntofijismo*, some initial findings can still be made. Perhaps the most obvious finding is twofold: there have been less positive votes in presidential, legislative, and state elections than during *puntofijismo*; and the percentage of positive votes in legislative and state elections decreased from one election year to the next. However, there are mitigating circumstances for that: first, the legislative elections of 2005 were boycotted by the opposition to MVR; and second, the percentage of positive votes in state elections is not very different from *puntofijismo*. But a more significant finding is that the current percentage of positive presidential votes (even if it is much lower than during *puntofijismo* and despite significant abstention) still surpasses 50% of the registry and

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57 I will only present the percentages for presidential, legislative, and state elections for the sake of expediency, since the information available for the most recent municipal and mayoral elections is very voluminous to handle.
even increased from 2000 to 2006. This suggests that the prior tendency to give more emphasis to presidential elections still continues, but whether it is caused by either the effects of the current electoral system or popular attitudes is still an open question. More importantly, those numbers show that there is still some space for vote maximization, as confirmed by Coppedge (2006) and Corrales (2006); indeed, politicization is high in Venezuela: the average citizen is almost between left and right (5.26 out of 10, where 1 is left and 10 is right) and only 13% do not indicate an ideological position (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2007). That space for competition is limited for opposition parties, but it is the reason why I stated in the introduction of this chapter that Venezuela still has a party system.

Cleavages are important to understand my statement, especially since they focus on existing concerns at the attitudinal and behavioral levels. The table below shows something important about the character of those cleavages:

Table 2.11: Strength of cleavages in Venezuela (in percentages, “very strong” plus “strong”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rich / poor</th>
<th>Owner / worker</th>
<th>Racial</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latinobarómetro 2007

In comparison to the rest of Latin America, Venezuela under chavismo is not particularly fazed by the socioeconomic cleavage dimension. Gender and racial cleavages are even much less of an issue for reasons unknown at this point, but that could relate to some of the policies enacted by Chávez (e.g., the political enfranchisement of indigenous populations). All that, however, does not mean that Venezuela is currently devoid of any societal divisions: the most salient dimensions are rich vs. poor and the owner / worker cleavage even though their percentages of strength are not as high as in Latin America as a whole. Whether or not those dimensions will create parties or be adopted by the
existing ones cannot be ascertained at present, but at least according to the rhetoric of *chavismo* those lines are already drawn – MVR / PSUV are on the side of workers and the poor, and its opposition represents the uppermost social class.

Still, the most visible cleavage is strictly political. Indeed, the current party system shows that people are divided by a dimension mentioned by Moreno: democracy vs. authoritarianism. The lines drawn are perhaps conjectural: some see *chavismo* as representing authoritarianism and its opposition as pro-democratic, but others disagree. Yet regardless of which interpretation of this cleavage is correct, the rational competition for votes is not reducible to income or prestige for individual members, but for political power more generally. That can be seen in the difference between positive and negative votes in presidential elections. Likewise, parties become rooted in society (at least somewhat) because voters either want *chavismo* to continue or to finish. Likewise, voters expect the Venezuelan state to enact specific policies (21st century socialism or something different) and will support the party that delivers the most of that utility. Coppedge (2006) posits that Venezuela is not an authoritarian state, but arguing for the existence of that political cleavage makes sense: on the one hand, many citizens seem to be willing to accept radical changes in the political system if that results in real change, but on the other hand Chávez’s methods have alienated many parties now adamant in his removal from power (hence the self-interested motives of voters and parties). As a result, competing interests have spilled onto society, although they have increased polarization and even fear (McCoy 2007, 26). The final outcome of this situation – positive or negative – remains to be seen.
Political culture is also important because *Venezuelans are still encouraged to participate in public affairs*. Judging from the percentages of positive and negative votes, that encouragement is not particularly compelling, but still exists. That is also part of what Corrales (2006) and Coppedge (2006) argue. Although my present interpretation of political culture under *chavismo* may be tentative, it is reasonable to state that the aforementioned political cleavage has legitimized political parties as vehicles for public involvement. In terms of how MVR / PSUV has attempted to maximize votes, the story of *puntofijismo* repeats itself in this party system: the attitudinal support given to MVR / PSUV cannot be separated from the dispensation of oil-based government largesse.

Indeed, one feature of *chavismo* has been the establishment of “missions” (*misiones*) that are generally geared to benefit the poor and focus on aspects such as health services, literacy, jobs, and education. While their effectiveness has been questioned (Rodríguez 2007), their inception coincided with the moment – after 2003 – when the opposition switched from contentious politics to electoral politics. Some programs were based on genuine redistribution and others were based on clientelism and even cronyism (Corrales & Penfold 2007, 21), yet largesse dispensation was made under a logic similar to what Carlos Andrés Pérez had in mind: individual identification with the party in power. In that sense, largesse enabled Chávez to overcome an initial decrease in popularity and win the recall and presidential elections (Corrales & Penfold 2007, 22). In other words, these policy outputs have swayed party interactions in favor of MVR / PSUV and against AD, COPEI, and other opposition parties, shaping of the party system to its present form. Nevertheless, unfulfilled economic expectations and widening social gaps – which largesse still has not resolved – may be undermining the ties between the
government party and its supporters; indeed, Chávez recognized publicly that some three million Venezuelans who voted for him in 2006 did not participate in the 2007 referendum \((The \ Economist, 12/4/07)\). Abstention in it was calculated at some 7 million voters or 44.1\% \((El \ Universal, 12/3/07)\).

The partisan crystallization of the political cleavage also reveals that the beliefs in favor of procedural democracy that underscore Chavez’s electoral victory underpin the existing level of legitimacy of party politics (that is, in comparison with the rest of Latin America) despite continued electoral abstention and the fact that democracy is still more valued than parties. Though Latinobarómetro 2006 found that only 25\% of Venezuelans frequently work for political parties or candidates, this percentage surpasses the Latin American average of 9\%. That same survey also found that 44\% gave a positive evaluation of political parties, but the belief that democracy could not exist without political parties (58\%) and that voting is efficacious for change (71\%) offset negative opinions about parties. The 2007 wave found that trust in political parties – although rather low (36\%) – surpasses the Latin American mean (20\%), and that voting was still valued (69\% believed that it was essential for political citizenship). In all, political parties enjoy a veneer of trust insofar as they represent procedural democracy.

Another indicator of this legitimization of political parties at the level of political culture is that despite the declared onset of an anti-party democracy \((Ramos \ Jiménez 2002)\) and the “de-monopolization” of political representation under Article 67 of the 1999 constitution \((Kornblith 2004, 132)\), MVR / PSUV has not withered away and opposition parties have not been completely suppressed. This continued existence of party organizations is also seen in the continued existence of an electoral system,
although its rules consolidate MVR / PSUV hegemony as much as they did with AD and COPEI under the prior party system. Nevertheless, since the 1999 constitution put the CNE in the same level as the traditional branches of government, it was deprived of institutional autonomy and made it subject to the direct intervention of the head of state (something that did not occur under puntofijismo). Because of that situation, the opposition feared fraud and did not participate in the legislative election of 2005, although it cleared the way for Chávez and his allies to consolidate their political position. AD did not participate in the 2006 presidential election for the same reason, but the rest of the opposition decided to compete (McCoy 2007, 27).

_The Venezuelan state under chavismo has a direct influence in party competition through direct and indirect intervention_, confirming Müller’s argument. One instance occurred when the party financing laws of puntofijismo were abolished as part of MVR’s offensive against the “adecopeyano establishment.” Another instance came about as a clampdown on private television stations, by which the government has a virtual predominance of the media. Much of this was caused by the private stations themselves because of their openly biased editorial lines against Chávez (during the April 2002 coup, none of them aired stories of pro-chavistas taking the streets condemning it), but his response was swift and devastating. The largest networks were the main victims of the clampdown: Venevisión was pressured by the government in 2004 into dispensing with its own anti-Chávez editorial line, and Radio Caracas Televisión (RCTV) had its operating license expired and was forced to close. Cable network Globovisión was threatened with the same fate as RCTV by Chávez himself for allegedly inciting his assassination. In turn, the government now controls six television stations (two of them
national networks), eight radio stations, 200 local TV and radio stations, a number of mass publications, and 100 web sites — all biased in favor of Chávez and openly demonizing and even slandering opposition figures (The Economist, 3/31/07). The effect of both the clampdown and government media predominance is to further alienate opposition parties by reinforcing the sentiments of rejection that festered in the electorate since before 1998, and by further controlling or even blocking their access to public opinion. Even if the Law of Political Parties of 1964 is still in force and has resulted in excessive fragmentation (Kornblith 2004, 126), its effects are not expected to be significant because of the tendency towards a hegemonic-party system created by these examples of state intervention.

If — as Cruz argues — the decision-making functions of political parties are limited by extrinsic circumstances, then the current party system exhibits precisely that situation: AD, COPEI, and MVR / PSUV still employ a rational mentality because they still strive to win votes (especially now, at a time of open rivalry). At the same time AD and COPEI — as well as all opposition parties — have become “restricted protagonists” because their character as rational political actors has been heavily influenced by the dominance of the ruling party. Obviously, MVR / PSUV is not subject to that restriction because it embodies the current pattern of inter-party competition, just like AD and COPEI did in their time. In turn, the self-interested motivation of all parties substantiates Bakke & Sitter: not only did it result in an acquiescence of opposition parties to the condition of restricted protagonists through their repeated electoral participation, but also legitimized party politics and established links between parties and society. The fact that some parties

58 Kornblith also mentions that the effective number of legislative parties is low even with a very high number of electoral parties.
are restricted rational actors also attests to how the events surrounding Chávez’s electoral victory set the stage for it, since for some AD and COPEI continue to carry the stigma of the latter years of puntofijismo. Still, not all parties became well organized as a result of self-interest since MVR / PSUV was incoherently put and kept together in its beginning. It remains to be seen whether or not its recent internal primaries are a demonstration of organizational coherence, but it is otherwise evident that the charisma of Chávez plays a large role. Finally, there are no new parties being formed out of “maverick issues” left unattended by mainstream parties, as it happened during the prior party system; although outstanding demands put aside by competition for the control of patronage by the major parties were eventually channeled by MVR, the splits within it were caused by its variegated composition (e.g., Podemos) and not by a weakening of any agenda-setting role. UNTC has a slight correspondence with “maverick issues” because it was created by former adecos, but its appearance may be more of a response to Chávez than to the flaws of AD.

In closing, it remains to be seen if the current party system is about to collapse, but full institutionalization has not been achieved. The existence of the democracy / authoritarianism cleavage suggests that political parties are embedded in society as vehicles for advancing either position, which suggests coherence. Likewise, although opposition parties share the idea that MVR / PSUV has a chokehold on democracy, the tactic of boycotting elections tightened that chokehold; despite restrictions and obstacles, opposition parties are still active and have stated their intention of breaking the MVR / PSUV hegemony through the party system itself, as plainly evident in their preparation

59 That statement uncovers one gap in Morgan’s (2007) analysis. She uncovers the reasons for Venezuela’s party system dealignment even while arguing that the associated literature has visible limitations, but she does not appear to explain why people supported MVR and not mainstream left-wing parties like LCR.
for the next local elections. In terms of chronological autonomy, the current party system has remained in place for 10 years so far, although it is far from the 40 years the prior system was in place. Regarding the other criteria, the hegemony of MVR / PSUV over all the other parties has undermined the other aspects of institutionalization, namely autonomy, functional adaptability, and complexity. In short, although the party system of puntofijismo was structurally flawed and change was not made on a timely-enough basis to prevent its collapse, the current party system is no better.

An assessment of alternative explanations

1. The number of parties

The party system of puntofijismo was multiparty on the surface; as such, the total number of political parties was always considerably high. Those who equate multipartyism with instability would say that puntofijismo was a necessity because multipartyism would make political competition in Venezuela extremely difficult to maintain; indeed, the mind-set behind Punto Fijo instituted a two-party dynamic in which AD and COPEI dominated over all the other parties, so the polarized pluralism so reviled by Sartori (1976) was not present. More exactly, both parties became “catch-all” center-leaning parties regarding issues such as economic and oil policy. This two-party system was not the result of a parliamentary system as Midlarsky argues, but puntofijismo had the same effects. Paraphrasing Powell Jr., the party system even harbored extremist parties (e.g. PCV and CCN) without any negative consequences for political stability. Ostensibly, the party system of puntofijismo is a textbook example of
the blessings of two-partyism, as well as being a cornerstone of Venezuelan exceptionalism (Ellner & Tinker Salas 2007).

But the party system of *puntofijismo* actually demonstrates that two-partyism is not a guaranteed success. *Two-partyism stabilized the party system, but led to the oligopolization of politics on the longer term.* Other parties were able to upset that oligopoly at the local level, but those were exceptions and not the rule; Morgan has found that Venezuelans with a leftist inclination perceived that neither AD nor COPEI represented logical policy alternatives. The centrism of both parties is consistent with the claim that strong center parties defuse polarization by making party competition centripetal rather than centrifugal, but it made them blur their programmatic differences and shift their attention to the control and dispensation of oil-based patronage – an issue that was important for both parties but divorced from more important concerns. We should also remember Coppedge’s (2001) and Almond & Verba’s statements: political positions should be relatively dispassionate and centripetal enough to ensure political stability, but they should also be distinctive enough to represent reasonable alternatives.

Powell Jr.’s analysis deserves closer attention. The party system of *puntofijismo* resembled the aggregative majority configuration in some respects, but despite Ellner’s (1984) argument about how influential the rank-and-file was inside AD and COPEI internal diversity did not result in the materialization of positions within their organizations. To be sure, the centrist positions of both parties encouraged internal diversity, but that was zealously controlled by a tight party discipline that prevented anyone from straying away from the official line, undermining any influence the rank-and-file might have had. Also, electoral participation was very high until the system
unraveled during the 1980s and 1990s; the converse is what is expected in aggregative majority party systems. The decrease in electoral participation since 1978 should not be ignored, but it did not go below 50% – the highest percentage of abstention was 40% in the 1993 election, which means that 60% did not abstain.

The scholars espousing the endogenous explanation for party system stability would sustain that the party system of *chavismo* is not optimal; still, because it does fit in Sartori’s (1976) party system typology as a hegemonic-party type and because a classification of the Venezuelan political system as fully totalitarian or fully authoritarian is questionable at best, we can at least make some comparisons with the prior system. First, it still has a multiparty configuration just as nominal as during *puntofijismo*, but it is predisposed towards one-party dominance rather than towards two-party dynamics. The polarization allegedly caused by multipartyism is not present here, but it is because the current party system is a virtual monopoly even if *chavismo* has not fully dominated at the local level. Also, abstention continues to be a problem just as it was during the latter years of the party system of *puntofijismo*. Finally, internal diversity has been discouraged by the party discipline requirement of MVR / PSUV just as it occurred within AD and COPEI; left-wing politicians and parties that did not share the radical party line were eventually expelled or estranged.

However, *whether the party system of chavismo will collapse or not will depend on how does it solve (or not) its problems with autonomy, functional adaptability, and complexity*. This does not relate to how many parties are there in the system, but to how one dominant party may stifle partisan competition to a point where the existing pattern of interaction will deinstitutionalize further.
2. Cleavages and the party system of *puntofijismo*

Party interactions during *puntofijismo* were not influenced by cleavages, as it was the case during the *trienio adeco*. By the time Pérez Jiménez’s dictatorship gave way to *puntofijismo*, there were four socioeconomic cleavages that influenced political activity: the poor vs. the wealthy, rural vs. city residents, traditional vs. modern culture, and Caracas vs. the periphery\(^{60}\) (Myers 1998). Those cleavages, especially the one between the poor and the wealthy, characterized early competition between AD and COPEI, which were in the end the direct result of divides that were socioeconomic (in Lipset & Rokkan’s definition) and political (in Rae & Taylor’s concept of behavioral divides).

Nevertheless, *those cleavages were diluted by overwhelming support for democracy and especially by positive economic development*. More specifically, the “*adecopeyano establishment*” diluted the rich-poor and center-periphery cleavages; they had more prominence than the remaining two, but their capacity to influence party politics diminished by the 1990s due to increased windfall oil profits, which were utilized by AD and COPEI to build broad, cross-class political support and close the regional gaps between center and periphery (Myers 1998). That relates to a proposition brought by Ellner (1984): that both AD and COPEI were pragmatic rather than ideological parties. Also, as a number of Venezuelans became wealthier thanks to the distribution of oil profits, they became more urbanized and cultured, thus diluting the rural/urban and traditional/modern culture cleavages (Myers 1998). Considering the preoccupation of AD and COPEI about controlling political polarization and institutionalize party politics, diluting structural cleavages was an effective idea.

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\(^{60}\) Myers believes that two of those cleavages were political, but I believe they are all socioeconomic because none of them relate to strictly political divisions, such as Moreno’s (1999) democracy vs. authoritarianism dimension.
Another major finding of Myers’s (1998) is that when significant divisions such as the ones that existed during the trienio adeco are diluted, less important differentiations emerge. That finding is confirmed by later research: by applying discriminant analysis to results from the World Values surveys of 1995 to 1997 for Venezuela, Moreno discovered that the most profound cleavage during puntofijismo – judging from its high coefficient (.84) – is age. Although he does not see any policy implications, it does show that AD and COPEI were supported by older voters whereas parties like MAS or CN were supported by younger voters. Curiously, the materialist-postmaterialist divide has the highest coefficient (.57) in a second discriminant function, but it is not statistically significant and only explains 28.2% of variance (age explains 48.9%). Morgan, in turn, argues that two reasons for party dealignment were that voters saw no policy differences between AD and COPEI, thus providing no alternatives at all; and that older age cohorts were less willing to dealign than younger cohorts.

Qualitative evidence also sustains the idea that cleavages were not important in puntofijismo; their absence was one hallmark of the exceptionality of the Venezuelan political system (Ellner & Tinker Salas 2007). That absence is evidenced by specific instances in oil policymaking: neither AD nor COPEI questioned the conciliatory role of Venezuela in OPEC, advocated for public-private partnerships, or rescinded from exploitation of new sources (Ellner 1984, 49). The co-optation of civil society also needs to be looked at closely in order to understand the argument of cleavage dilution: Coppedge (1993) believes that AD and COPEI were based on social sectors (workers, peasants, the middle class) that had their own wings or sections within party organizations, all of them subject to internal discipline. He also points out (1993, 1994a)
that the parties crept into organizations in civil society – sometimes with the help of state resources – in order to extend their control. When looked at from the standpoint of the concern for preventing polarization, such move is perfectly understandable. All that is also consistent with the fact that both AD and COPEI governments utilized oil profits to cement their cross-class coalitions, although AD infiltrated the most in Venezuelan labor and rural movements (Coppedge 1993).

3. Post-modernization and political culture under *chavismo*

Post-modernization as a catalyst for changes in political culture is not an effective indicator for the current party system, especially since Venezuela is currently classified by international economic organizations as a developing country. If Venezuela was a developed country, then *political activity should have changed after the economic policies enacted by AD or COPEI reached a plateau of diminishing returns*, prompting citizens to embrace different values and translate them into political positions and organizations – in other words, what Inglehart (1997) considers as party realignment and dealignment. As I already showed, economic growth stifled and receded after 1978. Also, the existence of a socioeconomic cleavage dimension – albeit minor – also blocks the effects of post-modernization over partisan activity because Venezuela has not reached that stage. Latinobarómetro 2007 found that of the two most pressing problems in Latin America (crime and unemployment) the most important was crime (46%), but that does not seem to translate into support for political parties or lack thereof. Finally, it is interesting to point out that Inglehart & Welzel’s analysis of the 1990 World Values
Survey (made about a year after the “caracazo”) found that Venezuelans scored low on self-expression values and that 50% of them support democracy (2003, 74, figure 4).

4. Cognitive mobilization

For this part of the analysis, I will compare Venezuela and the United States on the two elements of cognitive mobilization – college enrollment as an indicator of increased access to formal education, and employment in the service sector. The US was chosen because it is ranked by both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as the largest economy in the world in terms of gross domestic product. The education statistics I include are those for college or tertiary education because it is at that stage where the effects of cognitive mobilization through formal education are the most pronounced, according to Inglehart (1997). At the same time, I will include enrollment in college education rather than graduation because I assume that it is not necessary to complete college to acquire the intellectual sophistication associated with cognitive mobilization (after all, Inglehart does not mention explicitly that completion of a college degree is necessary). Calculating the percentage of the total population of each country enrolled in college education should determine whether there are enough cognitively mobilized individuals to spark the social transformations that will result in new attitudes about party politics. To be sure, there is no precise percentage at which those transformations occur, but their likelihood is presumably greater with a high percentage. My conclusions for this variable are tentative because Dalton’s analysis could not be replicated for this project, but they nevertheless reveal some fascinating initial findings.
The following tables present statistics obtained from the World Bank and
percentages calculated based on the numbers found:

**Table 2.12: Enrollment in college (tertiary) education – Venezuela and the United States**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>100,767</td>
<td>307,133</td>
<td>550,030</td>
<td>668,109</td>
<td>1,381,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>8,498,117</td>
<td>12,096,895</td>
<td>13,710,150</td>
<td>13,202,880</td>
<td>17,487,475</td>
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**Table 2.13: Total population – Venezuela and the United States**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>10,721,086</td>
<td>15,091,222</td>
<td>19,730,747</td>
<td>24,402,422</td>
<td>27,191,212</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>205,052,000</td>
<td>227,224,990</td>
<td>256,079,549</td>
<td>284,857,068</td>
<td>302,841,222</td>
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**Table 2.14: Percentage of the total population enrolled in college education – Venezuela and the United States**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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**Table 2.15: Percentage of the labor force in the service sector – Venezuela and the United States**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>76</td>
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For the party system of *puntofijismo*, the numbers suggest that *cognitive mobilization does not explain party identification because enrollment in college* (where the likeliest to be cognitively mobilized are found) *do not reach a mass critical enough to provoke major changes in attitudes towards party politics*, which is what theories of cognitive mobilization argue for. The low levels of negative cognitive mobilization (i.e., less partisanship) correlate with the ratio of positive votes to negative votes between 1958 and 1998, but no positive cognitive mobilization has occurred. No service sector statistics were found for any year before 1970, but the ones obtained show that employment numbers – while being above 50% – do not surpass those of the US. The party system was faltering during part of the 1990-2005 period, but Inglehart’s description is not

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61 These numbers were obtained through my own calculation of averages based on the percentages of males and females in the sector for the 1990-1992 and 2000-2005 periods.
validated because *Venezuelans only alienated themselves from mainstream political parties and not from political parties at all, and negative cognitive mobilization seems to overlook the structural conditions behind the “moral outrage” Venezuelans felt.*

*For the current party system, the findings are inconclusive.* On the one hand, the percentage of Venezuelans employed in the service sector between 2000 and 2005 and of those enrolled in college in 2000 did not surpass the American percentage, but 5% of the population in both countries enrolled in college by 2006. On the other hand, this increase does not coincide with a significant interest in politics within Venezuelans: the 32% that tries to convince acquaintances about political views is higher than the Latin American average of 16% (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2006), but also shows that 68% are less politically involved. The latter fact, however, does not explain why a still considerable number of positive votes are cast in the presidential election – not as much as cleavages, for instance.

If cognitive mobilization is not entirely satisfactory for the case of *puntofijismo*, what explains support for AD, COPEI? Similarly, if it is inconclusive for the current party system, what explains popular support for MVR / PSUV? The answer to both questions is that *individual ties to those parties is more consistent with external socialization* (Cassel & Lo 1997) *and ritual partisan mobilization* (Dalton 1984). The former aspect connects with a political culture explanation (party politics as part of normal political life), while in ritual partisan mobilization regular party membership and simple routine determine partisan involvement. In the case of the party system of *puntofijismo*, all this should be particularly clear when looking at how AD and COPEI implanted the ideas of procedural democracy in citizens, in how they co-opted civil
society, and in how they secured stable sources of support through oil-based patronage. Conversely, when the crisis of representation unfurled, those ritualistic ties unraveled as a result and the terms of support for procedural democracy changed. In the case of the party system of chavismo, oil (translated into funds for social programs) plays a similar role, but outstanding gripes against the “adecopeyano establishment” can also be reasonably argued for as factors that galvanized individual involvement with MVR / PSUV.

A much more conclusive statement about cognitive mobilization in Venezuela – especially in the light of contradictory data – can only be made by performing the calculations Dalton utilized in his study, which could not be done in this case because the necessary data (educational levels and levels of political interest) could not be found. However, I assume that the cognitive mobilization hypothesis loses explanatory power wherever tertiary education is not significant, and that in the case of Venezuela partisan dealignment seems to be better explained by other exogenous variables.

5. Interpersonal trust

Interpersonal trust exhibits some analytical difficulties because of the lack of related information applicable to the first decades of puntofijismo or about networks of social interaction that could encourage partisan activity in the current party system (i.e., research similar to Klesner’s [2007] analysis), so I cannot present any conclusive findings. Still, if we remember that political parties are a network of trust in themselves, the partially moralistic sub-culture shared by AD and COPEI might have paved the way for the creation of rules of reciprocity that sustained concerted partisan action. Conversely, when political competition became defined by the control of patronage rather
than by substantive differences between parties, the promise of spoils may have had the same effect of agglutinating supporters. In any case, both findings suggest that *interpersonal trust defined as a by-product of partisan activity is more associated with political culture rather than an exogenous factor in its own right.*

If we accept that interpersonal trust was an independent exogenous variable, initial findings can be made for the latter years of *puntofijismo* and the party system of *chavismo* utilizing the most readily available statistics, which come from the Latinobarómetro surveys of 2004, 2006, and 2007 and are presented in the following table:

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<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
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Note: This question was not included in the 2005 report.

Some of those percentages reflect opinions at the time of the collapse of the party system (11% in 1996 and 1997, and 16% in 1998), so it could be deduced that the reason for it was that there were no incentives, utility, or intrinsic value in party politics because of the defects of the party system. That statement is not unwarranted, for in a period where the political class was severely discredited for its stubborn belief in “business as usual” it would have been expected that the constituencies of parties like AD and COPEI would start losing trust in their leaders, undermining cooperation and identification with those parties in the process. However, *it does not explain why parties like CN and MVR and many others were created in those years as well*; if interpersonal trust was so low in Venezuela, there should be no chance for unrelated individuals to join together in a party organization – or *any* organization, for that matter. Similarly, *the continued existence of*
all parties (including AD, COPEI, and other opposition parties) also seems to undermine this notion of interpersonal trust.

That latter fact also contradicts a statistical finding from Latinobarómetro 2007 presented as a dimension of citizenship: Venezuelans are among those who display the least tendency to belong to political organizations in the region; in fact, 21% said they would, which is less than the Latin American mean (37%). The importance of that aspect, as defined by Latinobarómetro pollsters, is that it demonstrates levels of individualism that undermine the notion of not striving for the good of self but for the good of others; but if there is still interpersonal trust – as I stated above – in that individuals come together in political parties for one reason or another then there are still chances for the creation of a common good. Indeed, the same survey found that Venezuelans show the most solidarity in the region and believe that people try to be fair with others.

In terms of loyal opposition as defined by Almond & Verba and Inglehart, the Punto Fijo agreement established the bases for it by demanding the full observance and respect of the results of the 1958 election, and by Betancourt’s decision to create a coalition government with COPEI and URD after he was elected. Likewise, consensus-seeking and partyarchy dispelled any concerns regarding political reciprocity because none of the major political parties could either disagree with electoral results or monopolize political power. Still, we should also consider that loyal opposition is more related to political culture than an independent variable of its own, and that the path to it set by puntofijismo undermined the party system in the long term by defusing significant differences between the parties, even though there are no indications that either AD or COPEI reacted negatively after Rafael Caldera won the presidential election.
of 1993. That points to how deeply ingrained procedural democracy was in Venezuela even during the moments when the party system of puntofijismo was faltering. Under the current party system, though, the disloyalty – if it can be termed as such – comes from AD and COPEI, but for reasons that go deeper than just being “sore losers:” since Chávez’s victory in 1998, any disloyal opposition in Venezuela is more related to the broad attempt by his opposition to oust him from power. In that case, the possibility of loyal opposition is connected to the existence of the political cleavage between chavismo and its opponents.

In short, I am hesitant to count or discount interpersonal trust as an exogenous variable influencing the partisan self-interest in both party systems because of the weakness of the information available. It is because of it that interpersonal trust was not included with the exogenous variables that helped create the pattern of interactions of the prior Venezuelan party system. Yet the most cogent conclusions that can be made are two: loyal opposition is a function of other exogenous variables, and interpersonal trust in general seems to be a by-product of the exogenous factor of political culture for the party system of puntofijismo.

6. The economic environment

The economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s is a moment with far reaching repercussions for Venezuelan party politics. In that sense, what Coppedge (2001) and Burgess & Levitsky would argue for as the reasons for party system collapse was that its major parties were not prepared for it. There is an element of truth in that statement, particularly if we consider the “moral outrage;” simply put, if support for the Punto Fijo
party system was dependent on the outputs of the political system, and if adecopeyano
governments were not able to deliver them, a decrease in support for AD and COPEI and
an increase in support for other parties was necessarily to be expected. The decrease in
the number of positive votes during puntofijismo correlates with this aspect. Powers’
analysis also seems warranted: many Venezuelans believed to be severely impeded from
basic activities in society because of the economic crisis, the situation itself was
intolerable (hence the violence of the “caracazo”) and made making ends meet very
difficult, and a government led by parties other than AD and COPEI had to solve the
situation without sacrificing other values. Tanaka (2006), however, makes a slightly
different argument: the economic crisis alone does not explain the demise of the party
system as much as “the responses of political actors to challenges posed by crises of
representation at critical junctures, when the actors were especially vulnerable (2006,
47).” Still, there is another interpretation.

Coppedge’s (2001) analysis posits that AD saw its demise because it was not
adapted for surviving the changes provoked by the 1982 debt crisis, but that analysis
ignores that COPEI (a non-leftist party) also saw its demise as a major political force. In
reality, the party system of puntofijismo did not break down solely because of economic
factors. Powers’ analysis would argue that Venezuelans had specific interests that were
not fulfilled (itself an indication of economic voting that favored MVR [Weyland 2003])
and the debt crisis reduced the scope of options available to all political actors (Tanaka
2006, 51), but many – if not most – of the problems facing the major parties were
actually created by their political understandings; the economic environment simply
amplified them. In that sense, economic malaise made already existing flaws (e.g.,
corruption and the stifling of new ideas inside their organizations) more unbearable, resulting in moral outrage and dealignment from AD and COPEI. Also, the arrangements of puntofijismo did not evolve with the times and its political class was not enthusiastic about reforming the system; instead, AD and COPEI remained entrenched in their ways (McCoy 1999). Although AD and COPEI were not entirely swept out of power in 1993, losing the presidency to a non-adecopeyano candidate was a result of how voters responded to the flaws of puntofijismo – by dealigning and shifting their support to CN and later MVR, and dispensing in the process with two-party dynamics.

Tanaka’s explanation is hence more accurate, but alternatively the other part of his argument – that divisions inside mainstream parties caused by their rigid internal structures weakened them to the point of not being able to stop MVR in 1998 – does not explain why MVR was created. Those reasons are part of the antecedent condition for party interactions under chavismo – a political culture that still held party politics in a high regard but eschewed individual ties with the major parties, an electoral system that galvanized partyarchy but backfired to the point of motivating voters to dealign, and a sociopolitical divide between supporters of the status quo and the disaffected. A more reasonable way to understand the exaggeratedly rigid internal structures of the major parties is as Coppedge does: a function of the adecopeyano partyarchy inspired by consensus-seeking (hence, a flaw of puntofijismo itself). While Tanaka’s explanation is very intriguing, it minimizes unnecessarily the internal flaws of the party and political systems; in a word, it ignores the “moral outrage.” That made a greater contribution to the appearance of political outsiders than any divisions inside AD and COPEI.
Burgess & Levitsky emphasize on AD and argue that its demise as an electoral force was because it did not have the incentives or organizational wherewithal to adapt to changing economic conditions. There is a connection between their argument and Tanaka’s in the sense that neoliberal policies under Carlos Andrés Pérez were not well received within AD, but they stop short of identifying the same causal relationship Tanaka does. At the same time, Burgess & Levitsky make exactly the same oversight Tanaka made: the flaws of puntofijismo are not considered. Displeasure with how adecopewayano governments managed the economy changed individual perceptions about the parties, but so were the flaws of the party and the political systems. That conclusion is important considering that the authors neither make an explicit connection between lack of adaptation and the electoral demise of AD nor they mention COPEI, which implemented the first neoliberal reforms.

*These economic dynamics are seemingly absent from the current party system at the present time* because it seems that all political parties have adapted to the demands sparked by an environment that was nevertheless created by one of the parties composing the system (MVR / PSUV). Those demands are largely political: while economic issues are not negligible and supporters of chavismo still want to create the 21st century socialism, AD, COPEI, and all other opposition parties still demand the reestablishment of the political institutions abolished by Chávez; hence, the economic environment has not generated the same effects identified by Coppedge or Burgess & Levitsky in the party system of puntofijismo.

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62 Burgess & Levitsky mention that AD – besides having an inflexible organization – had no incentives for changing because the economy experienced some recovery, inflation was low, and oil reserves were high (Burgess & Levitsky 2003). They also argue that the popular belief of political corruption and economic mismanagement made neo-liberal policies unpleasant, but that does not explain why adecopewayano president Carlos Andrés Pérez implemented the IMF austerity plan that triggered the “caracazo.”
Conclusion

The competitive interactions between parties during puntofijismo and their institutionalization and stability are due primarily to the influence of two exogenous variables over the self-interested motives of political parties. One of them was political culture: the Punto Fijo agreement, as well as the generally accepted norms of political behavior in a democracy, provided a justification for party politics in general and how the competition for votes would unfold. Another exogenous factor that sustained the party system was the state, mainly the electoral system: it influenced over how many relevant parties would compete for those votes, and created the conditions for a two-partyism that was supposed to stabilize the party system on the longest term. Both variables also influenced individual party identification: citizens were encouraged to materialize their own self-interest and exercise their role as participants in the political process as members – or at least sympathizers – of either AD or COPEI. Ironically, both exogenous variables (i.e., values such as consensus-seeking and the predominance of both parties through the electoral system) represented a political system that became very problematic as decades passed. It was puntofijismo the source of the undoing of its party system.

Regarding the current party system, political culture and the state are also present as explanatory factors for why there has not been a collapse at this point because of the same encouragement of party identification that occurred in the prior system, but cleavages also play a role. Massive disaffection from puntofijismo prepared the ground for Hugo Chávez’s ascent into political power, but the policies implemented since have been alienating. For Chávez and his supporters, democracy has been strengthened and party politics has been imprinted with the accountability it lacked for so many decades,
but for his opposition those radical politics have given them a reason to assemble into organized political groups. Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that this party system is not fully institutionalized.

Causal complexity is very real in this case. Regarding the party system of *puntofijismo*, the intersection between political culture and the state was effective in institutionalizing the system because the state and its instruments (especially the electoral system) were the most capable promoters of procedural democracy and the political ideas that gave birth to the Punto Fijo agreement (especially consensus-seeking). That intersection was also instrumental in a negative way because it reinforced corruption and the excessive penetration of parties in society. Also, despite my reservations against an economics-based explanation being the only reasonable one, the economic environment also shows causal complexity: Venezuelans affected by the economic crisis concluded that AD and COPEI could not solve the situation, and Hugo Chávez was not only charismatic enough to promise better times ahead without sacrificing democratic governance (his supporters believe he has even improved it), but popular enough to elicit the support of committed democrats. Regarding the current party system, the current pattern of interactions that favors the party in government over opposition parties has been influenced by the divide between *chavismo* and its detractors, and the desire to defeat the latter has resulted in the control by Chávez and his supporters of key state organisms (especially the electoral board) and the dispensation of state largesse to key constituencies. It has also been justified by a continued rejection of AD and COPEI at the citizen level. All this has occurred in the midst of a political culture that still values procedural democracy despite generalized skepticism towards political parties.
The most important lesson this case study brings to the analysis of party system stability is that Mair’s arguments against the number of parties are not just well-founded, but empirically plausible. Although the party system of *puntofijismo* was a multiparty one in terms of the total number of parties, it was two-party in practice; nevertheless, the system did something not contemplated by the number-of-parties variant of the endogenous explanation: it collapsed (to reiterate the main argument of the endogenous explanation, two-party systems are impervious to collapse because they contain fragmentation, volatility, and polarization). The full story of that collapse demonstrates that the number of parties is not an accurate predictor of long-term stability as much as interactions.

There is also a series of considerations that may incite future research. First, the role of political elites in this case should not be ignored, although it was only in the party system of *puntofijismo* where that influence may be the most obvious. The antecedent condition I analyzed shows that the repudiation of polarization, the concern with political consensus, and the commitment to procedural democracy were ideas deeply held by the political class who orchestrated the inception of the party system and reproduced at their behest. While those ideas are connected to the exogenous factor of political culture and materialized through electoral rules, they originated in a group of leaders with enough influence to convince the masses. Still, the operationalization of that finding into a more general theory of party system stability that can be applied to other party systems remains to be done.

Second, a political culture explanation reveals several ironies within the current party system. The first of these is that there was a repudiation of individual parties and
that the party now in power took full advantage of a deficit of institutional supply, creating what could only be described as a “tyranny of the majority (Coppedge 2003);” but the fact remains that a non-democratic candidate triumphed through democratic means. Chávez externalized its anti-party sentiments by creating a political party that did not wither away after the “revolution” was completed. More generally, if the crisis of representation resulted in a divorce from party politics, the percentage of electoral participation after 1989 should have been lower. Similarly, if Venezuela under chavismo was indeed a plebiscitary democracy as Ramos Jiménez (2002) argues, then political parties in general should be discouraged or prohibited outright and the electoral system should be reformed much more radically.

Third, the comparison between party systems seems to confirm the old adage that “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” Most of the existing literature about Venezuelan party politics has made a case for differences between the party systems of chavismo and puntofijismo, but to my knowledge nothing has been said about possible similarities. What makes that possibility worth exploring is that a number of positive and negative traits of Venezuelan party politics seem to have remained in place for the last 50 years (support for procedural democracy, the manipulation of electoral rules for the sake of the ruling party / parties, the use of patronage or largesse). There should be no mistake about the fact that interactions between parties have changed in Venezuela, but behind those changes are individuals with certain mentalities, belief systems, and understandings of the political world that may have survived the crisis of representation. A more definitive answer to the question of whether Venezuela has
behavioral patterns impervious to contingent political change will require more extensive research, but this case study should initiate a discussion about the subject.

Finally, whether the Venezuelan political system should remain as it is at present or change to a liberal democracy is beyond the scope of this chapter; as I said, I neither intended to make a case for or against chavismo. What the Venezuelan case demonstrates nevertheless is one possible description of vote maximization in an illiberal setting: on the one hand, chavismo strives to remain elected and predominant to take the “Bolivarian revolution” further; on the other, its opposition wants to be elected in its strongholds and extend their sphere of political influence to the legislature and even the presidency. Opinions for or against the current Venezuelan party system will come and go, but one fact remains: vote maximization is influenced by exogenous variables.

In the end, it appears that party politics continue to exist in Venezuela to some extent despite the unconventional characteristics of the current party system. Although the 2008 wave of Latinobarómetro has argued that there is no party system in Venezuela because of the existence of too many parties, a look at party interactions suggests the opposite.
Chapter V
PERU: TO CRISIS AND BACK... AND FORTH?

Amongst the four cases that comprise this dissertation project, Peru represents a unique example of party system collapse. As I will demonstrate, the country did experience all the political effects of the crisis of representation, saw the rise to power of one of the many neopopulist political leaders that have appeared during the last decade, and had its normal patterns of party competition interrupted in the process. Yet at the same time, it also saw the recuperation of its party system, even though the gains obtained could be lost later.

One important question the Peruvian case presents is the same that some could pose for the Venezuelan case: whether Peru currently has a party system as I defined it in this project, or using any of the scholarly definitions. Martín Tanaka, a prolific scholar and observer of Peruvian politics, is very doubtful: Peru at present has no party system because political parties are not consolidated in time; indeed “since there are no permanent actors, there is no possibility of accountability [rendición de cuentas] or learning: the political game becomes a game without iterations, so everything starts from scratch without the possibility of corrections or experience accumulation (2005, 97).”

On the one hand, that is part of how frail are the country’s recent improvements; yet on the other, it also indicates a pattern of party interactions that may be studied utilizing the theory I presented in chapter III. Most importantly not everything is lost: while Peru obviously has a dysfunctional type of party politics, it is much more liberalized than during the last non-democratic period, when true party competition was seriously

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1 My translation.
undermined. The question we now face is how those special characteristics of party politics in Peru translate into party system stability or lack thereof.

This chapter will proceed similarly to the Venezuelan case study. For the case-oriented part, I will focus on the Peruvian party systems of 1980 and the current one, and begin with a brief analysis of the historical development of party politics in Peru. A number of aspects with relevance to both party systems, such as the effects of socioeconomic exclusion and the attitudes generated by Alberto Fujimori and his anti-party rhetoric, will be uncovered in that analysis. Some attention must also be paid to one of Latin America’s most recognized populist parties – Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA)\(^2\) – and the fact that it bore the brunt of systematic constraints and prohibitions that were imposed for decades. The delimitation of party systems is similar to the Venezuelan case study; that is, the starting and ending points for each system studied in detail are the onset and demise of an authoritarian or non-democratic regime.

I will also pay attention to Peruvian party politics under Fujimori (between 1990 and 2001), but only briefly. While the literature talks about a party system functioning in those years, the major reason for not analyzing it further is that it is connected to a quasi-authoritarian political system and, hence, it is not the kind of observation I am paying attention to in the intra-case comparison. Venezuela (if we agree with those that describe it as non-democratic) was an exception in this project because its rather restrictive party system is what has been currently established. Yet my brief description of that period will uncover other key aspects with relevance to party politics today, namely how the effects

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2 APRA is more commonly known in Peru as Partido Aprista Peruano, but I will refer to it in this chapter by its traditional name.
of Fujimori’s onslaught against organized political parties still linger over the current party system.

For the variable-oriented approach, I argue that the most influential exogenous variables over the self-interested motives of political parties – and the most fundamental for understanding competitive interactions and the prospects for party system stability – are political culture, state intervention, the economic environment, and cleavages. The effects of political culture are perhaps much more pronounced in the current party system than in the prior one, but in both systems the effects of cleavages, economic environment and state intervention are visible. In other words, electoral rules, attitudes regarding political parties and democracy in general, expectations about economic stability, and socioeconomic differentiations have served to determine the extent of party system institutionalization. The 1980 party system also shows how some of those variables have precipitated its collapse, while the current party system demonstrates that they give party interactions a highly contradictory character – on the one hand, there is reason to hope for a much more coherent system, but on the other there is also concern for its future evolution.

The politics of economic exclusion and social fracture

Initially the birthplace of one of Latin America’s greatest ancient civilizations (the Incas), Peru was under the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalty of Lima, one of the highest echelons of Spanish colonial authority. It remained loyal until the 1820s, when the frontlines of the South American independence wars shifted to present-day Peru and Bolivia (Vanden & Prevost 2006, Skidmore & Smith 2001) and talk of sovereignty was
The first partisan activities in Peru were associated with that atmosphere: the Constitutional Assembly of 1822 became the arena for ideological differences between political liberals and supporters of the continuation of the socioeconomic differentiations of the colonial period. The liberals dominated the proceedings, but the necessity of defeating the royalist army forced the struggling new state to concentrate political power (Haya de la Torre 2004, 208). The consolidation of Peruvian independence in 1825 was expected to make the resumption of liberal principles possible, but by then politics was dominated by warlords backed by landowners, who in turn saw warlords as a link to the limited but attractive patronage resources of the state (Haya de la Torre 2004, 208; Gorman 1979, 398). Warlord rule would last for the next five decades (Gardner Munro 1960, 257).

A crucial event in economic development set the stage to the creation of the first organized political parties: the coastal regions of Peru became top producers of guano, a fertilizer made from bird excrement. Since the guano fields were located in uninhabited islands that belonged to Peru, the state took advantage of this newfound natural resource through deals with international investors, expecting to reap windfall profits (Muecke 2004, Skidmore & Smith 2001). Although the industry had its financial burdens (Gorman

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3 One of the existing divides was between Europeans and the descendants of the Incas, by which the latter occupied the lowest echelons of the social structure. A similar dynamic also defined relations with people of African descent. A second chasm divided Europeans in two groups: those with white ancestry who migrated from Spain and took control of the colonial administration (peninsulares); and the local-born descendants of the 16th century settlers (Creoles or criollos) which were comparatively at a disadvantage despite their superiority to indigenous peoples and blacks. Colonial society was also characterized in its latter period by the existence of groups that competed for control of the economic structure: a dominant class that invested in sugar exports and had connections to the colonial government; and the “bourgeoisie in formation,” which had the status of a criollo aristocracy thanks to the many concessions and privileges extracted from colonial authorities (Wilson 2000, Sonntag 2001, Skidmore & Smith 2001, Vanden & Prevost 2006, Guardino & Walker 1992).
and Peru eventually lost its primacy as a guano producer after being defeated by Chile in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883) (Skidmore & Smith 2001; Gorman 1979), the guano industry unleashed a series of important changes: the Peruvian state acquired the necessary resources to sustain patronage and a philosophy (economic liberalization plus the centralization of political power), and political power shifted from the agricultural to the coastal regions (González 1991). Likewise, the guano industry gave the coastal elite – composed of individuals engaged in mutual relations and acquaintances with each other – the opportunity to acquire significant political influence (Gorman 1979; Guardino & Walker 1992, 32).

That influence was also nourished by the electoral activity of the day, founded on an electoral franchise not extensive to all citizens and centered on violent frays between candidates and their supporters (Mücke 2001; Gardner Munro 1960). Everything changed with the appearance of Manuel Pardo, a prominent guano exporter and mayor of the Peruvian national capital, Lima. After expressing his interest in becoming president, Pardo became a favorite of economic sectors that thrived during the guano boom – coastal landowners, bankers, and merchants (Mücke 2001, 322) – and were intent on coalescing for the defense of their interests while weaved in a common social identity (Mücke 2001; Mücke 2004; González 1991, 518; Gardner Munro 1960, 257-258). The foremost of those emerging forms of political mobilization were electoral associations; although they were primarily assembled around particular candidates and their purpose was to brawl against rival factions, they were the first attempt at creating party organizations since candidates no longer assumed that voters could be swayed easily and thus became concerned with making a good impression in public opinion through

\[4\] Gorman (1979) believes this was the moment when provincial elites and warlords became distant.
patronage (Mücke 2001). The most successful of those associations was the Sociedad Independencia Electoral (SIE), created in April 1871 by members of Lima’s socioeconomic elite with the purpose of supporting Pardo’s presidential bid on a national scale (Mücke 2001, Mücke 2004). Thanks to the SIE, Pardo won the presidential election of 1872, leading to two other key developments: winners now had to accept the idea of a political opposition, and civility became a rule. The SIE became the foundation of the first political party, the Civil Party (Partido Civil, PC) (Mücke 2001).

The PC – which dominated Peruvian politics for much of the 1870s – advocated for democracy, the end of warlord rule, and economic modernization; but in reality their stated positions were guises for a plutocracy sustained by an export-oriented economy and in which there was no commitment to the social inclusion of disadvantaged sectors (Astiz 1969, 134; Cotler 1995, 325). Civilista dominance ended in the 1880s, when economic constraints, political agitation, and defeat in the War of the Pacific diminished popular support for civilian rule and forced Pardo to reluctantly choose a warlord as his successor (Gardner Munro 1960, 258-259; Haya de la Torre 2004, 208; Gorman 1979, 407). In sum, the PC set the stage for the appearance of political parties in Peru, but given the socioeconomic background and vested interests of its founders “Maunel Pardo [and the civilistas] inaugurated a democratic regime at a time in Peruvian history when other social groups were not in a position to avail themselves of its opportunities (Gorman 1979, 411).”

The period between 1895 and 1919, which came after several years of political and economic turmoil under warlord rule, is known by scholars of Peruvian history as the “Aristocratic Republic” because it was when that regime (represented by cotton and sugar
exporters) came into being (Gardner Munro 1960, 259-260; Gonzáles 1991; Berg & Weaver 1978, 76; Klarén 1986, 587), although the Peruvian economy became less amenable to control by the coastal elite because of penetration by transnational capitalism (Gorman 1979, 407). There were more-or-less peaceful transfers of presidential power between civilians (Haya de la Torre 2004, 209), but electoral restrictions remained in place (Gorman 1979, 408) and all winning candidates (mostly civilistas [Gonzáles 1991]) invariably belonged to the elite (Gorman 1979, 408). Voting itself was questionable not only because electoral restrictions remained in place but because electoral rules – now based on boards chosen by the national legislature and judiciary – encouraged frauds and other irregularities (Haya de la Torre 2004, 209-210; Gardner Munro 1960, 260; Klarén 1986, 629; Gorman 1979, 408). Besides the PC, the other parties in existence were the pro-warlord Partido Constitucionalista and the Partido Democrático (Klarén 1986).

With the diversification of economic activities (Gonzáles 1991, 519) and exports, there were new members of the elite (Gorman 1979, 409) and sectors like urban labor and the middle class found a political voice; in fact, the Partido Democrático incorporated the latter groups into its organization, and there would also be two Marxist political parties – the Socialist and Workers parties (Skidmore & Smith 2001, 194; Gardner Munro 1960, 261). Though the appearance of new political actors opened the political sphere, it also created conflicts within the elite and between the elite and the new actors. To make matters worse, the political class looked for allies in the military not only as a way to gain an advantage in the intra-elite conflicts, but to prevent a take-over of the state by reform-minded politicians and the lower social sectors (Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens
The losers in the power game civilistas always won coalesced around the stubborn and independently-minded Augusto Leguía, who had open disagreements with the civilista mainstream. Leguía was elected president in 1919 with the help of a multi-class coalition and the military; yet afterwards, claiming that the civilistas were intent on annulling his electoral victory, he dissolved the legislature and forced the outgoing president into exile. That action initiated what became known as “eleven-year rule” or oncenio, in which Leguía prohibited political parties, unleashed coercion against dissenters, and alienated the middle and lower classes that were the backbone of his 1919 electoral victory (Klarén 1986). Leguía was reelected in 1924 and 1929, but the American stock market crashed right after the start of his third tenure, drastically affecting a Peruvian economy that relied heavily on foreign investments and trade. Rising discontent would undermine all of Leguía’s political dominance, which invariably ended in a coup staged in August 1930. The ousted president was sent to jail, where he died (Skidmore & Smith 2001, 198; Klarén 1986, 638-639).

The oncenio saw the appearance of two of the most salient personalities in Peruvian politics: José Carlos Mariátegui, and Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre. Mariátegui, a Marxist journalist and essayist, stated the necessity of creating a utopian society based on Incan collectivism; while Haya de la Torre, a student activist, created in Mexico in 1924 a populist movement known as Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) (Skidmore & Smith, 2001 197-198; Klarén 1986, 630). Mariátegui and Haya de la Torre

Conflicts were likely channeled through an instrumental definition of politics exemplified by the PC; as such, top politicians fluttered between the local and national political spheres in order to secure success (Muecke 2004, 201-202). Coastal planters were the most visible example of that behavior, as they had access to Lima’s high society and simultaneously dominated their provinces (González 1991, 525). As a result, party politics was limited to the creation of short-lived political deals and coalitions created to satisfy contingent strategic needs. Such transient alliances were further sustained by the personalistic politics of the time, leadership recruitment patterns, and the fact that the constituencies of all parties were socioeconomically similar (Astiz 1969, 93-94).
were close collaborators, but differences between them eventually surfaced: Mariátegui believed in the full direct participation of the peasants and workers that comprised the rank-and-file of his Peruvian Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista del Perú*), but Haya de la Torre opposed that idea. By 1928, the two severed their ties permanently (Skidmore & Smith 2001, 198; Cotler 1995, Sonntag 2001, 139; Klarén 1986).

The period immediately after the end of the *oncenio* was one of political tolerance, mass mobilization, and extension of the electoral franchise. Although it became a vehicle for Haya de la Torre’s self-promotion, APRA (which went from a transnational political movement to a full-fledged party) took advantage of that climate to campaign in the first truly competitive general election since 1919, advocating for a social revolution (in Skocpolian terms\(^6\)) and stressing the direct intervention of the state in the economy, the protection of the welfare of the middle class, and the extension of full political rights for all citizens. It also declared that it would neither fall to the universalist pretensions of Communism nor become closely related to it, thus underscoring its nationalistic character and allaying the fear from the United States that it was too Marxist. Haya de la Torre was nominated as a presidential candidate, but the Peruvian government – led by Luis M. Sánchez Cerro, the military officer that led the coup that ousted Leguía – began to place obstacles on the *aprista* campaign. Sánchez Cerro himself was also running for a presidential term of his own (for which he left office) under the banner of the pseudo-fascist Unión Revolucionaria and with the support of the elites. The elections, held in 1931, were highly irregular: even though APRA was successful in the northern

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\(^6\) It is not inaccurate to define APRA’s ideas as commensurate with Theda Skocpol’s concept of social revolution. If we remember that she defines the concept as a thorough, radical, and sudden change in prior social structures, we can easily see that APRA’s advocacy for an “anti-feudal revolution (as Cotler [1995, 326] defines it)” responds to an overwhelming desire to establish a new social order.
coastal region and gained a number of legislative seats, Sánchez Cerro was declared the winner of the presidential election by a sizeable margin (155,378 votes against 106,551 for Haya de la Torre; or 50.8% versus 35.4% respectively). APRA insisted that the election was rigged, but the government replied with the open persecution of apristas and the arrest and imprisonment of Haya de la Torre (Skidmore and Smith 2001, 198-199; Cotler 1995; Astiz 1969, 97; Haya de la Torre 2004, 211; Klarén 1986, 640; Dobyns & Doughty 1976, 231-232).

For the next several years, APRA engaged in open violence and earned the revile of both the elites and the military. The most notorious episode was a revolt in the town of Trujillo in 1932, which resulted in the execution by apristas of 50 hostages. In reprisal, the Peruvian army murdered 1,000 local residents suspected of supporting the aprista revolt (other estimates say 6,000). The bloodshed resulted in a ban against APRA from any presidential election by virtue of a provision within the Peruvian constitution that prohibited the existence of political parties with ties to international organizations, pushing left-wing voters (40% of the registry) to the sidelines. An APRA-supported presidential candidate won the 1936 presidential election, but the results were annulled (Cotler 1995, 328-329; Skidmore & Smith 2001, 199-201; Haya de la Torre 2004, 211; Dobyns & Daughty 1976, 232).

Anti-APRA sentiment wavered in 1945 when political negotiations were conducted; as part of the concocted agreement, Haya de la Torre was not allowed to be nominated as a presidential candidate. With political violence fully subsided, Haya de la Torre gave his support to the eventual winner of the presidential election of that year and

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7 Haya de la Torre mentions that APRA obtained 106,007 votes and that Unión Revolucionaria received 152,062 votes (2004, 211).
APRA was allowed to be part of the presidential cabinet. It also seized a legislative majority that was under the close supervision of Haya de la Torre, making him an extremely influential figure in policymaking and constantly placing obstacles on the president. In the midst of the political acrimony that ensued and an economic crisis, elements of APRA’s rank-and-file attempted another revolt. The military – with the acquiescence of the elites – responded by staging a coup in 1948, under the leadership of General Manuel Odría. Political parties were prohibited (Cotler 1995, 329-330; Dobyns & Doughty 1976, 232; Haya de la Torre 2004, 211).

By 1956, another economic slowdown alienated the supporters of Odría’s regime and forced him to call for presidential elections. APRA – still banned – was given permission to participate indirectly (Skidmore & Smith 2001, 202-203; Cotler 1995, 330; Levitsky 1999, 81; Haya de la Torre 2004, 211), becoming an ally of the Movimiento Demócratico Pradista (MDP). Per the terms of their agreement, APRA would support export-led economic policies and reign in its radical political base; and the MDP pledged to fully legalize APRA if its presidential candidate won the election. Facing the MDP-APRA coalition was the Youth Front (Frente de Juventudes), created in 1956 by middle-class supporters of structural reform (Cotler 1995, 330-331; Dobyns & Doughty 1976, 233; Haya de la Torre 2004, 211). Leading the Front and running on its ticket for president was Fernando Belaúnde Terry, a technocrat sympathetic to APRA (Astiz 1969, 112-113). The MDP-APRA coalition won the election by gathering 568,000 votes (45.5%) to the Youth Front’s 458,000 (36.7%) (Cotler 1995, 330; Skidmore and Smith 2001, 203; Haya de la Torre 2004, 211). As promised, the new president legalizes APRA (Dobyns & Doughty 1976, 233).
The 1956 election had another momentous consequence: the creation of the Youth Front (renamed Acción Popular [AP] by 1962 [Skidmore & Smith 2001, 203; Haya de la Torre 2004, 212] marked a point when political alternatives to APRA finally appeared (Cotler 1995, 331). Most importantly, although APRA did not have a presidential candidate entirely of its own for the time being, its legalization and the apparition of the Youth Front / AP set the stage for the development of a more coherent party system. In terms of the number of parties, the system was also a multiparty one: besides APRA, the MDP and AP, there were also Christian Democrats, Socialists, Communists (competing under the banner of the National Liberation Front [Frente de Liberación Nacional]), the Movimiento Social Progresista, and the Unión Nacional Odriísta (UNO) – a political vehicle for former dictator Odría (Astiz 1969; Haya de la Torre 2004, 212). In terms of relevance, APRA and the Youth Front / AP would be the most important of the existing parties, imprinting the system with two-party dynamics.

Yet the 1962 election – the first one in which APRA participated directly since the 1930s – was close and highly contentious: Haya de la Torre won with a small plurality of 33% (557,000 votes), but it was claimed that it did not meet the minimum share of votes for election set by the electoral law in force (one third plus one). That claim prompted the intervention of the Peruvian legislature in deciding the official result, accusations of fraud from Belaúnde, and another military coup to prevent Haya de la Torre from taking office. New elections were decreed for 1963 by the de facto regime, before which Haya de la Torre made a pact with Odría – who came in third behind Belaúnde in the annulled presidential election – under which APRA would become a partner of UNO in the legislature and give Odría a legislative majority if he won the new
elections. Belaúnde won the presidency with the support of a faction within the Christian Democrats, which joined AP (Skidmore and Smith 2001, 204; Astiz 1969, 127; Cotler 1995, 332; Dobyn & Doughty 1976, 234; Haya de la Torre 2004, 212). The most conservative sector of the Christian Democrats (those who did not support AP in this election) created its own party in 1967, the Partido Popular Cristiano (PPC) (Cotler 1995).

The subsequent period was one of the most politically active and convulsive in Peruvian politics. Three major electoral events (legislative elections, and the first even municipal elections) were held between 1964 and 1966 and saw aggressive campaigns from all parties, about which citizens were extensively informed thanks to a mass media explosion (Dobyns & Doughty 1976, 234-235). A worrisome development, however, was that the coalitions in the government (APRA-UNO and AP-Christian Democrats) clashed repeatedly over matters of public policy (Dobyns & Doughty 1976, 235; Cotler 1995, 332; Haya de la Torre 2004, 212); but at the same time Belaúnde’s lack of effectiveness – as proven by haphazard rural reform policies, errors in macroeconomic policy, and a less-than-favorable agreement with international oil companies (Wise 1994; Dobyns & Doughty 1976; Astiz 1969, 117-118; Skidmore and Smith 2001; Sonntag 2001, 139; Haya de la Torre 2004, 213). Increasing lack of governability was materializing in the midst of an equally rising level of political polarization, characterized in part by leftist activism by urban radicals and APRA dissidents (Cotler 1995, 332; Dobyns & Doughty 1976, 248). By 1967, when left-wing parties received a considerable electoral support in local elections held in the city of Lima (Haya de la Torre 2004, 212), the possibility – and perhaps the considerable probability – of systemic breakdown forced Belaúnde and Haya
de la Torre to negotiate, but not without creating serious internal divisions within the APRA-UNO and AP-Christian Democrat blocs (Cotler 1995, 332-333).

The crises had a more ominous result: the Peruvian military – conscious of Belaúnde’s unpopularity, believing that the civilian political class altogether was ineffective, intent on destroying the political dominance of traditional oligarchies, and motivated by its desire to modernize the country and end petty politics – was ready and willing to employ extra-constitutional measures yet again. As a result, General Juan Velazco Alvarado staged a coup on October 3, 1968 (Sonntag 2001, 139-140; Dobyns & Doughty 1976, 248; Taylor 2007, 2). It was the first military coup by the Peruvian military acting as a whole (Haya de la Torre 2004, 213).

Forwards and backwards: The Peruvian party system of 1980


The so-called Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces (Gobierno Revolucionario de las Fuerzas Armadas) was a rarity: whereas its contemporaries in Brazil and Argentina had an unambiguous stance against left-wing politics and economic interventionism, the Peruvian regime was not extremely repressive (Gutiérrez Sanín 2005, 8) and implemented the anti-oligarchic agenda of the Peruvian reformist parties of the prior three decades (Cotler 1995, 333; Dobyns & Doughty 1976). Nonetheless, it was also intent on curtailing democratic politics and silencing political opposition through corporatism, the indefinite suspension of legislative activity, and the express prohibition of political parties (Sonntag 2001, 140; Cotler 1995, 333-334; Skidmore & Smith 2001, 206-208; Haya de la Torre 2004, 213). With that, the social bases of the old oligarchic
order were destroyed but not replaced (Tanaka 2005, 287-288), and social mobilization – based on a sense of entitlement within the socially disenfranchised – became common (Romero 2007, 99). Yet despite their clandestine status, all political parties remained active at the grassroots level and stoked the fires of discontent against the regime. Activity from parties and social movements was not the only challenge the regime faced: an economic slowdown and the death of Velazco Alvarado in 1975 set the stage for the military’s extrication from power as well. His successor – General Francisco Morales Bermudez – initiated that process by negotiating a return to democracy in five years time with Luis Bedoya Reyes (PPC) and Haya de la Torre (APRA) (Cotler 1995, 334-335; Sonntag 2001, 140; Haya de la Torre 2004, 213).

The negotiations resulted in a call for a special election to create a constitutional assembly in 1978. The ensuing campaign nevertheless aroused contempt from Belaúnde, the creation of a myriad of left-wing non-partisan organizations, and a smear campaign by the PPC. Surprisingly, the lone figure pleading for moderation was Haya de la Torre, who by now was not the same radical he once was; his appeal for political consensus was effective enough to secure an APRA majority in the assembly and his election as its president (Cotler 1995, 334-335; Gutierrez Sanín 2005, 10). Though continuing restrictions on free speech and free press mired the campaign and state oversight of the election was deficient, participation was at a considerable 84% (ONPE 2005). AP did not participate (Haya de la Torre 2004, 214), but Belaúnde was reelected as president – under provisional terms – with 42% of the vote (Skidmore & Smith 2001, 209).

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8 Haya de la Torre nevertheless argues that AP did not participate in the special election due to requirements of electoral tactics (2004, 214).
From that point on, party competition in Peru appeared to strive towards normalcy thanks to the existence of parties with clear ideologies that interacted constantly with grassroots organizations, represented specific social sectors, and had an image or strength and stability (Gutiérrez Sanín 2005, Tanaka 2005, Tanaka 2006). Moreover, the new constitution (enacted in 1979 with the eventual acquiescence of AP [Haya de la Torre 2004, 214]) instituted a PR system under the D’Hondt formula for legislative elections, gave full adult suffrage to citizens 18 years of age and older, and required an absolute majority for victory in presidential elections with a run-off between the two most voted candidates whenever no single contender obtained that majority (Cotler 1995, 335). The constitution also granted constitutional status and rights to political parties (Arts. 68-71), and entrusted the national electoral board (Jurado Nacional de Elecciones, JNE) to “know all matters related to the exercise of the suffrage, the validity or invalidity of elections, the proclamation of those elected, the issuing of credentials, the electoral procedures, and all others indicated by law (Art. 286)” as well as the maintenance of the electoral and political party registry (Art. 294).

2. Great but dashed expectations (1980-1992)

The first general election under the new constitution was held in 1980 in the midst of widespread lack of knowledge about the voting system but also under high expectations. There were 81 parties interested in participating, which presented 15 presidential candidates, 894 senatorial contenders, and 2,390 Deputy hopefuls (ONPE

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9 Steven Levitsky argues that no party incorporated the rural poor and urban informal workers (1999, 80).
11 Ibid. Morón & Sandborn nevertheless contend that most of those provisions compromised party unity and discipline, and created a situation in which presidents did not have legislative majorities (2006, 12).
2005); but of all those parties APRA, AP, PPC and a newly-founded left-wing coalition known as Izquierda Unida (IU) were the most significant (Haya de la Torre 2004, 214; Morón and Sandborn 2006, 32). It was a flawed election because government restrictions continued, the campaign was very passionate and sometimes violent, and there were oversight and management irregularities; still, AP obtained 54.4% of the total legislative vote against APRA’s 32.2%, had Belaúnde elected president for a third time with 45.4% of the vote against Armando Villanueva’s (APRA) 27.4%, and also dominated in the municipal elections by winning 35.9% of the vote. IU and the PPC finished at a distance from APRA and AP in the presidential and legislative races. Most importantly, 79% voted in the presidential election, 82% did so for the Senate election, and 71% participated in the Deputy election (ONPE 2005).

Partisan disagreements continued after the general election when Villanueva declined an invitation from Belaúnde to form a coalition government, but since APRA could not become the vocal and opinionated opposition party of yesteryear (in part because of its overall state of internal division caused by Haya de la Torre’s passing in 1979) it eventually opted for being a loyal opposition party (Cotler 1995, Skidmore & Smith 2001, 209; ONPE 2005, 38-39). Municipal elections were held the following November, after which AP was the most voted party (36%) followed by APRA (23%) and IU (22%). APRA’s internal problems were later overcome with the appointment of long-time member Alan García as secretary-general in 1982, after which the party won every local election until 1990 (Gutiérrez Sanín 2005, 8; Burgess & Levitsky 2003, 903). The electoral returns gave the impression that the party system appeared to become a three-party one (Taylor 2006, 3).
Conditions became adverse between 1983 and 1985. Besides growing political corruption, Belaúnde had to face guerrilla activity from the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru (MRTA) and – most notoriously – Shining Path, forcing the government into controversial repressive operations. Also, the Peruvian economy was shaken by the 1982 debt crisis and it was further disrupted by a predicament in the agricultural sector. Economic dislocation, the rising threat from Colombian drug cartels, and political insurgency gradually undermined the political system and the party system in later years by underscoring the mistakes and shrinking legitimacy of the political class, by making anti-party politicians more appealing than their mainstream counterparts (Skidmore & Smith 2001; Cotler 1995; Haya de la Torre 2004, 214-215; Tanaka 2006, 50), and by triggering electoral volatility (Revesz 2006, 88); but for the time being the fundamentals of the party system appeared firm (Taylor 2006, 4). APRA became the major political force at the municipal level by winning 33.1% of the vote in 1983, clearly outdistancing the minor parties (Cotler 1995, 344, table 10.6); yet abstention was set at 36% (ONPE 2005, 67).

Political accommodation soon became a necessity and became part of the programmatic positions of IU and APRA for the electoral contest of 1985. Their campaigns – while taking advantage of state decrees that granted free and equal access to the media (ONPE 2005, 74) – still differed: IU presidential candidate Alfonso Barrantes focused on the lower and middle classes, and APRA secretary-general and presidential candidate Alan García presented himself as a pluralistic and conciliatory politician (although he also had plenty of resources at his disposal and received technical advice from abroad). García won the presidency with 53% of the vote (Cotler 1995, 342-343),
becoming the first APRA candidate to do so since Haya de la Torre’s botched victory in 1962. The presidential election also registered the highest percentage of participation ever (91%) despite the intimidation of Shining Path, more irregularities in management and oversight, and renewed mudslinging and physical violence between partisan sympathizers. Moreover, APRA balked at a reinterpretation of the electoral law made by the government that considered blank or null votes as valid votes – an eventually unsuccessful move intended to deny APRA a clear victory in the first round and force a second round that would result in its defeat. APRA also won the legislative majority with 59.4% of the vote, and IU came in an unexpected second place with 26.7%. AP was almost swept out of the political map and gathered fewer legislative votes than the PPC (5.6% and 6.7%, respectively) (ONPE 2005).

As years passed, however, Garcia’s reputation and levels of popular support shrunk because some of the bold economic policies he enacted depleted foreign exchange reserves, grounding economic development to a halt. His response to increasing criticism was to continue with his policies, prompting AP, PPC, and notables such as writer Mario Vargas Llosa to accuse García of having authoritarian tendencies. APRA still managed to win 47.8% of the vote in the municipal election of 1986 (not without the direct intervention of García [ONPE 2005, 87]), but the government was now isolated domestically and externally and APRA was losing legitimacy as a viable political alternative, fraught with internal divisions, with a relegated party machine. Although AP and the PPC were revitalized by their policy disagreements with García, opposition parties could not provide workable alternatives: IU was divided, AP was discredited by Belaúnde’s unsuccessful presidency and weakened after its electoral defeat in 1985, and
the PPC suffered the consequences of its association with AP (Cotler 1995; Skidmore & Smith 2001, 212; Kenney 2004; Tanaka 2006, 52-54; Taylor 2007, 4; Gutierrez Sanín 2005, 10).

The party system was discredited further when legislative bills pertaining to precise directives that would govern political parties were defeated after disagreements on intra-party procedures to choose leadership and political candidates and the supervision of party finances by the state. The major parties did take steps towards internal democracy, but the idea that they should organize outside the purview of the state and the lack of trust in the latter’s impartiality sealed the fate of those proposals and would cement public skepticism (Morón and Sandborn 2006, 53; Haya de la Torre 2004) – something the political class nevertheless did not perceive (Taylor 2007, 5). Self-interested individual behavior was also present, as politicians were intent on obtaining and maintaining their access to the spoils of office (Cotler 1995) in an atmosphere of organizational hyperthropy that made the “club goods” provided by the parties accessible only by a select few (Gutierrez Sanín 2005, 11). More criticism was caused by the apparent ineffectiveness of existing parties in reverting economic dislocation and defeating political insurgency, for which citizens demanded more drastic action (Haya de la Torre 2004; Taylor 2007, 4; Schmidt 2002, 346; Tanaka 1998, 171). In the end, the climate of unresolved socioeconomic crisis and political violence hastened the appearance of new parties and political outsiders (e.g., television personality Ricardo Belmont, who won the mayoralty of Lima in 1989) proposing the adoption of neoliberal
economic policies and chastening traditional parties (Tanaka 2006, 53; Tanaka 1998; Taylor 2007, 4; Kay 1996, 85; Gutiérrez Sanín 2005).\(^{12}\)

Another political outsider who took center stage was Vargas Llosa, the founder of Movimiento Libertad (ML). It became well-known for making thoughtful analyses of current problems and for elevating the status of political discussion, but at the same time it was sanguine against García, APRA, and the Peruvian left. At first, Vargas Llosa also unleashed his anger at AP and the PPC, but both parties later joined ML by 1989. The resulting political coalition was known as Frente Democrático (FREDEMO), which participated in the municipal elections of 1989 and won a majority (28%)\(^{13}\) (Cotler 1995, 344, table 10.6). Vargas Llosa became the front runner for the presidential election of 1990 outdistancing Alfonso Barrantes, who left IU after an internal dispute; but his newfound chances for winning were suddenly dashed after declaring that he would reduce public sector employment and apply drastic structural adjustment policies to curb inflation. APRA and the left soon took the offensive and harshly disparaged Vargas Llosa as a candidate of the elites and as someone who would not admit criticism. At the same time, FREDEMO had to face its own spate of internal division, as the PPC and AP challenged the overpowering influence of Vargas Llosa and ML (Cotler 1995, 347-348; Kenney 2004, 37; Tanaka 2006, 54-55).

A third political outsider made the swiftest rise to political popularity: Alberto Fujimori, the founder and presidential candidate of Cambio 90. The son of Japanese

\(^{12}\) Tanaka also believes that this situation also encouraged risk-averse behavior on the part of political parties and an ideological entrenchment that led to polarization and internal divisions (2006, 53).

\(^{13}\) Cotler presents this figure as what was obtained by AP and does not specify whether or not this is actually the percentage obtained by FREDEMO. That percentage also does not include Lima, where FREDEMO lost the mayoral race. It is noteworthy to mention that the distance between the minor parties and both IU (24%) and APRA (23%) was even smaller (Cotler 1995, 344, table 10.6).
immigrants, he also campaigned as a candidate with no ties to the political establishment and portrayed himself as an “effective technician” who promised not to implement the drastic neoliberal economic policies of Vargas Llosa and FREDEMO. His campaign was able to win the favor of the middle classes and lower sectors very quickly thanks to informal channels of communication, while Vargas Llosa only gathered the support of the wealthy (Sonntag 2001, 141; Cotler 1995, 348-349, Degregori 2003, 222). It was indeed the internal divisions within the parties (including APRA) what propelled Fujimori to national prominence (Tanaka 2006, 55), as well as the impression that mainstream parties were incapable of responding to social changes and address new political and economic concerns (Kay 1996, 86).

The 1990 presidential election became a hard blow for the political class and consolidated its discredit. The campaign was acrimonious for the most part: economic crisis and guerrilla violence raised polarization to the point that the interaction between the mainstream parties became vituperative, while support for Fujimori and Vargas Llosa increased dramatically. Both candidates were the most voted in the first round (Fujimori won 24.6% of the vote and Vargas Llosa obtained 27.6%), but none of them seized the majority. Conversely, APRA (19.2%) and IU (7.0%) were left far behind. In the run-off election, Fujimori won decisively with 56.5% of the vote, thanks in no small measure to a flood of votes from APRA and IU supporters. The concurrent legislative elections resulted in FREDEMO winning the legislative majority with 32% of the Senate vote and 30% of the Deputy vote, while APRA became the main opposition bloc with 25% of the

14 Tanaka mentions that Fujimori’s rise was due to the last-minute support of Alan García himself, who was challenged inside APRA by its eventual presidential candidate, Luis Alva Castro (2006, 55).
vote in both houses. Cambio 90 finished in third place (Cotler 1995; Haya de la Torre 2004, 217-218; Tuesta Soldevilla 2005).

Despite lacking a legislative majority, Fujimori’s popularity soared thanks to his good relations with the armed forces and the Catholic Church, his criticism against established political parties, his stance against political corruption, and his heavy-handed policies against guerrilla violence. Economic policymaking also increased his popularity, but that involved a change of mind: despite promising not to implement neoliberal measures, Fujimori did the opposite once in power thanks to the lobbying of Peruvian entrepreneurs and persuasion by the United States, Japan, and the International Monetary Fund. The policies set in motion increased poverty levels and triggered a recession, but also curbed inflation. In the meantime, APRA and the political left decided to react cautiously to Fujimori’s policies; and the FREDEMO-dominated legislature (which had a right-wing bloc by and large sympathetic to Fujimori’s economic policies [Schmidt 2002, 346]) delegated powers to the executive with the approval of 158 decrees, which added to prior executive orders (Kenney 2004, 105; Cotler 1995, 349-350; Degregori 2003, 222-223; Skidmore & Smith 2001, 213; Drake 2006, 39).

But it was the gradually straining relations between executive and legislature what determined the future course of Fujimori’s presidency, especially on the context of the former’s emphasis on structural adjustment and overt aggressiveness against Shining Path. Fujimori could have cooperated with existing parties in long- or short-term alliances, but that possibility was very slim. As a result, the climate of compromise of the first moments of Fujimori’s presidency soon unraveled and legislative blocs were now willing to form a unified front against increasing hyperpresidentialism (Kenney 2004,
Degregori 2003, 222-224; Cotler 1995, 350; Schmidt 2002, 346). Facing a hostile legislature and accepting the disadvantages of dissolving the Chamber of Deputies and calling for new elections, Fujimori gave serious consideration to a non-constitutional dissolution of the whole legislature, which became part of a larger scheme: on April 5, 1992, in what became known as autogolpe (self-coup), he suppressed the 1979 constitution and created the “Emergency and National Reconstruction Government” with the complicity of the Peruvian military intelligence service. Providing avenues for a plebiscitarian democracy, the autogolpe also had large popular support, since Fujimori’s charisma and lack of ties with the disgraced political establishment, the pressing issue of guerrilla activity, and renewed aversion towards APRA secured its success (Cotler 1995, 350-351, Skidmore & Smith 2001, 214; Degregori 2003, 224-225; Kenney 2004, 118-121; Schmidt 2002, 346).

Two faces: The current Peruvian party system

1. The autogolpe years (1992-2000)

The draconian measures of the de facto government lasted a relatively short time due to pressure from the international community over Fujimori, who in turn desisted from calling for a constitutional plebiscite (Schmidt 2002, 346); still, his position of superiority remained undimmed, and his contempt with traditional political parties remained strong (Haya de la Torre 2004). Indeed, Fujimori’s supporters easily won the legislative election of November 1992 and the municipal election of January 1993. The government later called for a constitutional assembly and the new document (ratified in 1993).

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15 The more immediate circumstance that convinced Fujimori to execute the autogolpe was an impending legislative investigation of alleged acts of corruption made by his wife and First Lady, Susana Higuchi (Schmidt 2002, 346).
October 1993 by a 52% majority) allowed for the reelection of the president was allowed, permitting Fujimori to run for a second term. In the presidential elections of April 1995, he defeated the presidential candidate of a party known as Unión por el Perú (UPP), former United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, by a sizeable margin – 64.4% to 22.8% (Skidmore & Smith 2001, 215; Cotler 1995, 351-352; Degregori 2003; Sonntag 2001, 141).

But Fujimori’s second term was pressured by economic trouble; accusations of corruption against his chief collaborator, military intelligence director Vladimiro Montesinos; and the resurgence of opposition parties, one of which won an election for the mayoralty of Lima. The government responded by amending the 1993 constitution and enact the Law of Authentic Interpretation, which allowed for a possible third term for Fujimori (a 1998 Peruvian Supreme Court ruling qualified his candidacy as his first official reelection bid). Likewise, Fujimori bounced back from the setbacks by manipulating public opinion notwithstanding that a considerable portion of the public was scandalized by the government’s unwavering support to Montesinos. Meanwhile, a new political figure emerged as the personification of opposition to Fujimori: Alejandro Toledo, a Harvard-educated economist of poor and indigenous background (Sonntag 2001, 141; Degregori 2003; Taylor 2007, 10). In the 2000 presidential election, Fujimori and his party – Perú 2000 – did not gather the absolute majority to claim victory on the first round; he was 0.14% short of it because Toledo gathered 40% of the vote, forcing a run-off. Toledo later withdrew on the grounds of a possible electoral fraud against him, but the electoral law would not permit him to remove his name from the ballot. Fujimori

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16 Perú 2000 was an electoral coalition composed of Cambio 90 and a number of minor parties that supported Fujimori’s policies (Schmidt 2002, 348).
held on and won the run-off with 55% of the vote. The opposition staged demonstrations to disrupt his inauguration, but they degenerated into violent riots and clashes against the police (allegedly caused by infiltrated military intelligence agents) (Sonntag 2001, 142; Degregori 2003, 241; Skidmore & Smith 2001, 215).

On September 14, 2000, a video showing Montesinos in his office bribing an opposition legislator was broadcast on national television. Although such deals were common knowledge, the revelation forced Fujimori to dissolve the military intelligence service, announce his decision not to seek reelection, and call for new presidential elections. Montesinos requested political asylum in Panamá but later returned to Perú and went underground, after which Fujimori led a widely publicized manhunt to capture him. Fearing the collapse of his presidency, Fujimori also negotiated his extrication from power with the political opposition, but the latter insisted that any reestablishment of democracy could only happen after the complete demise of the institutions he created. After attending the Asian Summit in Brunei, Fujimori flew to Japan and announced his resignation as president, but the Peruvian legislature rejected it and instead dismissed him on the grounds of “moral incapacity.” A provisional government started the process of dismantling the regime (Sonntag 2001, 142-143).

2. The great contradiction (2001-present)

The current stage of the Peruvian party system is best described by the elections held in 2001 and 2006. On the one hand, the 2001 presidential election was credited as the first truly democratic election in Peruvian contemporary history, with Alejandro Toledo and Alan García as front-runners. Toledo – the presidential candidate of Perú
Posible (PP) – won the first round with 36.5% of the total vote, but did not obtain the absolute majority. In turn, García obtained 25.8%, outpacing his nearest rival – Lourdes Flores Nano of Unión Nacional (UN)\(^{17}\) – by barely over one percentage point. The run-off round was contested between García and Toledo, who won narrowly with 53.1% of the vote against the 46.9% gathered by García. In the legislative election, PP gathered 26.3% of the vote against the 19.7% obtained by APRA and the 13.8% won by UN (Degregori 2003, 242; Schmidt 2003, 347, table 1). In general, parties steered their positions to the political center; eluded the extremisms of years past; and agreed on the primacy of democratic governability, the need for horizontal accountability and transparency, the advantages of social participation, and a rejection of corruption and authoritarianism (Tanaka 2005, 287-288; Kenney 2003, 1235). Also, the pro-Fujimori groups were too divided to resist: a moderate faction rallied around former minister Carlos Boloña and Solución Popular, but he obtained only 1.7% of the presidential vote and his party gathered just 3.6% of the legislative vote and won one seat. The more orthodox \textit{fujimorista} parties (i.e., a coalition between Cambio 90 and Nueva Mayoría) obtained 4.8% of the legislative vote and won 3 seats (Schmidt 2003). For some observers, the 2001 general election represented the rebirth of party politics and a second chance for the political class insofar as the latter was compelled to cooperate and create a consensus that would stabilize the political system (Kenney 2003; Taylor 2007). Others have even argued for the possibility “that a new party system similar to that of the 1980s could emerge (Schmidt 2003, 351).”

Another positive aspect is the institutional framework. Under the provisional presidency, the electoral system in place was amended by two critical laws: Law 27369,\(^{17}\) UN is an electoral alliance initially composed of the PPC and other parties (Schmidt 2003, 345).
which allowed parties with at least one legislator in 2000 and those that collected at least 120,000 signatures to participate in the 2001 election, gave all parties free advertising on radio and television distributed by lot, and prohibited the government (including individual officials) to intervene in the campaign; and Law 27387, which ordered the next legislative election to be by department (the Peruvian equivalent of the American state) under preferential voting and also set a gender quota for party lists at 30% (Schmidt 2002). Although the 1993 constitution is still in force, it maintained some of the provisions included in the more democratic 1979 constitution – the right to a secret, mandatory, and equal vote for all citizens up to the age of 70 (Art. 31); the status of political parties as main representatives of popular will and the power invested in lawmakers to approve laws that regulate their internal structure, finances, and access to the media (Art. 35); and guidelines for electoral competition. According to those guidelines, the president – who cannot be reelected and is allowed to serve only one five-year term – and two vice-presidents will be elected by absolute majority (more than half of the popular vote), and a run-off election will be held in the case that no candidate obtains it (Arts. 111 and 112). The unicameral national legislature – which has 120 seats – is elected every five years under PR rules. The list of legislative candidates may also include vice-presidential candidates (Art. 90).

An even greater step forward was the enactment of the Law of Political Parties of 2003, currently in force and considered the first such legislation in Peruvian history (Haya de la Torre 2004). The law characterizes political parties as entities that express democratic pluralism (Art. 1), provides legal recognition to any national organization

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able to gather a number of sympathizers representing no less than 1% of those who voted in the last national election (Arts. 5b and 17a), orders political parties to establish internal democracy mechanisms (Title V), and restricts public financing to those parties with legislative representation (Art. 29). Any political party can lose its inscription one year after the last national election if it cannot elect at least 6 legislators in more than one district or if it cannot obtain at least 5% of the total national vote (Art. 13a) (ONPE [2007c]).

However, there are also grounds for concern because Fujimori bequeathed a dysfunctional type of politics that continues to this day. First, his anti-party rhetoric has encouraged the creation of countless independent movements and ad-hoc political parties without deep roots in society, ideology or concrete positions (Revesz 2006, 86). Also, the political system is affected by institutional instability, citizen distrust, disorganization among social and political actors, and opportunistic politicians (Tanaka 2004, Tanaka 2005; Taylor 2007). More importantly, “[t]he fundamental change [from fujimorismo] was the substantial increase in the level of competition because there is no hegemonic actor, but it is a competition led by fragile political actors that would quickly demonstrate their limitations (Tanaka 2004, 136-137).” Although APRA did recover from the Fujimori years, not all parties were able to do so completely; indeed, most legislative seats were filled in 2001 by the movements that appeared during the 1990s (Taylor 2007, 11).

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19 My translation.
Moreover, while the majority of citizens preferred democracy over any other form of government (Tanaka 2004, 136, graph 1)\textsuperscript{20}, there has been skepticism about what political parties represent for the average citizen; for example, a 2003 survey revealed that only 16.3\% of Lima’s residents trusted political parties (Tanaka 2005, 94, note 3). In behavioral terms, the percentage of blank ballots increased from 5.9\% in 2000 to 10\% in the first round of the 2001 presidential election. Ironically, voter participation was high, but there is a reason: by law, blank ballots have to constitute two thirds of the total vote for any general election to be annulled. Given that such a condition was virtually impossible to achieve and invalidation would have not disqualified either García or Toledo, voters saw no other option than voting for the less unlikable of the two (Schmidt 2003, 350). APRA won the most votes in the regional elections of 2002, but only had a 3\% lead over all independent candidacies combined. Also, in the municipal elections held that same year, independent candidates won more votes than established parties (Tuesta Soldevilla [2008b], Tuesta Soldevilla [2008c], Tuesta Soldevilla [2008d]). In sum, while on the one hand Peruvians appreciate democracy, political parties still carry the stigma they had before Fujimori’s election in 1990. In the words of Tanaka (2004), post-Fujimori Peru became a “democracy without parties [democracia sin partidos]\textsuperscript{21}.”

That “democracy without parties” constrained both Toledo and opposition parties. Although the state lacked enough capacity to enact policies to solve problems like poverty\textsuperscript{22}, resulting in dramatic decreases in popular support (Castañeda & Navia 2007;\textsuperscript{22} This does not mean that Toledo was entirely ineffective in the area of economic policy. Notwithstanding the inconsistencies, Peruvian economy grew 4\% during his presidency, while inflation was kept in check at about 1\% (Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 115).

\textsuperscript{20} Tanaka gives a closer look at those statistics and argues that support for democracy decreased during that period, from 63.8\% to 59.7\%. However, we should also understand that in comparison less than 20\% of respondents preferred an authoritarian government.

\textsuperscript{21} See also Levitsky (1999).

\textsuperscript{22}
Teslik 2006), PP was rather a vaguely centrist party unable to build a unified base, besides not being the legislative majority and having undisciplined legislators. For that reason, Toledo was forced to assemble a Cabinet with policy experts with no partisanship, but that caused another crippling problem: the internal division of the party between technocrats and the “populists” who wanted to appoint militants to leadership positions as a reward for their participation in past campaigns and to encourage the government to make huge public expenditures to build social bases of support. The result was the implementation of inconsistent and erratic policies that cemented popular discontent with the president, which in turn was compounded by a climate of grassroots mobilization encouraged by the government itself and backfiring against it (Tanaka 2004, Taylor 2007, 13; Schmidt 2003, 344). Lack of legislative discipline, motivated by self-seeking individualism and characterized by constant party defections, was also rife (Taylor 2007, 16). Opposition parties received voter support in the local elections of 2002, but the results were devastating for parties such as AP (Tanaka 2004). The least affected was APRA, which reorganized itself prior to the 2001 general election around the figure of Alan García; but in general the local elections underscored how weakly embedded were political parties in society, how demoralizing was the climate of irresponsible behavior by politicians, and how likely was the reappearance of political outsiders (Tanaka 2004; Taylor 2007, 19).

One such outsider was the ultra-nationalistic Ollanta Humala. A former army lieutenant colonel, Humala was supported by a large number of Peruvians dissatisfied with the lack of progress in the eradication of poverty and the provision of basic public services like health and education, blaming neoliberalism for the situation. By the time of
the 2006 presidential election, Humala was nominated as presidential candidate by the Partido Nacionalista Peruano (PNP), but was not able to register the party because he did not fulfill the minimum requisites on time. Still, he was allowed to acquire the political franchise of Pérez de Cuéllar’s UPP (Revesz 2006, 87)\textsuperscript{23}, deserted after the 1995 presidential election. Existing discontent made Humala a powerful contender with real possibilities of winning (\textit{The Economist}, 3/25/06); his percentage of support of only 3% in June 2005 increased dramatically to 22% by January 2006 (Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 107) because popular sectors saw him as a more sincere representative of their demands in comparison with mainstream politicians, and because his nationalist overtones were seen as a vindication of the peasantry (Revesz 2006, 88-89). For some observers, Humala got much attention by denouncing the petty behavior of the political class (e.g., excessive salaries, corruption, and an inefficient state bureaucracy) (Taylor 2007, 19), while others have argued that “the rise of a politician like Ollanta Humala […] deduces the relevance of anti-party sentiments […] in a significant portion of the population, tied to or complemented by a lack of trust in the effectiveness of democracy or the authoritarian temptation (Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 98)\textsuperscript{24}.”

The 2006 presidential election was held in the midst of that atmosphere of “democracy without parties” and anti-political discourse, also exemplifying in part the structural problems that still affected party politics – there were 24 political parties presenting candidates to the national legislature, and 20 participated in the presidential campaign. Still, “supply surplus produced a concentration of demand (Revesz 2006,

\textsuperscript{23} Tanaka & Vera claim that UPP made a political alliance with Humala’s PNP (2007, 245).
\textsuperscript{24} My translation.
These results have been extensively analyzed and the conclusions have confirmed the contradictory nature of Peruvian party politics. First, Humala’s popularity was evident and mimicked the thoughts of voters in 1990, when Fujimori was elected (Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 109). Second, Flores Nano’s campaign was offset by the popular belief that she represented both the hit-or-miss neoliberal economic policies of part years and the narrow interests of socioeconomic elites, while surrounding herself with allegedly discredited political figures (Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 109; Revesz 2006, 90). Third, the results were more than favorable for APRA: Alan García made a surprising comeback by utilizing his highly refined political skills, and the visibly

\[25\text{ My translation.}\]
strengthened party increased its share of legislative seats from 28 in 2001 to 36 (Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 109; Taylor 2007, 20-21). Fourth, and more importantly, vote dispersion showed the existence of three separate geopolitical blocs: Flores Nano was the clear winner within the region and city of Lima (the bastions of the Peruvian right and where Peruvian voters are mostly concentrated), while García was highly successful in the northern coastal regions and Humala won voters in the highlands (Revesz 2006, 89-90; Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 110; Tanaka & Vera 2007, 236). Finally, and equally important, Humala and García incorporated proposals associated with the political right, especially in the economic realm (Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 111); and Flores Nano made more centrist proposals that included the establishment of a social security system and job creation (Revesz 2006, 90).

The second round was punctuated by an acrimonious campaign between Humala and García, with Hugo Chávez openly supporting Humala in what soon became a weapon in García’s hands to disparage his opponent (The Economist, 6/5/06). By and large, chavismo was not a decisive factor due to the complicated political relationships between Peru and Venezuela; indeed, analyses of the campaign made at that time argued that Humala’s ties with Chávez were a “mixed blessing” (Teslik 2006), and eventually hurt Humala’s chances for victory in the run-off. Likewise, Humala was not able to overcome the popular impression that he was a hot-tempered politician with authoritarian tendencies, which alienated voters (Revesz 2006, 91-92; Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006). Fear of Humala was a boon for García, who presented himself as a moderate; he represented the lesser of two evils in the eyes of the business sector and those who voted for Flores Nano in the first round, for it was expected that García would
continue with the neoliberal economic policies of Toledo’s presidency. Another key aspect in García’s favor was that he was seen as a true democrat; notwithstanding his chaotic presidency, he never strayed away from the institutions and procedures of democracy. All those factors decided the run-off round: García obtained 52.6% of the votes against Humala’s 47.3% (ONPE 2006b).

The legislative election resulted in a completely different picture since UPP-PNP won 45 of the 120 congressional seats up for election against the 36 obtained by APRA and the 17 of UN (The Economist, 6/5/06; Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 116). Although fragmentation is said to be less acute than before, no legislative party – especially APRA, UPP-PNP and UN – obtained a commanding majority. Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar (2006) have argued that in such a situation legislative partnerships are deemed particularly necessary and UN is placed as a pivotal force in their creation. They have also noted that Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of the former president, was the candidate with the most votes received; and that Peruvians hold their national legislature in a serious disrepute.

The most recent events from Peru reveal that the situation is still volatile. APRA won the most votes in the local elections of 2006, but they revealed displeasure with García and what some observers might consider as a worrisome trend towards fragmentation and dispersion. Indeed, APRA won in the regions of Piura and La Libertad while losing some of its traditional bastions, and UPP-PNP competed separately (Humala broke his ties with UPP prior to the election [Romero 2007, 93]). Individually, the PNP obtained 8% of the vote and won 10 mayoral contests, while UPP gathered 6% of the vote and won 17 mayoralties as well as the regional presidency of Cuzco. Conversely, the
rest of the regions were dominated by local parties and/or minor groups: in the Lima region, for instance, a minor group known as Concertación para el Desarrollo Regional Lima seized the majority (ONPE 2007a; Tanaka & Vera 2007, 241, table 3; Tuesta Soldevilla [2008e]; Tuesta Soldevilla [2008f]; Tuesta Soldevilla [2008g]). While the economy grew 9% in 2007, demonstrations against economic policies have become a common occurrence; last July, southern Peru saw a massive labor demonstration and violent disruptions (The Economist, 7/10/08). In the midst of those circumstances, a new firebrand has taken the spotlight: Hernán Fuentes, head of the region of Puno in southern Peru and a constant opponent of Alan García. Ollanta Humala has also been regarded once again as a major political contender because of the support generated by his proposal to impose taxes on mining and oil corporations (The Economist, 7/10/08), though the connection between him and opposition against García is said to be loose (The Economist, 7/26/07) and his rhetoric moderated significantly (The Economist, 7/10/08). In the final analysis, as Bruno Revesz has stated, “[i]f the situations that are grave in themselves did not reach extremes that made governability unsustainable […], it was in good part due to a lack of leadership with an extensive capacity to aggregate demands [capacidad de convocatoria] (2006, 94);” nevertheless, such leadership is incipient.
Theory and evidence in the Peruvian case

1. The 1980 party system
   a. The antecedent condition

   The political parties that existed by 1980 were organizations that made long-term choices in their self-interested competition for votes. In other words, all parties – particularly the major ones, since they were the most likely to win elections – behaved in a way consistent with the assumption of the vote-maximizing government; that is, the goal for parties already in the government was reelection, and for parties were not in the government it was election. This competition for votes, however, did not appear at first to be for the sake of income, power, or prestige, but rather for the enactment of specific ideas of the good society. Nevertheless, long term choices were not made without any consideration to the external environment, as Maor’s (1997) view of Sartori would argue more generally. In turn, a number of exogenous variables play a role in the creation of that pattern of interactions.

   The economic environment is one of those variables because how citizens construed their economic situation articulated specific political interests that led to party identification; in fact, Peruvians by 1980 had direct demands that related in part with a stagnant economy, which were even more pressing amongst the underprivileged (Cotler 1995). That is similar with Powers’s argument: most Peruvians were deprived for decades of partaking in society at large mainly because of structural poverty and coping mechanisms – if any – were apparently insufficient; for that reason, they were expecting the government to reverse the situation. It is also very consistent with Downs’s argument: voters had a self-interest of their own represented by policies against structural poverty. If
existing parties wanted votes to access political power, this voter self-interest represented a major precondition for obtaining that vote. It was thus structural poverty what became a major factor in party identification, and political parties were hence encouraged to maximize their utility by providing the most reasonable and effective policies to reverse the situation. In other words, a situation extrinsic to the party system played a role in the articulation of political interests that would later be channeled by competing political parties.

*Economic conditions were also closely connected with cleavages, which also compelled individuals to identify with specific parties.* Contrary to what Mainwaring and Dix have argued, party identification in Peru was made in part on the base of already-existing sociological cleavages; in fact, political parties at the time of the resumption of party politics in Peru represented certain social sectors: APRA and most particularly IU represented the poor, AP had its largest constituency in the middle class, and the wealthy identified with the PPC (Gutiérrez Sanín 2005, 4, table 2). In that sense, ideology (Downs 1957) – or more precisely an economic left / right dimension (Moreno 1999) – were part of vote maximization by the parties. Lipset (2001) and Rae & Taylor seem to be relevant because there were clear attitudinal and behavioral differences – sociologically based – that defined existing parties. Party identification conceived in these terms was a source of the strength parties generated in their attempts at utility maximization.

*Party identification was also influenced by various forms of state intervention that, in general, provided structural incentives.* One of those forms was the electoral system: despite many flaws in management and supervision of particular electoral events, it not only set boundaries for partisan utility maximization but also extolled party politics.
Those boundaries involved channeling the expression of contrasting sociopolitical demands to the point that no single party could be a hegemonic force or challenge the system after losing an election (Tanaka 1998, 81). The result was that voters with particular predispositions were being encouraged to take sides with specific parties and expect interparty competition to observe loyal opposition and moderation for the sake of governability. Also, whereas the restrictions placed by the outgoing military government on the media were a factor that mired the 1980 general election, the legislation enacted before the 1985 general election equalized utility maximization by the parties and promoted party identification in general by empowering voters with information about candidates and issues. The correlation between media liberalization and partisanship seems warranted: 91% voted for the president and 87% did so for senators in 1985, compared to 79% and 82% respectively in 1980. The only exception are Deputy elections, which show a slight decrease in participation from 82% in 1980 to 80% in 1985; yet that diminution is not dramatic. In all, these examples of state intervention are consistent with Müller’s argument.

**Political culture played a role as well through the concept of democratic political culture defined as beliefs that support participation.** Mobilization was widespread during the military regime because social segments expected to be recognized as moral subjects (that is, as recipients of economic and social rights), and became in time a significant inroad into the democratization of society and the onset of polyarchy (Romero 2007, 98-100). By the same token, the reforms enacted by the regime that destroyed the old oligarchic order created a citizenry with more political sophistication through opportunities for education and activism, especially among the middle and lower
sectors. Those sectors became politically engaged through the organizations created during – and encouraged by – the regime, and when the economic crisis began and protests were repressed they became unquestionably pro-democratic (McClintock 1989, 139-140). With that foundation set, the reactivation of democratic institutions such as political parties was facilitated, and we can find there a connection between political culture and state intervention that points to causal complexity: the best vehicle for the expression and reproduction of the basic norms of democratic politics was the state (i.e., the 1979 constitution and the electoral system), which elevated political parties to a position of importance in the polity and enabled them to engage in their traditional utility maximizing behavior without any restrictions. There is another connection between state and cleavages: party identification around existing societal differences was encouraged as part of democratic political culture (i.e., participation in public affairs). In those conditions, partisanship – in Almond & Verba’s sense – was expected to be intense and related to a political subculture – in Elazar’s sense – that was both individualistic (government should satisfy individual needs) and moralistic (competition between different conceptions of the good society).

The resulting pattern of interactions had a moderate multiparty configuration in part because of the many parties that crystallized socioeconomic divides; hence, they possessed representational and affective strength. Some might say that this system was a two-party one since APRA and AP alternated in presidential power and legislative majority (Cotler 1995), but on closer analysis its dynamics did not resemble twopartyism. Others would say that the system was excessively fragmented because the legislative elections held between 1980 and 1990 were contested at various times by at
least 15 political parties (with an effective number of parties ranging between 3 and 5) and in the presidential election of 1980 alone there were 15 presidential candidates; however, fragmentation decreased to some extent by 1985 and 1990, when there were 9 parties participating and the effective number of parties ranged between 2.76 and 3.95 (Kenney 2003). Also, before FREDEMO and Cambio 90 shifted the electoral balance, the major parties amassed most of the combined presidential, legislative, and local vote – as much as 90% between 1978 and 1986 (Tanaka 1998, 50)\(^ {26} \). In other words, the alleged tendency towards fragmentation was counterbalanced by a concentration of votes towards a few parties with more organizational, affective, and electoral strength than others. The following tables put that statement in perspective:

**Table 3.1: Share of Peruvian presidential vote by party, 1980-1990 (in combined percentages)**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APRA, AP, PPC, IU</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>31 (APRA, IU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambio 90, FREDEMO</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cotler (1995)

**Table 3.2: Share of Peruvian Deputy vote by party, 1980-1990 (in combined percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APRA, AP, PPC, IU</td>
<td>73 (APRA, AP, PPC)</td>
<td>82 (APRA, IU, AP)</td>
<td>35 (APRA, IU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambio 90, FREDEMO</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ONPE (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e, and 2008f). Note: Percentages do not include independent candidates.

**Table 3.3: Share of Peruvian Senate vote by party, 1980-1990 (in combined percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APRA, AP, PPC, IU</td>
<td>64 (APRA, AP, PPC)</td>
<td>84 (APRA, IU, AP)</td>
<td>34 (APRA, IU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambio 90, FREDEMO</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ONPE (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e, and 2008f)

\(^ {26} \) Of all the four major parties, the PPC had comparatively the lowest percentages of the vote for any elected office, but they were still larger than those of minor parties.

\(^ {27} \) The dashes indicate that the party in question did not participate in the election.
Table 3.4: Share of Peruvian municipal vote by party, 1980-1989 (in combined percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APRA, AP, PPC, IU</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>93.7 (APRA, PPC, IU)</td>
<td>75 (APRA and IU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambio 90, FREDEMO</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>28 (FREDEMO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cotler (1995)

In terms of ideology, there were leftist (IU), center-left (APRA), center-right (AP), and rightist (PPC) parties (Schmidt 2002, 346) with clear programmatic differences based on those ideologies; likewise Tanaka’s finding that this party system was ideologized is consistent with the prevalence of those ideological distinctions and with how they compelled individuals to identify with particular parties. The parties were equally strong in terms of affective and representational strength, although APRA had the strongest organization and electoral strength was dispersed between APRA, AP, and IU. Taking Mair’s criteria for party system change, alternation in government was not interrupted, access to it was not restricted, and political options were highly familiar until the late 1980s, when new and unfamiliar political options (FREDEMO and Cambio 90) appeared.

A very significant assessment of this party system is worth mentioning: Tanaka (1998) argues that the system was not only ideologized, but also highly polarized and highly competitive because of existing cleavages and extensive grassroots mobilization during the 1980s. Most importantly, he also posits that parties followed an electoral-movementist logic (electoral-movimientoist) in which there was a complicated balance between vote maximization and interest aggregation. That logic is fully consistent with Downs’s argument. In that sense, the pattern of interactions created during the democratic transition by the intersection of partisan self-interest, electoral system, cleavages, and
political culture can be more aptly summarized by a series of characteristics (Tanaka 1998, 51):

- APRA, PPC, IU, and AP as the four relevant parties in the system
- The existence of anti-systemic parties (i.e., guerrilla insurgency)
- The existence of bilateral (i.e., incompatible) oppositions
- The political center occupied by parties not necessarily centrist
- Large ideological gaps between the parties
- Centrifugal tendencies
- High social ideologization
- “Semi-irresponsible” positions within the parties
- Excessively ambitious policy proposals

Nevertheless, a party system with these characteristics is not necessarily bound for failure. In a highly persuasive argument, Tanaka believes that the main problem was governability and not representation, although in any case there is a trade-off between both – that is, the satisfaction of all sociopolitical demands cannot be achieved under conditions of scarce values, while complete governability presupposes the absence of any demands and is hence undemocratic (1998, 51-52).

b. Institutionalization and party system stability

In terms of Sitter (2002) and Bakke & Sitter’s (2005) own conception of self-interest (i.e., long-term choices within the atmosphere of competition for votes), the argument is demonstrated by the case of the 1980 Peruvian party system: it rooted itself as parties displayed their rationality – especially APRA, IU, PPC, and AP. That set the
system on the path to institutionalization in the critical first years with evident results: the parties reacquired social legitimacy and their organizations were stable enough. Most importantly, a specific aspect that influenced that rational behavior – a type of restricted protagonism associated with democratic political culture – was also steering the system towards institutionalization; in other words, “there was a certain agreement between the principal political actors regarding the maintenance of constitutional order (Tanaka 1998, 56).” That agreement was based on how the threat of guerilla warfare was understood by traditionally anti-democratic political actors; more exactly, a military coup would ignite a civil war, and socioeconomic elites had to reckon with mobilized middle and lower sectors supportive of democracy (McClintock 1989, 143).

The party system should have been sustainable on a much longer term because of three general reasons associated with the intersection between self-interest and exogenous variables: first, the dynamics were not those of two-partyism, but the range of viable choices was moderate; second, the system was ideologized, but that highlighted how embedded in society political parties were; and third, the commitment to procedural democracy was unmistakably present. However, the appearance of Cambio 90 and FREDEMO indicated that institutionalization was compromised; both parties were not able to wrest political dominance from the established parties in 1989 and 1990 (which prompts Tanaka [1998] to posit that the party system was strong even at that point), but they nevertheless pushed mainstream parties to the sidelines – Cambio 90 in particular. Considering that party system institutionalization refers to how constraints on partisan behavior become legitimate, the problem was that by 1990 Peruvians believed that the pattern of interactions created during democratization lost a very significant fraction of
its intrinsic value even if – as I will explain later – procedural democracy remained in a better position. Partisanship at that point became very open.

Before unearthing the underlying reasons for that belief, it is necessary to describe how close to institutionalization the 1980 party system was. In its beginning, the system did have significant autonomy because there was not any social or political sector that treated inter-party competition as a way to overtly externalize sociopolitical dominance and, by the same token, there were political parties representing disadvantaged social sectors. Also, APRA finally had the chance to compete against middle-class and wealthy-class parties in equal conditions and without systematic restrictions, something that was virtually impossible between 1930 and 1968. The party system also had considerable coherence because all parties seemed to agree on the boundaries and procedures within (particularly with the larger constitutional setting), and also had significant complexity because access to government was not systematically restricted (even though not all political parties had enough strength to win or acquire significant representation).

Conversely, low functional adaptability resulted in a weakening of chronological adaptability (i.e., the duration of the institution, in Huntington’s sense) and especially autonomy. It is within the aspect of functional adaptability where we can find some clues to explain why this party system collapsed.

This issue can be seen in the “laissez faire” mentality politicians had; indeed, Tanaka argues that the disintegration of the 1980 party system was not because it did not work, but because “actors became accustomed to play by certain rules that worked but were decaying rapidly since the end of the 1980s. The consistency of acquired habits and

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28 It is difficult, however, to ascertain the level of generational adaptability, since the system did not last long enough to warrant a change in political leadership.
their relative success made assimilation of the new rules and adaptation of the new scenario difficult (1988, 63)." By the same token, "while [the electoral-movementist] dynamic was initially representative of the citizenry, in time – and because of the [political and economic] crisis – it became increasingly elitist notwithstanding the involvement of interest groups and social movements (which, like political parties, were losing their capacity to express the social segments that supposedly they were representing) (Tanaka 1998, 168)." Moreover, as I mentioned in chapter III, Latin Americanists like Robinson (2006a) contend that procedural democracy has served to channel mobilization away from radical social change and instituted a type of sociopolitical domination of the masses by elites based on consent rather than on direct repression; in the case of the 1980 Peruvian party system, Catalina Romero has argued that civil society was weakened in favor of the reinforcement of a concept of “lordship” (señorío) that existed parallel to democratic institutions (2007, 100). In other words, parties became more and more disconnected from larger social sectors, favored narrower interests, and ignored an increasingly independent public opinion that was influenced more by media exposure than by traditional proselytism (Tanaka 1998), mindful to that divorce between principal and agent. All that is what is meant by low functional adaptability and how did it undermine autonomy.

This situation is very closely associated with partisan self-interest because it pertains to the minutiae of the moves and countermoves parties are expected to make in their competition for votes (i.e., what to represent, and which constituency should be tapped into for electoral strength). The prevalent electoral-movementist logic was

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29 My translation.  
30 My translation. Parenthesis in the original.
deemed perfect as it was; hence, sweeping changes were not necessary and giving oversight powers to the state was unwarranted (the latter claim is precisely “laissez faire” in its most traditional sense). That was proven in part by the defeat in the national legislature of specific additions to political party legislation that would fully democratize parties and made their financing transparent and accountable. Two other situations are also representative of low functional adaptability: first, both Belaúnde and especially García imposed a strict party discipline that stymied internal debate and discouraged criticism (Cotler 1995, 339); and second, there was also unbridled rent-seeking on the part of individual politicians. That latter condition is consistent with Downs’s argument that parties create policy proposals and use ideologies to win votes towards seizing the government for the self-interested motives of party members (we must remember Tanaka’s conclusion that this party system was ideologized). It also seems at first to confirm the argument presented by Laver & Benoit (2003) about how rent-seeking politicians can change the expectation vector of the party system, but this particular situation has not occurred exactly as they argue and neither is it sufficient to explain why functional adaptability was low. In other words, rent-seeking did not shift the axis of the party system, but actually undermined popular expectations. In all, those three conditions (the unwillingness to enact party reform, the seemingly autocratic way APRA and AP were directed, and rent-seeking) were one of the underlying problems that hindered institutionalization because they made the political class unaccountable to the constituency of traditional parties, undermining party identification. In the longest term, they also overshadowed the initial success of the system in encouraging ties between

31 The next subsection, which takes a look at alternative explanations, will argue that interpersonal trust still falls short.
parties and society and counterbalancing fragmentation. In short, it is reasonable to argue that result of low functional adaptability and how did it affect chronological adaptability and autonomy was the crisis of representation that reached its peak in 1990, resulting in the pronounced lack of support for mainstream parties, the appearance of anti-system alternatives, and the election of Fujimori.

If the self-interest of the parties played a negative role, does it also mean there were “maverick issues”? The answer is a positive one insofar as the apparent relegation of voter self-interest (i.e., outstanding issues such as the alleviation of poverty and the bridging of the income gap) in favor of the partisan self-interest that became part of the electoral-movementist logic (i.e., vote maximization for the sake of the self-interest of party members) motivated the crisis of representation. In that sense, Maor (1997) is very plausible. The worst of this situation occurred during Alan García’s presidency and cost important political support for APRA: the economy was showing no indications of recovery, and Shining Path’s insurgency was not letting up. An enabling factor for that outcome within partisan self-interest was what Gutiérrez Sanín (2005) calls the “leftist contagion:” in political environments like Peru during democratization, left-wing parties have an advantage over other parties in mobilizing voters (i.e., how they “encader” the masses), so those other parties will imitate the former’s example. When the crisis of the party system was becoming manifest, a golden opportunity was given to organizations that learned how to “encader” the masses effectively but never had experience in government. Cambio 90 was one of those organizations.

Regarding the economic environment, Powers’s argument relates very closely to this situation: Peruvians who expected the government to improve the economic
conditions that would make them full members of society were disappointed because the issue of intolerable hardship was not addressed at all (or at least not as effectively as it should have been). Economic mismanagement under AP and APRA governments – especially after the 1982 debt crisis – became in time a very powerful incentive for citizens to dissociate themselves from both parties (Kenney 2003). In other words, citizens had specific material interests that were transformed into political interests but were nevertheless ignored. In the case of APRA in particular, Burgess & Levitsky argue that a reason for relegating adjustment was that it had very weak economic incentives and strong electoral disincentives for market reform: the economic crisis was not too severe, dysfunctions were related to IMF austerity plans, there was no national consensus on neo-liberal policies, and the lower social sectors aligned with the left (2003, 897-898). What occurred to APRA in 1990 is connected to Coppedge’s (2001) “political Darwinism” and to Levitsky’s argument that the Peruvian political class “was increasingly out of touch with the day-to-day realities of most Peruvians (1999, 80).”

The economic environment also relates to the cleavages from which the political parties divorced from, according to Tanaka (1998). Although the effects of the 1982 debt crisis and economic mismanagement cannot be ignored, the “restricted protagonism” of political parties during this period was determined by popular expectations regarding the resolution of not just immediate economic concerns, but also of long-standing societal inequalities. When juxtaposed against the self-interested motivation of parties, those expectations represented not just voter self-interest, but a major necessary condition for parties to win votes; indeed, all parties had – and eschewed – connections with social sectors that had particular interests and demands. Economic mismanagement might have
been a reason for dealignment away from APRA and AP, but it does not explain why IU and PPC were also affected. Moreover, there was also much popular dissatisfaction with the day-to-day business of maintaining existing party organizations – something that was not exclusive to APRA and AP, but to the other parties. In sum, what seems to be the likeliest cause is what Tanaka (1998) has concluded: the ossification of certain behaviors and procedures and how parties became less connected with the cleavages they were supposed to crystallize. Anti-system politicians started to appear when the political class divorced itself from those cleavages.

One question seems warranted in this analysis of cleavages: has excessive polarization destroyed the 1980 Peruvian party system? The facts of the case point to a negative answer. Although the conditions were conducive for ideological and programmatic polarization, Tanaka (1998) argues consistently that collapse was due to a crisis of representation and not to a crisis of governability, although circumstances at the outset seemed to presage the opposite. In reality, the lack of concern towards major issues – rather than the exacerbation of social or partisan tensions – undermined traditional partisanship based on attitude and behavior. There was no environment similar to that of the 1930s, when APRA was illegalized. Haya de la Torre (2004) mentions that polarization rose significantly during the presidential campaign of 1990, but it was not because of unrestrained societal or political conflict. Rather, the parties reacted in that fashion as a response to how their mishandling of the economic crisis and political insurgency undermined their popularity and credibility. Since the socioeconomic cleavages remained unresolved and were even reinforced by the existing political class (Levitsky 1999, 80), the socially disenfranchised felt better represented by Fujimori.
Other clues for party system collapse can also be found in unattended flaws within the electoral system. While Kenney (2003) doubts that the electoral system played a role because the relationship between electoral rules and party system collapse is weak, the correlation between both is actually more plausible. One key aspect is that because position in party slates determines the possibilities of individual candidates for success, the effects of that rule unleashed internal competition within the parties (Haya de la Torre 2004, 217), particularly within AP and PPC. Indeed, accusations of fraud leveled between members of the same party were not uncommon (ONPE 2005, 74). By the same token, the legislative slate rule “weakened the control of the direction of candidate selection” and “accentuated the use by the candidates of personal economic resources (Haya de la Torre 2004, 217),” creating a situation – of which Fujimori took advantage of – similar to what Tanaka describes in the case of the media and public opinion, in which “the trajectory of the militant identified with the party line and its activities could no longer be appreciated (Haya de la Torre 2004, 217)”. That can easily be associated not just with corruption and rent-seeking, but also with the notion of “lordship” mentioned by Romero (i.e., politics as the exclusive realm of the wealthy). Although the original purpose of the legislative slate rule was to test the allegiance of APRA supporters to Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre during the elections for the constitutional assembly (Haya de la Torre 2004, 217), it remained in place long afterwards and its effects were never addressed.

Political culture is also relevant in why the party system collapsed, but there is a nuance we must consider: Peruvians did not lose faith in procedural democracy as dramatically as they mistrusted traditional political parties. Some observers (e.g., Gutiérrez Sanín 2005 and Haya de la Torre 2004) argue that Peru did not have a deeply disposable.

32 My translation.
embedded tradition of democratic politics that could sustain a party system because of the many episodes of authoritarianism, suffrage restriction, socioeconomic exclusion, and systemic bars against specific parties; in that sense, Peruvians might have been unexposed to the idea of party politics. The facts suggest a different story, starting with the percentages of positive and negative votes:

Table 3.5: Positive vs. negative votes – Peruvian presidential elections (1980-1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 (first round)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 (run-off)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6: Positive vs. negative votes – Peruvian Senate elections (1980-1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.7: Positive vs. negative votes – Peruvian Deputy elections (1980-1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.8: Positive vs. negative votes – Peruvian municipal elections (1980-1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Adapted from ONPE (2005) and Tuesta Soldevilla (2005, [2008a])
Table 3.9: Positive vs. negative votes – Average for 1980 Peruvian party system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputies</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While many percentages of negative votes per election are considerable, the average for the period clearly favors positive votes – 62% of the votes cast for all elections were positive and 36% were negative. The implications of this finding cannot be underestimated: considering that the connection I make between political culture and party system stability states that citizens consider party interactions to be an acceptable political behavior, the numbers demonstrate a tendency towards that belief. In other words, casting a positive vote indicates an interest in participating in public affairs, which is a component of Almond & Verba’s concept of democratic political culture. Indeed, though democratic political culture in Peru was weakened by demobilization at the grassroots level and the obstacles to democratic liberties caused by the offensive against Shining Path, electoral participation was genuine and relied on a legitimate trust in democracy (Romero 2007, 100-101). By the same token, there was a dramatic increase in voter turnout in presidential elections from 69% in 1980 to 91% in 1985, whereas countries like Ecuador registered a decrease (from 73% to 69% between 1978 and 1984) and Bolivia’s 83% is lower in comparison (McClintock 1989, 142, table 6). Moreover, there was no support for military coups as it had been the case in the past; respect amongst the major political actors to the 1979 constitution “[did] not mean scrupulous compliance […], but rather, more realistically, the degree to which party actors behaved strategically – and assuming that the rules of alternation and of the democratic game
would be the principal mechanisms for settling political differences – without resorting to antisystem strategies (Tanaka 2005, 269).” What should be considered systemic under that interpretation is the resumption of party politics as a materialization of that strategic behavior. Furthermore, a nationwide public opinion survey conducted in March 1988 revealed that 75% of respondents considered a democratic government to be the most adequate in comparison with 13% who supported at revolutionary (Socialist) government and 7% who did so for military rule. In the city of Lima alone, 81% were content with democracy, 10% with Socialism, and 7% with military rule (McClintock 1989, 140, table 4). Even if support for mainstream parties decreased very dramatically by 1990, Peruvians did retain a belief in the idea of procedural democracy, although McClintock states that Peruvians equated democracy with social justice and sometimes the former is not a central concern when assessing the performance of elected leaders (1989, 141-142).

*The real cause of the collapse of the 1980 party system at the level of political culture is that identification with mainstream parties ceased to be an accepted political behavior.* If we contrast that statement with the percentages of positive and negative votes, the reason why the former are still a majority even under these circumstances is that *procedural democracy was the weapon – so to speak – with which voters expressed that rejection of mainstream parties.* Also, if we remember Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez’s (2006) definition of party system collapse, it was manifested not by disengaging from voting, but by the opposite. In that sense, Almond & Verba could qualify partisanship as an open one; the case of independent candidacies such as Ricardo Belmont’s represents one important example, as well as Fujimori’s own electoral victory. At the same time, the divorce between principal and agent is also related to pervasive

33 My translation.
practices; it has been proposed that the leadership exercised by Belaúnde and García matched perfectly with past party patrimonialism, as patronage was dispensed to secure loyalty and court social elites (Cotler 1995, 339). Revesz (2006) even points to the continuation of an exclusionary mentality that many Peruvians – particularly the most economically and socially disadvantaged – considered negative. Both propositions are very much warranted by Tanaka’s claim that political parties distanced themselves from the constituencies that were supposed to represent and became too elitist and divorced from the most pressing day-to-day issues.

The idea of parties as “restricted protagonists” (Cruz 1998) does acquire a particular dimension because it puts the statements made above about cleavages, the economic environment, and political culture in perspective, to the point of suggesting causal complexity. This is not to say that there were structural restrictions on party behavior that limited agency powers, but rather that *there were expectations based on attitudinal and behavioral dimensions – the same expectations exemplified by larger socioeconomic issues from which parties steered clear from*, according to Tanaka (1998). As Revesz has argued, “in a country so socially, geographically, and ethnically fragmented, with a weak penetration in society by political parties and a behavior within the privileged that constantly denies their invocation of democratic principles, it is not surprising that a candidate alien to the social, political and economic establishment of the country is perceived as more attractive. Fujimori defeated Vargas Llosa in 1990 […] mostly because popular sectors felt more identified to and better represented by Fujimori […] than by [his] more formal and eloquent rivals (2006, 88)\(^3\).” The circumstances surrounding the 1980 party system were different from those of prior party systems in

\(^3\) My translation.
that political obstacles were superseded, but the nature of the larger setting within which
the political protagonists operated is thus connected to those unfulfilled expectations. In
other words, parties were expected to be responsive to pressing demands (i.e., voter self-
interest) and serve as effective channels for representation. When political parties were
not able to act consistent with those expectations, candidates like Fujimori appeared. This
situation contradicts Sartori’s (1969) assumption that political parties can operate
independently from external surroundings, while being consistent with McClintock’s
finding that Peruvians equate democracy with social justice.

In conclusion, the 1980 party system had all the possibilities for full
institutionalization at the outset, but eventually none of the parties did not meet the
expectations set by a much larger setting: after decades of exclusion and renewed chances
for democratic politics, key social groups were expected to be fully represented by the
parties in the political process. Dissatisfaction with how parties and politicians conducted
themselves as the party system was institutionalizing served as lynchpins for the crisis of
representation that resulted in Fujimori’s election.

2. The current party system

a. The antecedent condition

The exogenous variables that were present in the prior party system also
materialized in this party system as well. On the side of Peruvian politicians, the
possibility of causal complexity is very real since a political culture conducive to party
politics (an objective of democratization after Fujimori) could encourage the
crystallization of social divisions into vote-maximizing political parties that would follow
rules enforced by the state. On the side of Peruvian voters, that causal connection is
difficult to come by because a part of Fujimori’s legacy is the view of traditional political
parties as unrepresentative of their self-interest and their substitution by countless
spontaneous organizations. Indeed, the context in which Peruvian party politics currently
unfolds complicates how traditional parties maximize their utility because votes are more
difficult than before to gain; they have not lost their quality as rational actors because
they still continue to look for those votes, but identification is not a given. Party
identification is a psychological attachment to a party impervious to change except in
grate circumstances, but what currently occurs in Peru is that the psychological
attachments to traditional political parties are weaker than before. The end result is that
the public is not particularly compelled to identify with them; hence, they lose legitimacy
and voter support becomes scarce. The best way to describe the current Peruvian party
system is by stating these contradicting tendencies between the recuperation of party
politics and the threat of a setback.

Political parties still display self-interested motives, especially those that have the
best possibilities of winning elections. Perú Posible in 2001 represented an exceptional
case because of its imprecise policy proposals, but even so the fact that it competed for
votes against other parties reveals that it was also capable or willing to make long-term
choices towards a possible electoral victory. The larger objective for all parties, in any
case, was to fill the vacuum caused by Fujimori’s demise and reinitiate democratic
governance within party-based policy guidelines – however they were created and set.
The darker side of this self-interest is the continuation of rent-seeking: legislators during
Toledo’s presidency exhibited the same rent-seeking behavior of their 1980 predecessors
(Tanaka 2005, 94), which seems to prove Laver & Benoit’s argument about how party systems change because of defections (which is in fact what happened in this case) and how it changes the expectation vector of the party system. Rent-seeking has been connected to Fujimori’s presidency (Taylor 2007, 22), but ignores that it began before his appearance. Still, rationality was not the only significant element in the pattern of interactions that was constructed by 2001.

Regarding the precise exogenous variables at play, the economic environment played the same role it played before, especially in conjunction with cleavages. Charles Kenney (2003) believes that certain differentiations along economic lines (i.e., modernization, urbanization, and the growth of the informal sector of the economy) do not explain the rebirth of certain political organizations after the fall of Fujimori, but the economic cleavage (i.e., Moreno’s economic left-right dimension) has done exactly so in a way. In that sense, the conditions for the crystallization of material interests into political self-interest were also present in this antecedent condition, resulting in a mass of predisposed voters for which the current parties compete. By the same token, post-modernization does not influence party identification in this system; indeed, the 2007 wave of Latinobarómetro found that of the two most pressing problems in the region (crime and unemployment), 28% of respondents believed unemployment was more important than crime (5%). Yet existing cleavages are not only related to economics, but also to geography and ethnicity: as mentioned in the analysis of the 2006 presidential election, there are three geographical foci, each with different constituencies and demands on the government – Lima, the coast, and the highlands.

The following table sheds more light on existing cleavage dimensions:
Table 3.10: Strength of cleavages in Peru (in percentages, “very strong” plus “strong”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rich / poor</th>
<th>Owner / worker</th>
<th>Racial</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latinobarómetro 2007

These numbers confirm the last sentence and what has also been argued by Revesz, Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar, and Tanaka & Vera: Peru is a divided country. More precisely, the main divisions – with percentages above the Latin American mean – can be found along income (rich vs. poor), economic sector (owners vs. workers) and racial lines. Most importantly, it seems to underscore the importance of parties with roots in society because it points to the existence of individuals willing to take sides with parties that aggregate their self-interest. That is precisely Lipset’s main point – it should encourage the creation of strong parties, their legitimacy (i.e., roots in society), and the eventual institutionalization of this party system. However, this also raises concerns for institutionalization, as I will explain later.

In terms of state intervention, the purpose was to reactivate partisanship after Fujimori’s presidency; it was expected that after some 10 years of quasi-authoritarianism Peruvians would be able to participate in politics through the existing parties, which were now permitted to compete for votes without systematic restrictions. Three instances were the most decisive: the law that provided free advertising to all parties, which was one step towards equal competition and a contribution to party identification; the Law of Political Parties of 2003, which celebrated political parties as the foundations of democratic pluralism; and the 1993 constitution, which also elevated parties to a high position in the polity. Causal complexity is visible in this case, since it was expected that behavioral differences would make their way into partisan competition for votes. In all, the importance of state intervention during democratic consolidation cannot be
underestimated: *it presented structural incentives for partisanship by legitimizing party politics and admonishing the anti-party mentality of political leaders like Fujimori.* The more negative aspects of this electoral system (i.e., its openness) have important implications as well.

Regarding political culture, it was understood that the procedures and institutions of the outgoing presidency had to be supplanted and that partisanship had to be intense enough to consolidate democracy. Nevertheless, the politicization of the divide between politics and society that characterized Fujimori never disappeared; it was simply separated from his anti-political rhetoric along with the associated themes of direct democracy and transparency, which were now worded to be compatible with party politics (Gutiérrez Sanín 2005, 17). In other words, the *“politics of anti-politics”* (Gutiérrez Sanín 2005) *has become a major determinant of party identification because it has been weaved into voter self-interest,* which has been already influenced by cleavages and economic demands. While APRA and UN still have a following and involvement in electoral contests is still considerable (as I will show later), partisanship is currently open because voters are now more willing to choose marginal options – either supporting politicians who take advantage of that fracture between politics and society like Ollanta Humala or Hernán Fuentes, or spontaneously forming organizations that intend to rival established parties (or sometimes doing both simultaneously). This combines Elazar’s moralistic and individualistic subcultures; that is, government should promote the public interest, which in this case is the resolution of socioeconomic problems. The larger point, as Gutiérrez Sanín (2005) also argues, is that there are incentives to denounce traditional politics, but the organizations created under these
circumstances do not have other foundation than this admonition and are thus weak. Nevertheless, they treat electoral support as a way to legitimize their claims and compete for votes with the more established parties.

The pattern of interactions resulting from this combination of variables is that of a highly fragmented multiparty system without any major forces in sight and volatility set at 65% between 2000 and 2001 (Gutiérrez Sanín 2005, 7). If there is a durable major party in this system, it would be APRA because of its organizational strength (as demonstrated by how it weathered the electoral debacle of 2002), but not even the quintessential Peruvian mass party could dodge the blow received in the last local election. Still, the continued existence of APRA does not make the party system a hegemonic-party one since electoral strength is now much more dispersed than before. In terms of affective strength, the electoral setbacks of APRA in 2007 and current opposition to Alan García’s presidency have left a visible dent, but APRA may not be the only party suffering from the effects of disenchantment since the politics of anti-politics provides disincentives for identification with the major parties. Such a situation redefines the terms of representational strength: socioeconomic cleavages still exist, but most parties have been created with the politics of anti-politics in mind. In terms of ideology, APRA appears to be the most important centrist party, with UN inclined towards the right and parties like PNP more oriented towards the left. That continuum seems to indicate the existence of clear programmatic distinctions and the possibility of ideological polarization, but not every party in the system can be placed on those divides; indeed, one aspect of the politics of anti-politics is precisely the diminished relevance of traditional
ideologies. Access to and alternation in government do not seem to be restricted, but most partisan options are unfamiliar.

b. Institutionalization and party system stability

The most important consideration regarding institutionalization is that the current pattern of partisan interactions is not necessarily conducive to it. The existence of cleavages may root parties in society and the electoral system may reify democratic political culture and structure competition alongside attitudinal and behavioral lines, but a challenge comes from the current notion that traditional political parties are badly flawed, which is what Fujimori was able to instill in the public. When translated into institutionalization and party system stability, this situation – along with the ancillary creation of ad hoc parties – increases the chances for the appearance of another Fujimori and party system collapse. The effect of the relevant exogenous variables is to justify the possible appearance of another anti-politician on the grounds of an electoral system that gives legal status to parties that advocate the politics of anti-politics and aggregate the demands of downtrodden socioeconomic sectors. The following paragraphs will explain that latter statement.

Current electoral rules are a legitimate concern for observers like Tanaka, who criticizes the low thresholds for the creation of political parties and characterizes the electoral system as too open (2005). Still, the threat to party system institutionalization from the electoral system may not be in terms of fragmentation by itself, but in terms of how does it connect to popular attitudes about political parties; after all, the appearance of new parties is due to a greater reason. That assessment corresponds well with – and
even reinforces – the opinion that traditional political parties are untrustworthy, since most of the organizations that also compose the party system and contribute to its fragmentation have their origin in community groups. It relates also to Gutiérrez Sanín’s (2005) notion of how an effective “encadering” of the masses has given an opportunity to partisan organizations without government experience but with incentives to denounce mainstream politics to participate in public affairs (ironically, the national electoral board is one of the few organizations with the highest percentages of citizen trust [Carrión, Zárate & Seligson 2007, 13]).

Those attitudes relate to political culture: as far as it is concerned, institutionalization is influenced not just by the legacies of Fujimori, but also by attitudinal support for political parties and democracy itself. Percentages for both aspects are contradictory: on the one hand, 63% of Peruvians have expressed support for democracy (Carrión, Zárate & Seligson 2007, 7); but on the other 55% of those who voted for Ollanta Humala in 2006 thought that either a dictatorship or an authoritarian government was more preferable than a democratic government (Masías Núñez & Segura Escobar 2006, 114, table 11), and 20% of Peruvians preferred authoritarianism over democracy (Carrión, Zárate & Seligson 2007, 7). A look at some questions from past Latinobarómetro surveys – presented in the table below – will also reveal these ambiguous attitudes.

\[^{35}\text{Parts of this information were taken from “Democracy clings on in a cold economic climate (The Economist, 8/15/02).”}\]
Table 3.11: Attitudes in Peru towards democracy and political parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of survey</th>
<th>Positive trends</th>
<th>Negative trends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>20% preferred authoritarianism; 54% thought that politicians could restore their image; 54% believed that voting is critical for change.</td>
<td>Less than 15% trust political parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>57% thought that democracy has flaws but is the best system of government.</td>
<td>57% did not mind that a non-democratic government seized power if it could solve economic problems; 8% trust political parties; 40% would vote for a political party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>61% thought that democracy has flaws but is the best system of government; 53% believed that democracy could not exist without political parties.</td>
<td>48% rejected a military government; 49% believed that voting is critical for change; 4% would work for a political party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>69% thought that democracy has flaws but is the best system of government; 52% believed that democracy could not exist without political parties.</td>
<td>47% believed that voting is critical for change; 6% would work for a political party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>60% thought that democracy has flaws but is the best system of government.</td>
<td>14% trust political parties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attitudes towards related aspects such as support for the political system and political tolerance present a more sobering situation: although 53% of Peruvians declare to be politically tolerant, Peru has some of the lowest percentages of political system support in Latin America, third only to Ecuador and Haiti. In all, only 21% of Peruvians affirmed to be supportive of the political system and politically tolerant at the same time, while 33% position themselves in the most extreme category (i.e., unsupportive and intolerant) (Carrión, Zárate & Seligson 2007). Inglehart & Welzel’s finding that Peru scored low in both the self-expression and democracy values (2003, 74, figure 4) – seems to confirm these facts.

However, the difference between positive and negative votes – in which positive votes are still above 50% despite the fact that there have been less elections between
2001 and 2006 – reveals a more positive outlook and even an improvement from the 1980 party system:

**Table 3.12: Positive vs. negative votes – Peruvian presidential elections (2001 and 2006)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001 (first round)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 (run-off)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 (first round)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 (run-off)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1980-1990</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.13: Positive vs. negative votes – Peruvian legislative elections (2001 and 2006)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1980-1990 (Senate + Deputies)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.14: Positive vs. negative votes – Peruvian regional elections (2002 and 2006)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.15: Positive vs. negative votes – Peruvian municipal elections (2002 and 2006)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002 (districts)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 (provinces)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 (districts)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 (provinces)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1980-1989</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Adapted from Tuesta Soldevilla (2005, [2008b], [2008c], [2008d], [2008e], [2008f] and [2008g])
The key in understanding these attitudinal contradictions is that Peruvians think of democracy as a way towards prosperity. That connection was already established during the 1980s (McClintock 1989, 141-142) and relates to the finding that support for the political system and political trust are contingent on personal economic outlooks (Carrión, Zárate & Seligson 2007, 10) – both very closely associated to what Powers argues. In short, democracy enables Peruvians (and Latin Americans as a whole) to realize that the welfare of all is a scarce good that is nevertheless valuable enough to aspire to and demand (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2007, 78), and if traditional parties cannot deliver that good then ad hoc parties will; otherwise, the political system could lose support. Indeed, Latinobarómetro 2006 revealed that 63% of Peruvians agree with the statement that democracy entails economic upward mobility, and that although 45% thought democracy could steer the country towards development 74% still associate it with the expectation of an improvement in their economic condition. Peru seems to be very traditional, but also values democracy – with all its defects – as the best way to close socioeconomic gaps. The politics of anti-politics is placed within this context insofar as the less established parties market themselves as more representative of voter self-interest (i.e., socioeconomic concerns).

Statistics also underscore – most importantly – why party politics in Peru currently has a positive and a negative dimension. The positive dimension is that there is

Table 3.16: Positive vs. negative votes – Average for current Peruvian party system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (with regional elections)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1980-1990</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
– as Romero has described – a “stubborn will (terca voluntad)” to institutionalize democracy in Peru, or at least its procedural variant: the percentages of positive votes are slightly larger in comparison with those from the preceding party system and are consistently above 50%. Even if we subtract the averages for regional elections (which were not included in the statistics for the prior party system because none were held between 1980 and 1992), the finding still holds. Civic rebels exist (22% believed that protest movements were effective for change [Latinobarómetro 2006]), but that contrasts with the 47% that still prizes voting and are thus identified with a party. The political sub-culture involved – as I mentioned before – is not exactly an individualistic one in Elazar’s sense, but a hybrid between individualism and moralistic ideas; in other words, when citizens conceive of democracy as a path to socioeconomic mobility, government is seen as a way to satisfy particular necessities through state intervention.

The negative dimension of Peruvian party politics relates to the very important precondition for the legitimacy of political parties in general and mainstream parties in particular: they are trustworthy insofar as they truly sustain the notion of democracy as socioeconomic progress. What makes this dimension negative is the continued perception that entrenched social elites continue with previous patterns of socioeconomic exclusion; by the same token, a democracy conceived as economic progress – along with electoral laws that set a low threshold for the creation of political parties – give an opportunity to citizens to clash against that exclusion by creating and supporting party organizations that exploit the politics of anti-politics but are nevertheless weak. In sum, Peruvians do not wholeheartedly support authoritarianism to solve their most immediate
problems, but also look for democratic solutions outside the traditional partisan offer. The expectations that underscored the 1980 party system still linger.

Those considerations regarding political culture in general and support for democracy in particular correlate perfectly with the effects of existing cleavages and the economic environment over the possibility of party system institutionalization. On a positive note, *cleavages such as the ascriptive ones that still permeate in Peru may be reflected in the penetration of parties in society*, as shown by the 2006 presidential elections. Lipset (2001) seems to be confirmed here. On a negative note, *those cleavages also point to incentives for the politics of anti-politics*. One of those incentives is reflected in the indices of support for the political system: most of the disloyal have experienced exclusion (ethnic and socioeconomic) first-hand, especially those of indigenous background and very low income living in the southern highlands (Carrión, Zárate & Seligson 2007, 10) – precisely where Ollanta Humala and Hernán Fuentes have the most support. This same region also has the lowest percentages of political tolerance and the least trust in representative institutions (Carrión, Zárate & Seligson 2007). What all this translates into is another reason to be concerned about the autonomy of the party system; since the political system has no intrinsic value for some citizens because of its lack of representativeness, instruments such as mainstream political parties lose legitimacy as well.

To conclude, the current Peruvian party system is indeed a two-faced one. One face is optimistic: the reactivation of party politics after Fujimori’s controversial tenure was an important feat and a step towards the consolidation of democracy – at least in procedural terms. The other is pessimistic: structural deficiencies still exist and cast
serious doubts on how stable this party system can be and for how long. In terms of Huntington’s criteria, autonomy and (quite possibly functional adaptability) are questionable because of persisting social divides, and that weakness in turn threatens chronological adaptability. It may also threaten coherence, since the effects of social divides and exclusion may also influence the opinion that certain sectors are left outside the established boundaries of the system (i.e., a possible crisis of representation). Moreover, complexity is perhaps too high in terms of the number of parties, but the reason for it is extrinsic to the party system. It is too early to determine the levels of generational adaptability in this party system given the fact that it has been only 8 years or so since inception, but existent concerns with autonomy and functional adaptability (because they cement negative popular attitudes) can also affect this characteristic.

*An assessment of alternative explanations*

1. The number of parties

The fact that two anti-party organizations became more popular than mainstream parties in 1990 could motivate some to say that the prior party system exemplifies the dangers of multipartyism. Midlarsky could also argue that two elements of systemic stability – the restoration of party competition and its restraint by balance – were absent, particularly since Peru never had a parliamentary system or a legislature in which party coalitions were encouraged. Huntington’s (1968) concern with political parties being too connected to social forces seems warranted by this case, especially by how APRA and IU were supported by the socially disenfranchised. Perhaps most importantly, Roberts & Wibbels’s argument that shorter distances between parties in a multiparty system enhance
volatility. The lone exception seems to be Powell Jr.: Peru did have Marxist parties, but their electoral support was negligible. However, a closer look at the facts of how and why this party system collapsed suggest that widespread disenchantment with mainstream parties – rather than the total number – is the most plausible explanation. In other words, the collapse was not caused by fragmentation, but by a sentiment that was extensive to most parties. The Peruvian case is an example of Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez’s definition of a crisis of representation (it was included in their volume as such). That latter statement acquires a special character when contrasted with the argument of Roberts & Wibbels: in the discussion of electoral volatility I presented in chapter II, I argued that something had to compel voters to switch allegiances from one party to another. Tanaka’s (1998) findings describe what caused this electoral volatility.

The current Peruvian party system is also a multiparty one, but although the types of extremist parties mentioned by Powell Jr. are still in the fringes it is difficult to ascertain at this point if there is a two-party or even a three-party tendency because fragmentation and vote dispersion are higher than before. Still, any crisis in the current party system may be similar to what undermined the 1980 Peruvian party system, so it is likely that the number of parties by itself will not be a deciding factor. In any case, Mainwaring & Torcal (1999) and Mair (2006a) are still critical of the use of the numeric variable because it does not tell anything about the inner workings of party systems or about their institutionalization.
2. Cognitive mobilization

As I did in the Venezuelan case, I will now compare education and service sector employment statistics taken from the World Bank for Peru with those for the United States in order to analyze cognitive mobilization. The methodology I followed for this case is the same as the Venezuelan case. Likewise, the conclusions I present are tentative, pending a replication of Dalton’s research. The year 1981 was chosen because it was the first full year under the 1980 party system for which information could be found. 1990 is the obvious endpoint for that party system, and 2001 was the start of the current one.

My main finding is that **cognitive mobilization does not explain the inner workings of the 1980 party system and presents inconclusive findings for the current one.** Once again, I start with college enrollment:

**Table 3.17: Enrollment in college (tertiary) education – Peru and the United States**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>277,304</td>
<td>678,236</td>
<td>831,345</td>
<td>952,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>12,096,895</td>
<td>13,710,150</td>
<td>13,202,880</td>
<td>17,487,475</td>
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**Table 3.18: Total population – Peru and the United States**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>17,761,216</td>
<td>21,762,177</td>
<td>26,321,032</td>
<td>27,588,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>227,224,990</td>
<td>256,097,549</td>
<td>284,857,668</td>
<td>302,841,222</td>
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**Table 3.19: Percentage of the total population enrolled in college education – Peru and the United States**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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As the numbers show, less Peruvians were (or are) enrolled in college in comparison with the US, but in the case of the 1980 party system Tanaka (1998) has concluded that ideology was a very visible element. By the same token, the percentages of positive votes for the party system are high. **Both facts contradict the main argument of cognitive**
mobilization because the college age population is very small; in other words, Peruvians in 1980 did not acquire an interest in politics or in party politics through access higher education. What is likely to be the explanation is a process of external socialization represented by cleavages and the economic environment. The percentage of the population enrolled in college increased substantially by 1990, but that does not explain the collapse of the party system because it does not point to the deficiencies in the partisan offer that were not ignored by citizens at large, including the least likely to be cognitively mobilized (i.e., those with limited or no access to college education, which were also the most likely affected by structural poverty and exclusion). At the same time, the crisis of representation of 1990 meant that mainstream parties were rejected, not party politics or interest in politics in general – all of that facilitated Fujimori’s election.

In the case of the current party system, low enrollment in college education does not correlate with high percentages of positive votes; hence, Peruvians are not cognitively mobilized and are rather externally socialized through cleavages and the economic environment. However, Peruvians are said to fall within the Latin American “norm” of lack of interest in politics: although 20% tries to convince acquaintances about political views, as opposed to 16% for Latin America (Latinobarómetro 2006), it implies that 80% are not interested. At the same time, political mobilization despite low college enrollment also relates to threats to party system institutionalization coming in part from the “politics of anti-politics.”

No service sector employment statistics were found for any year before 1990, so there cannot be any conclusions for the 1980 party system. From 1990 onwards, the statistics obtained show an interesting aspect: more Peruvians were employed in the
service sector between 1990 and 2005 than in the US, even if the difference between both countries is minimal (World Bank 2007).

Table 3.20: Percentage of the labor force in the service sector – Peru and the United States

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>76</td>
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In a confirmation of Sullivan & Transue (1999), Peruvians favor democracy as the best system of government despite its flaws. Instead of negative cognitive mobilization (i.e., less party identification from service sector employment), Peruvians seem to be experiencing positive cognitive mobilization (i.e., more party identification), especially since the percentages of positive votes in recent elections still surpass 50%. In the same way it occurs with college enrollment, current party identification shows the relevance of exogenous variables such as the economic environment and political culture, but also shows the influence of the “politics of anti-politics” and does not correlate with the aforementioned low percentages of political awareness.

In sum, cognitive mobilization is neither an accurate nor a conclusive descriptor of stability in both the 1980 and current party systems because the available statistics are contradictory. On the one hand, the correlation between service sector employment and ideas towards politics is ostensibly confirmed by the available statistical data, but the correlation between increased access to higher education and ideas towards politics is not fully substantiated.

36 These numbers were obtained through my own calculation of averages based on the percentages of males and females in the sector for the 1990-1992 and 2000-2005 periods.
3. Interpersonal trust

No statistics of interpersonal trust could be found for any year between 1979 and 1994; hence, it is very difficult to reach any definitive conclusions for the 1980 party system. Intuitively, though, the moralistic sub-culture adopted by the major parties might have established the pertinent links between sympathizers, while the commitment to constitutional order exhibited by the political class prevented any instance of disloyal opposition. In addition, dissatisfaction with party organizations and the reinforcement of social exclusions may have cut the ties of trust between political leaders and their followers, undermining party identification in the process and underscoring partisan dealignment. That, however, does not explain the appearance of FREDEMO and Cambio 90 as organizations composed of like-minded but previously unrelated individuals intent on collective political action.

The same logic is also applicable to the current party system, for which there is more statistical information on interpersonal trust. Klesner (2007) argues that political activism in Peru is indeed determined by interpersonal trust, but also that there are very few instances of interaction that provide such an opportunity. In this case, those forms are limited to church community, cultural and health advocacy groups. The 2004, 2006, and 2007 Latinobarómetro surveys also confirm this apparent lack of interpersonal trust among Peruvians:

Table 3.21: Interpersonal trust in Peru (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
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Note: This question was not included in the 2005 report.

The numbers are mostly consistent; except for 2006, interpersonal trust ranged between 11 and 16% – a relatively narrow margin (5%). Although Peruvians are said to have high
levels of participation in voluntary organizations, it may actually respond to lack of trust in political parties (Morón and Sanborn 2006, 55) than to partisanship in general. Also, Peruvians are said to be among the least willing to show social solidarity and join political organizations (35% said they would, lower than the Latin American mean of 37%) (Latinobarómetro 2007), which indicates a considerably high level of individualism.

However, not everything seems to have been lost: in the 2006 election (perhaps coinciding with the highest percentage of interpersonal trust recorded so far), APRA and UN finished the first round almost tied (20 and 19% respectively) and APRA trailed UPP by 5 percentage points. Paraphrasing Putnam (2005), *if interpersonal trust is low, voluntary organizations like political parties would be much more difficult to come by and political participation would diminish;* as a result, civil society would be more difficult to sustain. In a less positive but still similar vein, the creation of organizations alongside the lines of the politics of anti-politics points to the fact that Peruvians can still coalesce around specific issues and work in concert. It also shows that there is still a civil society despite the legacies of *fujimorismo,* and what has been mentioned during the analysis of political culture is important in this respect. In other words, there are still people willing to cooperate with each other for the achievement of political goals, especially if they relate to social mobility.

Loyal opposition was visible during the 1980 party system because *there were no indications of particular politicians or political parties that would overstep the boundaries of the political system in response to electoral setbacks* despite the highly ideologized character of the party system. In the case of the current party system, whether
or not there is loyal opposition is not readily evident, but it could be hypothesized that political leaders like Ollanta Humala and Hernán Fuentes are a source of disloyal opposition; at least, they are the most representative figures of existing attitudes towards disloyalty to the political system. While on the one hand the continued existence of parties might lead to a veneer of interpersonal trust, on the other hand the popularity and pervasive anti-system rhetoric of those two politicians – coupled with dissatisfaction with Alan García’s current presidency – may create the conditions for a post-electoral showdown. Inglehart’s view of loyal opposition is still warranted, but only when considered as part of other exogenous variables such as cleavages, political culture, and the economic environment.

In sum, an assessment of interpersonal trust in Peru and how does it relate to party politics is very complicated and information for the 1980 party system is lacking. In turn, what has been found for the current one does not consistently point to either positive or negative effects. Peru confirms the finding stated repeatedly by the Latinobarómetro surveys that interpersonal trust is low throughout Latin America, but such a finding should have resulted in a direr situation for party politics in general. While the current picture is still not positive, party system collapse has not occurred yet.

Conclusion

Competitive party interactions during the 1980 and current Peruvian party systems are connected to the assumption of partisan self-interest, but only in part. We cannot make sense of how the parties interacted with each other and of any concerns regarding institutionalization without considering the influence of four exogenous
variables that have appeared in the two systems: political culture, state intervention through the electoral system, the economic environment, and cleavages.

For the 1980 party system, party interactions were sustained by a pro-democratic political culture that originated in grassroots mobilization during the last military regime, sociological cleavages that embedded political parties in society, long-harbored concerns about economic stability that influenced party identification, and a state that gave structural incentives for partisanship. It all seemed to work well because partisan self-interest was strengthened and the system was on its way to institutionalization. However, as time wore on, successes were overcome by flaws and full institutionalization was not achieved. The details of how and why the system collapsed can be found in self-interest, political culture, and state intervention; more precisely, the party system ignored the socioeconomic demands that sustained it at first because of rent-seeking behavior encouraged by electoral rules, a lack of serious interest in reform, strict party discipline that stifled internal debate, and pervading patrimonialism. Although there were cleavages, party system collapse was rather a function of a crisis of representation and not of governability; however, those cleavages were connected to the economic environment and represented expectations that were placed on parties, particularly the major ones. When those expectations were ignored, Peruvians were convinced that the major parties were less effective than ad hoc political groups or politicians like Fujimori.

In the current party system, the aforementioned exogenous variables are also significant, especially as an indication of present challenges for institutionalization. Party rationality is not lost and politicians are less reckless than before, but concerns regarding rent seeking still linger. Socioeconomic cleavages continue and that should have created
a closer connection between parties and society, but the opposite effect is more plausible because it is connected to disloyalty to the political system, especially within those who have experienced exclusion. The electoral system was bolstered by laws that intended to promote partisanship but have not provided a reasonable limit for the creation of parties; hence, the system is still fragmented. Nevertheless, fragmentation is not the largest concern. Political culture is more committed to democracy after Fujimori and that should have also contributed to institutionalization, but his rhetoric has created serious skepticism against traditional political parties as effective instruments of representation and interest aggregation. By the same token, support for democracy is heavily dependent on popular expectations for economic advancement, which explain why Peruvians support the idea of democracy but are generally dissatisfied with its quality. The negative repercussions of those three exogenous variables amount to the politics of anti-politics currently existing in Peru, as well as the lingering possibility of another crisis of representation and its subsequent system collapse.

The expectations placed on parties also indicates that causal complexity is plausible because it connects the four exogenous variables in question. In 1980, most Peruvians (especially those of indigenous descent) were beset by structural poverty and found an opportunity to demand action from the government when democracy resumed, although there was already a tendency – set during the last military regime – towards participation in public affairs encouraged by the state. In fact, citizens embraced that opportunity and adopted it as part their accepted set of behaviors, especially for aggregating and articulating cleavages and attitudes toward economic development. State institutions were also instrumental because they reproduced democratic political culture.
values, especially participation in public affairs and moderation (the latter imposed by electoral rules). Partisan self-interest was unfolded against that setting, and how it unfolded – as well as unresolved flaws with the electoral system – resulted in negative popular perceptions. In the case of the current party system, those expectations are still there: opinion polls have revealed that resolving the problem of economic hardship is at the very core of popular support for democracy in Peru, but bridging existing cleavages may also be just as primordial. So long as established parties do not solve those problems to the satisfaction of citizens with a vested interest, the “politics of anti-politics” inherited from the Fujimori years is likely to continue.

The same consideration stated in the case of Venezuela can be presented here: an allegedly non-democratic candidate resorting successfully to democratic means. The larger question is if Fujimori’s participation in a party system that he considered faulty actually legitimized it, although he was the product of how the system became incoherent in the opinion of many. If we grant that Fujimori’s purpose was not to legitimize the party system or perhaps democracy itself because – as Gutiérrez Sanín [2005] argues – he represented a chasm between the political class and ordinary Peruvians, such position was expressed under democratic political culture (because it prizes participation in public affairs) and crystallized effectively through state decisions that structured the vote maximization capabilities of his political machine. The question then becomes if Fujimori utilized democratic means as tools to seize power and externalize his opinion of procedural democracy. If Fujimori – once in power – was impatient with democratic institutions to the point of concocting the 1992 autogolpe, why would he create a political party and compete for the presidency under those institutions?
Most importantly, what does the future hold for the Peruvian party system? Will Alan García and APRA restore the lost faith in party politics? Will there be a Peruvian Hugo Chávez? At this point, an answer to those questions is impossible to offer with absolute certainty, but we can take sides with Tanaka and argue that the 2003 Law of Political Parties is “a step in the right direction (2005, 107).” We can also take that argument even further. The exogenous variables of political culture and cleavages – taken together into one whole – point to two facts: 1. Peru has had socioeconomic differences that go back to the colonial period and have seeped into party politics, leaving a mark in political competition for more than 100 years; and 2. Redressing them in the form of a fully inclusive democratic system is a major priority. Those two facts, in turn, describe very vividly the current two-faced character of party politics in Peru – how it has been beset by a crisis, how it has recovered from it, and how it could relapse into crisis again. They also make us consider the much larger context of exclusion and anti-partyism connecting political culture and cleavages with partisan self-interest, and it is here where a possible solution to the current flaws of the party system can be found. It will not only take a revision of current laws in order to reduce fragmentation to a more manageable point, but also an understanding on the part of political parties that they are part of – and accountable to – a larger context. That understanding could do much good in restoring the trust of Peruvians in their political parties.
Guillermo O’Donnell’s characterization of Argentine politics between 1955 and 1966 as an “impossible game” has become a mainstay of the analysis of Latin American politics since it appeared in his celebrated 1973 study. However, if we look closely at how Argentine political parties and party systems have developed, we could say that party politics were always an impossible game because there were express prohibitions or institutional obstacles that have compelled some groups to employ extreme measures. It is very likely that the “impossible game” image is a good description of political behavior not exclusive to a specific period in time, but more embedded in Argentina’s political history. The question then becomes whether party politics in Argentina at the present time has seen an improvement; in fact, more than 20 years after democratic transition and more than 40 since the last turn in the original game, we should ponder if party politics currently offers real incentives to anyone willing to participate. The answer to this question has tremendous implications not just for the study and practice of party politics in Argentina, but in Latin America as well.

It is the image of an “impossible game” what could encourage some analysts to argue that an application of the term “party system” is difficult in Argentina. Indeed, one aspect that will be clear in this case study is that some political parties were either systematically cast aside from competition or overpowered by a hegemonic party. None of that, however, undermines party interactions as the best descriptor of party politics in this case study because of the obvious existence of specific patterns throughout Argentine history. Also, hegemonic-party systems are legitimate party systems because they allow for competition, even if it is very minimal. Likewise, elections were held and political
parties competed even in periods of significant political restrictions (such as the one between 1930 and 1943). Most importantly, Juan Abal Medina & Julieta Suárez Cao—who rely heavily on Peter Mair’s (2006a) analysis—make three influential arguments: first, the hegemonic tendencies Argentine political parties have always had proves the existence of a party system; second, the behavior of those parties—though not the most desirable—does not infirm the existence of a pattern of interactions at all; and third, the orientation of the major parties towards winning elections in fair competition makes a description of inter-party antagonisms accurate (2002, 165-166).

With all that in mind, the case-oriented part of this chapter will focus on the party systems of 1973 to 1976 and the current one, preceded by an overview of Argentine party politics. The overview will advance the argument that Argentine party politics was an impossible game—perhaps not exactly in O’Donnell’s sense, but as an indication that there were few incentives (if any) for certain party organizations to participate in party politics. In the case of some of those parties (i.e. Unión Cívica Radical [UCR] and the Peronists), that situation was averted by externalizing their hegemonic tendencies. Most importantly, the tug-of-war between hegemonic parties and reactionary forces has influenced the events that finally unfurled by the 1970s.

For the variable-oriented section, I argue that the pattern of competitive interactions that characterized the 1973 party system included a combination of partisan self-interest, state intervention (i.e., electoral rules), and political cleavages. Indeed, the interactions between parties were influenced by the confrontation between Peronism and its detractors within and particularly outside the party system. In the current party system, the self-interested motives of political parties combined with political cleavages, state
intervention, the economic environment, and a political culture strongly supportive of democracy; however, the crisis of 2001-2002 redefined political culture and cleavages. We should not conclude that the crisis set the stage for the collapse of this party system, but for its transformation; hence, I will talk about one party system with two different phases – one between 1983 and 2001, and another from 2001 to the present. The reason for including a single party system is that all along the most visible political forces have been Peronism and UCR – the two poles of what some consider as a two-party system and I will define as a multiparty system with two-party dynamics. In turn, the reason for dividing this party system into two different phases is that the crisis transformed the party system to a strictly multiparty one where Peronism is fragmented but still exists, UCR has weakened severely but is still present, and there are new political parties with aspirations of becoming influential forces.

_Hegemony and its discontents_

Colonial Argentina had a singular history; not only did it produce cotton, wheat, rice, and leather, but also had critical access to the sea (which fostered trade). Nevertheless, it was also not suitable for the type of socioeconomic system that Spain imposed during the early stages of its empire, which was based on the mass exploitation of indigenous peoples. Only the northern and central regions experienced significant development as parts of the affluent Viceroyalty of Peru, relegating the trade hub of Buenos Aries to a much lower status. The situation changed in 1776, when border disputes with and smuggling from Portuguese Brazil compelled Spain to create the Viceroyalty of La Plata with Buenos Aires as its seat and eventual major trade center.
However, the landowners in the western and northwestern territories had closer relations with Chile and Peru, sowing the seeds for regional fragmentation. Those differences were briefly pushed aside as simmering discontent with colonial rule resulted in Argentina’s separation from Spanish rule in 1810, although it would not be until 1816 that a formal declaration of independence would be proclaimed (Skidmore & Smith 2001, 69; Gardner Munro 1960; Bailey & Nasatir 1968; Rippy 1958).

The very genesis of Argentina as a sovereign state was fraught by divisions between clericals and anti-clericals and most particularly between center (the city and province of Buenos Aires) and periphery (the interior territories, later called provinces).\(^1\) The center / periphery divide was primarily economic, since independence from Spain meant an economic bonanza for the province of Buenos Aires but caused three problems for the provinces: their economic ties with Chile and Peru were cut, the importation of cheaper goods from Europe was driving producers out of business, and profits were undercut by taxes levied in Buenos Aires on goods exported from the interior. Those divisions were present at the meeting in which the Argentine declaration of independence was drafted, held in the town of Tucumán; and remained unresolved when a constitutional assembly was enacted in 1853. The constitution established a federal system and mandated the nationalization of the city of Buenos Aires, but the provincial government did not ratify the document and that latter provision was not made official. Political strife would ensue until the 1870s without resolving that issue (Bailey & Nasatir 1968; Gardner Munro 1960).

\(^1\) In terms of cleavages, McGuire argues that at this point the clerical dimension was weak because none of the existing political groups were decidedly anti-clerical, and the center/periphery cleavage ceased to exist when the province of Buenos Aires asserted its power over the rest of the nation (1995, 227). Gibson (1996) disagrees with McGuire in regard to the center/periphery cleavage.
By the 1880s, Argentina became an important global economic actor by utilizing its comparative advantage as a producer of cattle and wheat to the United Kingdom, which in turn made investments in infrastructure. The province of Buenos Aires reaped the ancillary benefits thanks to its coastal infrastructure, customs revenues, and the stocks of cattle and wheat raised and grown in the *pampas* (the rural portion of the province) (Carlino & Stuart 2005, 105-106; Skidmore & Smith 2001, 70; Gibson 1996, 45; Gardner Munro 1960, 185); yet that created a cleavage separating the province and the rest of the country (Gibson 1996, 45). At the same time, the agro-exporting sector became a new political class – the “generation of 1880” – and ushered the creation of a bevy of political parties that represented a multiplicity of local interests (Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 170; Bailey & Nasatir 1968, 376). One of those parties became Argentina’s first nationwide political party: the Partido Autonomista Nacional (PAN), which took the cause of all Argentine landowners (Gibson 1996) and was the center of an “incumbent-party hegemony (McGuire 1995, 204).” Also noteworthy was that the city of Buenos Aires was finally nationalized after another civil war that broke out in June of that year (Gardner Munro 1960, 184; Gallo 1986, 360-361).

One aspect that characterized PAN hegemony was how it coordinated the various levels of government, especially since the system established by the 1853 constitution was open to the co-optation of one level of government by another (Bailey & Nasatir 1968, 376). Moreover, laws passed by the legislature had to be non-threatening to executive power, and policymaking was the product of agreements between executive officials. The electoral college system in place facilitated those agreements, but its propensity to fraud – combined with consistently low turnout – fueled skepticism about
the effectiveness of party politics. The provinces were given presence in policymaking, but the national government maintained control through an inefficient but calculated system based on patronage and the power of “federal intervention,” by which provincial governments could be taken over by the national government (Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 170; Gibson 1996; Gallo 1986; McGuire 1995, 205). There were other elite-based political parties (mostly local) with significant strength, but the PAN had the advantage not only by dominating the national government (very often, the party president was also the head of state), but also because it was better organized and had a consistent following. In turn, those who were part of opposition parties were sometimes barred from public life (Gallo 1986), and the parties themselves either withered away or were co-opted by stronger organizations (McGuire 1995, 204-205).

Yet in the long run the PAN reckoned itself with a number of political actors, particularly with the middle class. In 1889, a society known as Unión Cívica³ (UC) was formed with the purpose of political reform, staging an armed revolt against the PAN a year later. Both groups reached an agreement, but some left UC in protest and created Unión Cívica Radical (UCR) in 1892, led by activist Leandro Alem and later by his nephew, Hipólito Yrigoyen. UCR represented the middle class and progressive members of the pampa elite and was critical of the PAN, but it also advocated for the same agro-exporting economic model supported by the latter (with added input from the middle class). Its initial acquiescence to PAN hegemony ended by 1905, when UCR staged a second revolt that ended as unsuccessfully as the first (McGuire 1995, 205; Skidmore & Smith 2001, 80; Vacs 2006, 400; Gallo 1986; Bailey & Nasatir 1968, 549).

² See also Carlino and Stuart 2005, 106; McGuire 1995, 203-204; and Skidmore & Smith 2001, 78.
³ Gibson believes that Unión Cívica was a splinter group from the ruling elite (1996, 48). Gallo, in turn, argues that opposition parties did not offer concrete proposals of their own for electoral reform (1986, 386).
The 1905 uprising coincided with internal divisions within the PAN (Gallo 1986, 388) and set in motion a pivotal process. Concerned by the conspiratorial activities of UCR and confident that it could win future elections without resorting to fraud, PAN reformists proposed what became the Sáenz Peña Law⁴, which made voting secret, mandatory, and extensive to all male citizens 18 years of age and older (Vacs 2006, 400-401; Rock 1986). With party competition set over more visible standards of fairness, UCR saw incentives for the creation of a more coherent national organization and its full participation in the existing party system (McGuire 1995, 206), achieving electoral successes in 1912 and 1913 (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 801-802). The PAN reformists coalesced around a coalition of provincial parties known as Partido Demócrata Progresista (PDP), but the Buenos Aires oligarchy – assembled around the Conservative Party – refused to join (Gallo 1986, 388-389; Gibson 1996, 49-50). Yrigoyen won the presidential election of 1916 with a share that amounted to almost half of the total vote (339,332 votes) (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 812).

The “generation of 1880” (hereafter conservatives) expected Yrigoyen to maintain the status quo ante in return for the passage of electoral reform and his policies were acquiescent at first, but when Yrigoyen and the conservative-dominated national legislature squabbled for the allocation and spending of public funds the former resorted to federal intervention in conservative-dominated provinces in an attempt to change the composition of the national legislature. As a result, UCR obtained the majority in the

⁴ There are other important details underlying the history of the Sáenz Peña Law, which was named after its originator – President Roque Sáenz Peña. First, UCR was not the only political force involved; labor and anarchist movements and the Socialist Party (created in 1894) were also active. Also, the PAN reformists – themselves only moderately anti-democratic – appeared during a process of early urbanization that, in conjunction with the internal characteristics of the landowning elite as a whole, sowed the seeds for the establishment of full democracy (Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens 1992).
Chamber of Deputies in 1918 (Rock 1986, 429-431). Other disputes happened when Yrigoyen started a policy of case-by-case intervention in labor disputes (Skidmore & Smith 2001, 80; McGuire 1995, 206; Rock 1986, 433): it was applauded by workers, but rejected by conservatives (Rock 1986, 433). In December 1918, a metal workers’ strike hastened what became known as the “Tragic Week” (“Semana Trágica”), in which conservatives formed armed groups that were responsible for the deaths of some 200 people. Violence subsided after a quick but violent operation to restore order (Rock 1986, 434-435; McGuire 1995, 207).

The middle class was also concerned about increasing labor agitation, and the PDP took advantage of the situation by trying to win their favor; still, Yrigoyen fought back by resorting to more federal interventions and dispensing patronage. With that, UCR kept the PDP at bay in the legislative elections of 1920 and in the presidential election of 1922, by which the conservatives were once again divided (Rock 1986, 435-436; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 825). Because the 1853 constitution prohibited the immediate reelection of the president, Yrigoyen supported the candidacy of rancher Marcelo T. De Alvear, who won the presidency with 48% of the vote (McGuire 1995, 207). Yet Yrigoyen’s favoritism towards middle-class activists alienated the oligarchic faction of UCR, which joined the conservatives in their rejection of Yrigoyen’s leadership, his economic policies, and his patronage tactics (Rock 1986, 436).

A serious economic slowdown and the threat of bankruptcy – both caused by decreasing international demand for Argentine frozen and canned beef – forced De Alvear to cut government spending and reduce the public debt, which affected UCR stalwarts dependent on patronage. De Alvear also dismissed Yrigoyen’s political

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5 At that time, legislators were appointed by the provincial legislatures.
appointees (Rock 1986, 440-441) and became more conciliatory with the conservatives (McGuire 1995, 207) – two decisions that were also controversial. Eventually, De Alvear’s initiatives precipitated a split: by 1924, the party’s legislative bloc pledged allegiance to Yrigoyen, and blocked presidential proposals. The remainder became known as “antipersonalists” because they resented Yrigoyen’s “personalist” (i.e., autocratic) leadership. De Alvear took sides at first with the antipersonalists, but withdrew his support in 1925 in an effort to unify UCR (Rock 1986, 441). Then, Yrigoyen took control of the party in 1928 and presided over its reconstitution as a nationally-recognized (and mainly middle-class) political organization (McGuire 1995, 207; Rock 1996, 441-442). That spelled disaster for the conservatives, whose support of democracy now started to weaken (Rock 1986, 442-443; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 82).

Yrigoyen won the presidential election of 1928 with 60% of the vote, but conservative opposition was now much more entrenched and fanatical. He was able to hold his ground for a time, but the crash of 1929 and the ensuing global economic depression resulted in a major crisis. The government decreed fiscal austerity, but it cost valuable political support and coincided with an increase in unemployment. Factionalism within the Cabinet ensued, accusations of corruption were rife, and demonstrations against Yrigoyen spiked (Rock 1986, 448-451). The electoral consequences were also significant: not only did the conservatives won over many middle-class voters (Vacs 2006, 401), but UCR saw its legislative vote share drastically reduced, and lost the Buenos Aires mayoral election (Rock 1986, 451; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 863). Perhaps more ominously, conservatives found allies in the military, which was always suspicious of politicians and despised Yrigoyen for condoning political favoritism in rank
promotions (Rock 1986, 451; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 83). Although the idea of a coup was not wholly popular within the military, those who participated forced Yrigoyen’s resignation on September 6, 1930. A brutal squabble for succession ensued amongst the members of the divided Cabinet, while the ousted president was banished to an island-prison in the estuary of the Plata River, where he died in 1933 (Rock 1986, 451-452).

With Yrigoyen gone, conservatives were gleeful: not only they were appointed to Cabinet posts by the new government (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 868), but also hoped to reestablish the export-oriented economy of decades past; unfortunately, the global economic crisis made agro-exportation impossible to sustain (Snow 1965, 3; Vacs 2006, 402). Furthermore, the military already concluded that changing the rules of the political game was the most effective solution to the recent instability, resulting in a long period of military tutelage (Cavarozzi 2001, 47) in which there would be a wide chasm between political society and the military, though intervention in politics would also create chasms of their own within the military itself (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 873). The de facto head of state, General José Uriburu planned to impose restrictions on suffrage and establish a fascist-like corporatist state in order to minimize political mobilization, assuming that all anti-Yrigoyenists would support the plan and that UCR was unable to recover from the coup. In reality, the anti-Yrigoyenists only shared the desire to oust Yrigoyen but not Uriburu’s intentions, proving that the coup was actually an improvised and underprepared affair (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 869-871). Uriburu was initially supported by groups such as the PDP and the antipersonalists, but most of the existing parties withdrew their support when the plan was announced and took sides with a more liberal faction represented by General Agustín Justo (Floria &
On April 5, 1931, Buenos Aires province held an election that intended to be the first step towards the realization of Uribiru’s grand scheme, but the winner was a UCR candidate; in turn, Justo attempted unsuccessfully to court favor with De Alvear. However, a countercoup was discovered the following July and Uriburu took it as a pretext to unleash a wave of repression against UCR. The results of the Buenos Aires election were annulled in the following October. UCR reacted by abstaining from the electoral process, while the conservatives joined forces with the antipersonalists and other groups (except the PDP) under Concordancia Nacional, which proclaimed Justo as its presidential candidate. The presidential elections were held in November and Justo won easily with the help of the de facto regime. His presidency would be eased by a virtual dominance of the Concordancia in the national legislature, and was characterized by a chameleonic stance aimed towards courting favor with the military and society at large. Ironically, given Justo’s participation in the 1930 coup, he was also able to subordinate the military to civilian authority (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 871-874).

UCR abandoned its abstentionist stance by 1935 and participated in a number of races for provincial governorships (including Buenos Aires) and in the Deputy elections of 1936, winning in Entre Ríos and Córdoba (a conservative bastion) and increasing its number of elected deputies; but lost the fraudulent Buenos Aires race. UCR then demanded military arbitration in all subsequent elections, but Justo rejected it out of his
stated position of military independence from civilian politics. However, Justo still had the threat of authoritarianism at his disposal; along with electoral fraud, it enabled him to keep UCR and all opposition at a safe distance. New presidential elections were scheduled for September 1937, for which UCR chose De Alvear as its candidate and Roberto Ortíz became the Concordancia nominee. The latter won convincingly, but accusations of fraud were levied (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 881-887).

During the next several years, with World War II about to start, Italian fascism and German Nazism influenced many Argentines deeply fearful of Marxism, including many in the military; however, constant electoral fraud during Justo’s presidency already fanned skepticism and displeasure with conservatives and even with liberal democracy itself. The Concordancia remained in control and, facing a debilitated opposition, was poised to win the next presidential election, but at the same time military nationalists created the Grupo de Oficiales Unidos [GOU]), a pro-fascist organization. The GOU believed that a military coup was necessary as a way to chastise conservative governments, but its longer-term goals and specific policies were unknown. Despite that flaw, the coup was carried out on June 4, 1943 without any serious resistance and General Arturo Rawson – who became the new head of state (Floria & García Belsunce 2004) – ordered the immediate dissolution of the legislative branch and the prohibition of political parties in 1944 (Skidmore & Smith 2001, 84-85, McGuire 1995, 208). Nevertheless, after his appointment of two conservatives for the ministries of Justice and Treasury, the stunned military conspirators forced Rawson to resign after only two days. His substitute, General Pedro Pablo Ramírez, was also forced out after a struggle within
the GOU between supporters of the Allies and of the Axis. General Edelmiro J. Farrell became the new head of government (Flora & García Belsunce 2003).

In the meantime, a new labor organization entered the political arena in 1930: the General Confederation of Workers (Confederación General del Trabajo, CGT). Although Socialists, Communists, and anarchists mobilized Argentine workers for decades, the CGT was different in that it advanced its agenda outside the party system. Taking advantage of a two-fold increase in the number of industrial workers from 1935 to 1943, it soon became the largest labor union in the country (McGuire 1995, 208); yet by 1943 the CGT was divided on how to interact with the GOU: one faction insisted in remaining independent from any partisan orientation, and the other faction became more sympathetic to the Socialist Party. The former could have had a better chance at successful negotiations, while the latter placed itself squarely against the government (Gastiazoro 2004, 68). In the midst of this environment, a new political figure forged ties with the Socialist faction of the CGT: Colonel Juan Domingo Perón. An ambitious army officer of middle-class upbringing and part of the GOU coup, he was involved with the military government in various capacities (Minister of Labor, Vice Minister and later Minister of War, and finally Vice President), but most importantly he won massive worker support by spearheading sweeping labor reforms, supporting labor strikes, and leading the organization of rural workers (Gastiazoro 2004; McGuire 1995, 209; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 85; Flora & García Belsunce 2003; Abal Medina & Suáez Cao 2002, 171). He allegedly had some sympathies for UCR (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 910) and at one point he even considered being its presidential candidate, but that idea did not materialize (McGuire 1995, 209).
With the imminent defeat of fascism and Nazism by the Allies, Farrell lifted the prohibition against political parties in May 1945 (Gastiazoro 2004, 72) and called in July for presidential elections to be held late in the year (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 917), but popular discontent against the military government did not cease (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 916). Escalating opposition deprived Perón of many supporters within the military, and the resulting internecine intrigues forced his resignation from the government on October 9 and shortly afterwards in his arrest and incarceration. Days later, workers staged a massive and spontaneous manifestation (*pueblada*) demanding his release (Floria & García Belsunce 2004), forcing Farrell to reschedule the presidential election to February 24, 1946 (Gastiazoro 2004, 79)\(^6\).

Although UCR held a national convention in December 1945 where it prepared its government program and selected its presidential candidate (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 922), the *pueblada* provoked a reconfiguration of political forces by mobilizing Perón supporters: renegade Radicals formed UCR-Junta Renovadora (UCR-JR), dissident conservatives created the Independent Party (*Partido Independiente*), and two other new parties (Alianza Liberadora Nacionalista, and the Laborist Party [*Partido Laborista*]) also appeared. Facing Perón was Unión Democrática (UD), a hastily-assembled and improbable coalition composed of UCR traditionalists, the PDP, Socialists, and Communists. The conservatives did not join, but nevertheless instructed their supporters to vote for the anti-Perón coalition. The national and local press did not expect Perón to win and even the US State Department took part of the campaign by making public a document that described Nazi Germany’s activities in Argentina with the pretense of

\(^6\) Abal Medina (h.) & Suárez Cao argue that those presidential elections were the result of conservative rejection to the social policies implemented by the GOU government (2002, 171).
defaming Perón, but he nevertheless won the election with 52% of the total vote against the 43% obtained by UD. Perón’s supporters also seized the legislative majority and most of the provincial governments (McGuire 1995, 209-210; Vacs 2006, 403; Gastiazoro 2004, 80-81; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 924).

Immediately after the electoral victory, Perón’s coalition was on the verge of rupture and conceded that unification was imperative; indeed, divisions surfaced between workers and a political faction. For a time, the Laborists – which gathered the majority of votes for Perón (McGuire 1995, 209) – opposed unification, while the CGT (the largest component of Perón’s legislative majority and the centerpiece of his supremacy), UCR-JR, and the Independents defended internal autonomy (Floria & García Belsunce 2004). In the end, all groups acquiesced to unification after Perón’s leadership settle the issue, and his coalition became known as Partido Unico de la Revolución, later renamed Peronist Party (Partido Peronista, PP) in 1947 (McGuire 1995, 210; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 925). While it had defined goals and an attractive program, the PP nevertheless lacked ideological precision; hence, efforts were made to create a doctrine (doctrina justicialista) that would provide a coherent rationale for Perón’s charismatic leadership, based on the constant manifestation of solidarity and loyalty through street demonstrations and day-to-day partisan work. That doctrine also stressed cooperation between social classes, social justice, economic policies aimed towards self-sufficiency, and a foreign policy that would guarantee Argentina’s political sovereignty (Floria & García Belsunce 2004).

Likewise, the PP became the manifestation of Peronism as an anti-oligarchic political movement in which the lower sectors were said to be represented and
enfranchised, but in reality they were not (Cheresky 2000, 50; Manzetti 1993, 81). It also represented a contradiction: while the PP was an legitimate political party, Peronism was nevertheless disdainful towards liberal democracy and rejected party politics (Cheresky 2000, 50). Moreover, the PP was not as rationally organized as other mass parties because Perón was more concerned with the plebiscitarian aspects of political power than with party organization, even if it discouraged the creation of an independent cadre of leaders that could perpetuate the party. An important element of the party organization was Perón’s wife, Eva (“Evita”) Duarte; a radio personality with charisma and ambitions that matched her husband’s, she created a power base of her own and became the first leader of the Peronist women’s section in 1949, making it her personal domain (McGuire 1995, 210-211). Under her encouragement, Perón granted the electoral franchise to women the right to vote in 1947 – a decision that greatly expanded the social base of a movement already sustained by three socioeconomic sectors: the workers of the large urban centers, the interior periphery, and a local industrial upper class that demanded protectionist policies (Snow 1965, 9; Vacs 2006, 403).

Also in 1947, Peronists debated about amending the 1853 constitution to allow immediate presidential reelection, in an attempt to have Perón reelected. His opposition – and even Perón himself – rejected the idea, but he did not object when the amendment was carried out in 1949 (Vacs 2006, 404; Floria & García Belsunce 2004). Afterwards, the next major issue became the selection of a vice-presidential candidate for the next presidential election: the CGT, the women’s branch, and a number of elected officials campaigned actively for “Evita” to be the chosen candidate (Vacs 2006, 404), but her failing health and opposition from the military to a female commander-in-chief forced her
to withdraw\textsuperscript{7} (Skidmore & Smith 2005, 87-88). Perón nevertheless obtained more than 4 million votes in the presidential election of November 1951, while Ricardo Balbín (UCR) – his nearest competitor – gathered about half of that total (Gastiazoro 2004, 111, note 91).

Despite Perón’s overwhelming victory, the government became more bureaucratized, inflexible, and inefficient. There were already many reasons for dissenting with Perón (his militaristic origins, his demagogy, his autocratic rule, his populism), but the structural defects of the system were exploited by the opposition to the point of gaining popular recognition and even influencing members of the military, within which a sense of displeasure was evident at least since the 1951 vice-presidential nomination. To make matters worse, economic policies were opposed by the traditional economic sectors, and the Catholic Church resented his escalating stance towards secularization. Perón’s initial response to the latter was to increase repression, but after some time he became more conciliatory. When the latter option failed, he resigned as head of government on August 31, 1955. A group of anti-Perón military officers soon stepped in and rebelled. After days of turmoil and confusion, Perón requested political asylum in the Paraguayan embassy and the military rebels took control of the government (Floria & García Belsunce 2004).

The new government, led by General Eduardo Lonardi, attempted to eliminate Peronism through a rather conciliatory process, but some military officers believed that it showed weakness and ousted him after several months in power. His substitute, General

\textsuperscript{7} The military’s opposition to “Evita” being proclaimed the vice-presidential candidate can also be seen from another standpoint: Gastiazoro (2004) and Floria & García Belsunce (2003) suggest that the military was contemptuous of “Evita” since before 1949 because of its modest origins; it even demanded Perón in 1945 to end the relationship because it violated the military code of honor.
Pedro E. Aramburu, dissolved the PP, restrained the CGT (still under orders from Perón), and prohibited Peronist candidacies. Although Peronist social policies were left untouched, Aramburu’s decisions resulted in the quick collapse of the PP, which was too weak organizationally to survive (McGuire 1995, 213; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 90; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 961-962). The systematic exclusion of the PP and Peronism was the opening move in a reconfiguration of politics described by Guillermo O’Donnell as an “impossible game,” characterized by the following points (1973, 172-175):

- **The stakes**: Parties have to win “important elections” (i.e., elections in which the Argentine presidency and provincial governments are contested).
- **The rules**: Non-Peronist parties are allowed to win important elections, but they must make sure Peronism does not. In the event of a Peronist victory, the umpire of the game (i.e., the military) will intervene.
- **Assumptions about rationality**: Parties are rational when they maximize their utility (i.e., votes toward the next important election). Voters are rational either when they vote for the alternative they prefer the most, or when they cast blank votes if none of the alternatives is desirable.

What no one considered was that non-Peronist political parties could not win important elections singlehandedly: because they were too weak to do so, they had to win Peronist votes. To win those votes, non-Peronist parties had to promise either the legalization of Peronism or to enact sympathetic policies, but the imposed rules virtually barred the PP from the party system and any concession to Peronism had to be deliberately ignored. Hence, there were no real incentives to play the game because the only reasonable option
was to lose – winning with Peronist support would provoke another military coup and winning without it would amount to a hollow victory (O’Donnell 1973, 175-176). That was how party competition unfurled for the next decade.

Perón’s downfall opened a period when the political capital and the leadership of Peronism was disputed between local leaders who saw their opportunity to stand out and a more assertive CGT, which was able to withstand the restrictions placed on the PP even if it was still under Perón’s orders. Perón resorted in turn to the proverbial “divide and conquer” tactic in order to eliminate rivals for power, but the challenge from organized labor would be a daunting one (Mustapic 2002, 145-147). It would also be daunting from the standpoint of the political system itself, since the CGT was very vocal in advancing worker demands – something the economic elites considered detrimental to sustained economic growth. The government was in a difficult position: maintaining its ban on Peronism antagonized the unions, but placating their anger through concessions alienated the elites and fueled their demand for a transformation of the political system (O’Donnell 1988). In the meantime, while the conservatives remained divided (Gibson 1996, 66-69), Aramburu expected UCR – the most important political force after the demise of the PP – to co-opt the Peronists. However, by 1956, the party was divided between an anti-Peronist faction led by Balbín and a faction sympathetic to Peronism, led by Arturo Frondizi. The latter group became Intransigent Radical Civil Union (Unión Cívica Radical Intransigente, UCRI), while Balbin created Radical Civic Union of the People (Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo, UCRP) 8 (McGuire 1995, 213; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 963-964).

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8 At some points hereafter, UCRI will be referred to as “Intransigents,” and UCRP will be described as “People’s Radicals.”
Intent on initiating a democratic transition, Aramburu announced the celebration of elections for a constitutional assembly for July 1957. At the same time the conservatives and UCR remained divided, Perón gave the order to his supporters to cast blank ballots that amounted to 24.3% of the vote and technically gave Peronism the majority, but that was not translated into seats. The UCRP obtained 24.2% and gained 75 seats, but UCRI – despite gathering 21.7% and finishing in a relatively distant third – obtained 77 seats thanks to the PR formula utilized in the election. Constant bickering and interruptions hampered the short-lived proceedings, from which only one article was approved. Later, in a move to win the support of Peronists for the upcoming general election, Frondizi promised the legalization of Peronism9 if elected president. Seizing the opportunity, Perón ordered his followers to vote for Frondizi, who won the election (McGuire 1995, 213; Manzetti 1993, 102; Skidmore & Smith 2005 90-91; Snow 1965, 9-10; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 964-966). UCRI also won the legislative majority and dominated in all the provinces (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 966).

Meanwhile, metalworkers leader Augusto Vandor took the challenge of transforming the PP into a more moderate political party. The result was the creation of Unión Popular (UP), which presented candidates to the legislative and local elections of March 18, 1962 after Frondizi lifted the ban on Peronism. Perón provided initial support to Vandor, but UP’s autonomy from his autocratic influence made the former renege and present himself as a candidate for the vice-governorship of Buenos Aires province. As expected, the military forced the government to reject Perón’s candidacy, but still

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9 It is without doubt that Frondizi’s legalization of Peronist parties was a pragmatic move, but Snow mentions two possible explanations: it was either a move to destroy the UCRP or to break up Peronism (through bad returns or military repression) and co-opt its supporters into UCRI. He nevertheless thinks that Frondizi overestimated the results of his decision (1965, 10-11).
acquiesced to UP; nevertheless, its successful electoral showing (31.9% of the legislative vote and the governorship of Buenos Aires) prompted the military to demand Frondizi’s resignation on March 20. After the demand was rejected, the military appointed Senate president José María Guido as provisional head of government\(^\text{10}\), invalidated the results of the election, and reinstated the ban on Peronism (Skidmore & Smith 2005, 92-93; McGuire 1995, 213-214; Manzetti 1993, 103; Snow 1965; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 969-970; Mustapic 2002, 147).

The *de facto* government also enacted a law of political parties that granted legal recognition to any political party that received at least 3% of the vote in the last valid election; predictably, that provision disqualified Peronism because the 1958 presidential election was considered the last valid one. The exception was UP, which was granted legal recognition on March 8, 1963 and was invited to form the National Popular Front (*Frente Nacional Popular*, FNP) along with the Intransigents and some conservative parties. Opposition to the FNP was manifest in some sectors of the military, which forced the government to ban its candidates; but at that point the coalition was already fragmented and did not participate in the 1963 general election. Its supporters (under orders from Perón) announced that they would cast blank ballots, but they did not stop UCRP candidate Arturo Illia from winning the presidency and his party from seizing the legislative majority and most of the provincial governments. For a moment, it seemed that the party system was stabilizing: Radicalism was divided but strong, Peronism was declining but not vanquished, and a third major party extended the limits of bounded

\(^{10}\) Frondizi’s Vice-President, Alejandro Gómez, was supposed to become acting President, but he resigned long before the coup.

Illia made no promises to Peronism, but he was tolerant with its labor unions and approved a minimum wage law; nevertheless, the Peronists accused him of being “illegitimate,” and sectors within the military were skeptical. In turn, Vandor acquired more power after a series of factory occupations he organized, thus continuing his challenge to Perón’s authority and constraining Illia. He still had to decide between winning the favor of the military (which saw his efforts a way to keep Perón and labor under tight control) or remaining loyal to the Peronist labor base when Perón publicly declared his intention to return to Argentina, setting the stage for a showdown. The UP – allowed to compete in the 1965 legislative elections after Illia lifted the ban on Peronism – won 30% of the total vote against the 28.9% gathered by UCRP, but that hardened Perón’s opposition to Vandor. A gubernatorial election held in 1966 in the province of Mendoza became the final battle between Vandor and Perón (who supported different candidates) for control of Peronism: a conservative won the election, but Perón’s favorite candidate came in second place. In the end, Vandor halted his efforts and Perón reclaimed authority over the movement (Manzetti 1993, 104; McGuire 1995, 215-216; Skidmore & Smith 2001, 93; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 974-975).

Despite earlier disagreements within military ranks on how to deal with Peronism (Snow 1965, 16; Floria & García Belsunce 2004), the military now had no patience left for party politics; indeed, the results of the Mendoza election preempted two more favorable scenarios: that the military would choose palatable candidates for new gubernatorial elections in 1967 (what Vandor hoped for), and that the in-fighting within
Peronism would weaken it (what UCRP wanted) (McGuire 1995, 216). The next step was another coup: on June 28, 1966, Illia was deposed and the *de facto* government – composed of the chiefs of staff of the Argentine armed forces – prohibited political parties, canceled elections indefinitely, dissolved the national legislature, and appointed General Juan Carlos Onganía as the new head of government, among other decisions (O’Donnell 1973, 115-116; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 94; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 983-984). It was the beginning of bureaucratic authoritarianism in Argentina.

* A *last chance for party politics: The Argentine party system of 1973*

As mentioned by Floria & García Belsunce, bureaucratic authoritarianism (BA) was the seed of a “military autocracy;” and the coup was justified as a preemptive action against a Peronist electoral victory, as a defense of social values that were allegedly in danger, and out of the perception that the constitutional order was ineffective (2004, 984). It also had the support of the economic elite (O’Donnell 1988, 62) and the conservative sectors associated with the Buenos Aires technocracy; the latter resorted to lobbying and alliances with a military that provided them with the access to the state they were not able to get as a political group (Gibson 1996, 68) ¹¹.

Yet although BA eschewed the idea of political parties and party systems, it did not suppress politics altogether: the new regime was receptive to Augusto Vandor’s efforts to create a moderate brand of Peronism, especially since they exploited existing divisions between a historical faction (the unions and the “old guard”) and an ideological faction (young cohorts and an urban guerrilla group known as montoneros); but was also

¹¹ See O’Donnell (1973) for a full description and analysis of the main features of bureaucratic authoritarianism.
overtaken by worker riots in Córdoba province in 1969 (the “cordobazo”). The uprising not only resulted in a severe credibility crisis for General Onganía, but was also the start of a spiral of political violence that would last until the mid-1970s, in which the montoneros were particularly notorious (in fact, the montoneros claimed responsibility for the assassination of Vandor in 1969, and for the kidnapping and murder of General Aramburu in 1970). With the situation degenerating, the junta demanded Onganía’s resignation and appointed General Roberto Levingston as his substitute (Manzetti 1993; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 94-95; McGuire 1995, 217; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 986).

Levingston decided to consort with the “intermediate generation” within the existing parties – rather than with their top leaders – with the intention of creating a “national project” (i.e., politics under military tutelage), but the plan was thwarted by opposition from civil society. Indeed, besides increasing social mobilization, most of the political parties (including Peronism and UCRP) made a manifest – known as La Hora del Pueblo – on November 11, 1970 demanding free elections and the end of the ban on political parties, among other points. Levingston was forced to exit in 1971 and his substitute, General Alejandro Lanusse, attempted unsuccessfully to co-opt key non-Peronist sociopolitical actors into a grand conservative bloc (the Great National Accord or Gran Acuerdo Nacional), after which he scheduled elections, lifted the ban against Peronism and allowed its reappearance under the label of Partido Justicialista (PJ), and enacted two laws establishing their reorganization with funds provided by the government and the regulation of their internal structures. Lanusse also permitted Perón

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12 Oscar Landi mentions that social mobilization constrained the capacity of unions and political actors to negotiate with the military government (1979, 92).
to return briefly from exile in 1972, but did not allow his nomination as a candidate in the expectation that Peronism would fragment further; Perón’s reaction was to encourage the Peronist youth and choose physician Héctor J. Cámpora as presidential candidate (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 988-989; McGuire 1995, 217; Landi 1979, 92-93; Manzetti 1993, 47).

The election would be held under an electoral law that instituted the absolute majority formula and a run-off round provision for presidential elections, and the PR rule for the Deputy election. It also involved a panoply of political parties: PJ became part of the Frente Justicialista de Liberación (FREJULI) along with other parties, while UCRI split between its orthodoxy (later known as Partido Intransigente and renamed Alianza Popular Revolucionaria [APR]) and Frondizi’s pro-Peronists, which created the Movimiento de Integración y Desarrollo. The UCRP, still under Ricardo Balbín, took over as heir apparent to the old Radicalism and was granted the right to bear the UCR label after a 1972 court ruling, but constant demands for reform resulted in a presidential primary between Balbín (the winner) and former collaborator Raúl Alfonsín. Conservatism was still divided between liberals and federalists, which were now known as Nueva Fuerza and Alianza Popular Federalista (APF) respectively, but their connection to the military regime was unavoidable. When the election was held in March 1973, FREJULI won 142 Deputy seats, 45 Senate seats, and all provinces. Campora won the first round of the presidential election with 49.5% of the vote against the 21.2% gained by Balbín, while Nueva Fuerza received almost 2%, APF gathered almost 3%. Though a second round was warranted because Cámpora did not reach the majority threshold, UCR declined to participate (Skidmore & Smith 2001, 96; Gibson 1996, 69;
Cámpora’s short presidency – he resigned after less than two months in office – has been explained by at least two arguments: that he was only setting the stage for Perón’s return (Manzetti 1993), and that he was a victim of a feud within Peronism between the unions and an increasingly disaffected bureaucratic sector allied with the young cohorts (Landi 1979). It was obvious, however, that he presided over a very tumultuous period of sociopolitical mobilization and fragmentation within Peronism, both starkly characterized by a bloody confrontation between *montoneros* and union members that marred Perón’s permanent return to Argentina in June 1973. Raúl Lastiri, president of the Chamber of Deputies and acting head of state, announced that a presidential election would be held in the following September, for which Perón was finally allowed to become a presidential candidate under the FREJULI ticket and had his new wife María Estela Martínez as running mate. With the support of the APR, independent left-wing supporters, and a number of right-wing voters, FREJULI swept the election by winning 61.6% of the vote against 24.5% for UCR and Ricardo Balbín (McGuire 1995, 218; Manzetti 1993, 95, table 3.2; Crawley 1980, 394; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 997; Landi 1979).

Perón was by then ostensibly more moderate (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 991) and even demanded the institutionalization of Peronism. Whether Perón was actually willing to validate his word is doubtful, but he did declare publicly his intention of resigning to the presidency of FREJULI and let new leaders take over. It was unquestionable that he was instrumental in the rapprochement between FREJULI and
UCR that began with La Hora del Pueblo; indeed, Balbin believed it would facilitate the establishment of a stable two-party system. With that, Perón embarked on his Social Pact (Pacto Social) – an agreement between the major political parties, the major entrepreneurial and labor organizations (including the CGT), and the military; it contemplated the restraining of demands from labor and business, and an anti-oligarchic discourse in which economic redistribution and social reform were favored (Landi 1979, 100-101; Manzetti 1993; McGuire 1995, 219). Nevertheless, the economic policies enacted (e.g., limitations on foreign investment, nationalization of bank deposits, income redistribution) led to a diminution in profits for producers, salary decreases, a retrenchment of political opposition, the intensification of labor agitation, and destabilizing attitudes within some members of the economic elite. Perón threatened to resign as president in an effort to retake control of the situation, but with a recession looming he now had to choose between two unpalatable choices for recovery: to create a mixed economy and risk continued domestic criticism, or to enact more orthodox policies and claudicate to international capital (Landi 1979).

Perón died on July 1st, 1974 before he could take any action, leaving a void that his widow and vice-president could not fill: UCR, the CGT, and the bourgeoisie were increasingly critical of the economic policies of the government; and power within Peronism was dispersed between the unions, left-wing Peronists, and the right-wing Peronists led by Minister of Social Welfare José López Rega. It was López Rega who eventually gained the upper hand: under his influence, the government resuscitated the traditional image of Peronism as a workers’ movement, persecuted the Peronist left wing, and deprived opposition parties from any influence in decision-making (indeed, UCR
could not become a real opposition force because its prior consensus with FREJULI meant in practice that it would not disapprove any action from the government). A devaluation of the currency and harsh stabilization measures implemented in the midst of negotiations between unions and owners resulted in stronger opposition by the CGT, which organized a general strike that resulted in López Rega’s resignation. The unions not only substituted for the Peronist right wing that once influenced the President, but remained confrontational and targeted the economic interests of the elites. In the midst of this situation, the military began to conspire, ousting Martínez de Perón in March 1976 (Landi 1979; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 98; Manzetti 1993; McGuire 1995, 218-219; Cavarozzi 2001, 53; Hodges 1976, 176-180; Crawley 1984; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 97).

One system, two stages: The current Argentine party system

The military regime of the National Reorganization Process (Proceso de Reorganización Nacional) was bureaucratic authoritarian like its 1966 predecessor, with the difference that state terrorism was institutionalized, and the armed forces – in cooperation with police and paramilitary groups – made brutal crackdowns against any political opposition. Indeed, the Proceso was the most repressive military government in Argentine history; estimates put the number of victims between 10,000 and 30,000 people (Vacs 2006, 406).

When the more immediate political threats diminished, Videla embarked on the establishment of a “national project” similar to what was attempted by the 1966 regime (Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 1013), which involved a return to party politics with
military tutelage and the co-optation of conservatives and moderates Radicals; but instead it caused the division of the federal conservatives (which supported the regime from the start) (Gibson 1996, 86-92; Manzetti 1993, 185-186) and did not sway the opposition, which formed a pro-democratic coalition known as Multipartidaria (Gibson 1996, 92-96; McGuire 1995, 220; Manzetti 1993). Power feuds within the junta resulted in the exit of Videla and his substitution in March 1981 by General Roberto Viola, who was also incapable to deter factionalism and ceased as head of government the following December. His hard-line replacement, General Leopoldo Galteri, ordered the invasion of the British-controlled but long-disputed South Atlantic islands (Falklands, South Georgia, and South Sandwich) in April 1982, which resulted in a devastating defeat for Argentina, a serious crisis for the regime, and his resignation the following June. After the brief tenure of General Cristino Nicolaides, General Reynaldo Bignone tried unsuccessfully to reach an extrication agreement with Multipartidaria. The conservatives were unexpectedly found adrift and with no prospects for influencing events or securing a successful showing in future elections, which were scheduled for October (Gibson 1996, 95-99; McGuire 1995, 220-221; Manzetti 1993, 186-187; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 100-101; Floria & García Belsunce 2004).

1. The game at its most possible yet (1983-1999)

With democratization underway, UCR now engaged in a political dialogue with Peronism, but first it had to resolve an internal dispute for the 1983 presidential nomination between Balbín’s old rival and heir apparent Raúl Alfonsín and Fernando de la Rúa, whose faction dominated the party machine; still, Alfonsín won the nomination
after taking sides with influential factions within the party (McGuire 1995, 221; Manzetti 1993, 96). Meanwhile, FREJULI (hereafter PJ) was divided between the orthodox verticalistas, supporters of María Estela Martínez (ultraverticalistas), Lorenzo Miguel and the labor unions, Buenos Aires Peronist leader Antonio Cafiero and his Movimiento de Unidad, Solidaridad y Organización (MUSO), and a provincial group known as Intransigencia y Movilización. The verticalistas took the most nominations, Martínez de Perón seized the top leadership of the PJ, and Miguel not only became party vice-president but also convinced the party to choose Italo Luder as presidential candidate (Manzetti 1993, 105-106; McGuire 1995, 221; Vacs 2006, 421). On the side of the conservatives, Alvaro Alsogaray created Unión Republicana, later known as Unión del Centro Democrático (UCEDE). Briefly considered the fastest-growing political party at that time, UCEDE advocated for free-market economics and elicited support from conservative voters who wanted to reassert the goals of the Proceso within the setting of democratic politics and broke with the regime because it failed to enact truly neoliberal economic policies. UCEDE nevertheless exemplified the old divisions between liberals and federals, who in turn reactivated their old parties (Gibson 1996; Gibson et al. 1990).

The electoral campaign of 1983 was held within the margins of two fundamental statues enacted during the last throes of the Proceso: a political parties statute that expressly prohibited anti-system parties; and a reform of the electoral system that instituted the PR rule for Deputy elections; and an electoral college for President, Vice-President, and Buenos Aires provincial senators. Most importantly, the campaign was deeply influenced by the bitter memory of María Estela Martínez’s presidency (which made UCR the most preferable alternative) and the even more traumatic memory of the
Proceso; indeed, Alfonsín and UCR presented themselves as champions of the nascent democracy. Also playing in favor of UCR was the division of the conservatives and that Luder’s campaign was undermined almost from the start. Predictably, Alfonsín won the presidency with 51.7% of the vote against Luder’s 40.1%, and the 4% obtained by conservative parties. In the province of Buenos Aires, conservatives received 10.7% of the vote, with 8.7% of it going to UCEDE (Manzetti 1993; McGuire 1995, 221; Gibson 1996, 126-128; Vacs 2006, 420-421; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 1038; Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 176). In the deputy election, UCR elected 129 deputies and 47% of the positive vote, while the PJ became the main opposition bloc with its 111 elected deputies and 38% of the positive vote (DNE 2007a). However, the PJ won a narrow majority in the Senate (21 seats against 18 for UCR), and won 12 provincial governments (5 more than UCR) (Calvo & Murillo 2005). Still, the election demonstrated three pivotal aspects: political parties gained respectability despite some lingering skepticism (McGuire 1995, 222; Catterberg 1991); all parties recognized the importance of political toleration (Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 176); and the party system became a two-party one based on the decades-old rivalry between UCR and Peronism (Calvo & Escolar 2005, 22; Torre 2003; Torre 2005).

Alfonsín acquired prestige by imposing a tighter civilian control over the military and bring the masterminds of the Proceso to justice for human rights abuses (Manzetti 1993; Gibson 1996, 138; Vacs 2006, 409; Levitsky 2005a, 74), but military pressure – externalized sometimes in rebellions – forced him to enact laws that constricted prosecutions (De Riz 2008, 51, notes 8 and 9; Levitsky 2005a). Inside UCR, however, Alfonsín changed internal rules in order to remain as party leader while being head of
state— all part what Alfonsín named “third historical movement (tercer movimiento historico),” or the historical continuation of decades of Argentine movementism under Yrigoyen and the old Peronism. While such ideas alienated many party members, the internal crisis of PJ after the 1983 election (which strengthened the dominance of UCR) appeared to legitimize them (Manzetti 1993; Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 177). But then a new Peronist faction known as Renovación—led by Antonio Cafiero (the former head of MUSO) and Carlos Menem—pressed for the transformation of the PJ into a political organization more similar to traditional parties (particularly to UCR) and blamed the unions for the electoral defeat. The challengers eventually seized the party machine in 1986, destroying the dominance of union orthodoxy and set the course for the electoral recovery and institutionalization of the PJ13 (Manzetti 1993; McGuire 1995, 230; Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 176-177). The new powers-that-be would also transform the party from union-based to patronage-based (Levitsky 2005b, 193).

By then Alfonsín’s presidency was besieged by the effects of the 1982 debt crisis and further discredited by the failure of his stabilization policies. The setback had an electoral effect although UCR won a total of 83 legislative seats and 43% of the positive vote in 1985 (DNE 2008b), its share of the total deputy vote diminished from 85.9% in 1983 to 77 (point) 8%. In the 1987 election, UCR slightly increased its deputy vote share to 78.7% and retained its Senate seats, but the PJ won 60 Deputy seats, 41% of the positive deputy vote, and 17 provinces (UCR, elected 52 deputies, 37% of the deputy vote, and two provinces). The setbacks forced Alfonsín to make important concessions to the PJ at the cost of unleashing a dispute with Córdoba province governor Eduardo

13 Steven Levitsky argues the opposite: the PJ never institutionalized after Renovación pushed unions aside, although it acquired a shared subculture (2005b, 185).
Angeloz, who was eventually nominated for the 1989 presidential candidacy. Meanwhile, the PJ now embraced neoliberal economics, thanks – ironically – to the organizational defects for which Peronism was infamous, which made for a seamless transition. (Torre 2003, 649, table 1; DNE 2008b; DNE 2008c; Manzetti 1993; Gibson 1996; Burgess & Levitsky 2003; Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 177; Levitsky 2005a, 74; Calvo & Murillo 2005). Yet the PJ was not the only political party that experienced a sudden increase in popularity; the center-left Partido Intransigente (PI) increased its share of the deputy vote from 2.8% in 1983 to 7.7% in 1985. Growth, however, was short-lived and PI saw its share reduced to 2% in 1987 because of the rebound of PJ. UCEDE also increased its share of the deputy vote from 3.2% in 1985 to 5.8% in 1987 and gained significant influence in Buenos Aires; in fact, by being a vocal opponent of Alfonsín’s economic policies, advocating for neoliberal economics, and appealing to sectors outside its traditional constituency (i.e. the urban middle and lower classes), UCEDE became a multi-class group with possibilities of breaking up the UCR-PJ dominance over party politics (Manzetti 1993, Gibson 1996, Burgess & Levitsky 2003; Torre 2003, 651).

Worn down, Alfonsín announced his resignation and the early scheduling of the 1989 general election; by then, UCR was still divided and unable to maintain its prior multi-class coalition; and the PJ – supported by PI and other parties – formed the Frente Justicialista Popular, with Menem defeating Cafiero in the first-ever presidential primary in the history of Peronism. UCEDE, in turn, coalesced with other parties and formed Alianza de Centro, which nominated María Julia Alsogaray (the daughter of Alvaro Alzogaray) as presidential candidate; but long-standing divisions between federals and liberals and the rejection of its ideology by key conservative sectors undermined its
possibilities of success. The Peronist coalition won the presidential election with 47% of the positive vote, received 44% of the deputy positive vote and 67 seats, and won 28 Senate seats. UCR was left behind with 32% of the positive presidential vote (a decrease in its share from 91.9% in 1983 to 79.7%), 28% of the positive deputy vote (decreasing its share to 73%), 42 Deputy seats, and 12 Senate seats. Alianza de Centro received almost 7% of the positive presidential vote, 9.9% of the positive deputy vote, and made a significant gain in the city of Buenos Aires. (Manzetti 1993; Gibson 1996; Gibson et. al. 1990; DNE 2006a; Torre 2003).

Once in power, Menem relied initially on strategic ties with business as a way towards economic recovery (Burgess & Levitsky 2003), but inflation forced him to take a stricter orthodox course (price controls, privatizations, reduction of the money supply, cuts in government spending). Chief in his decisions was the stabilization of the currency exchange rate through the Convertibility Plan, an approach that proved to be effective in reducing inflation despite strong popular opposition (Gibson 1996, 192-194; Levitsky 2003; Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 178; Powers 1999, 544-555). The shift to neoliberalism made UCEDE a part of the governing Peronist coalition but cost valuable electoral support in the city of Buenos Aires, which diminished to 8.6% in the first midterm election in 1991 and further down to 3% in the second midterm election in 1993 (Torre 2003, 651). Memen’s neoliberal economic policies also played a role in the creation of the Frente Grande (FG) in 1991: created by a group of Peronist legislators disgusted with Menem’s economic policy shift, the FG (which obtained 1.5% of the positive deputy vote in 1991), won 2.5% of it in 1993 – a testament to its sudden popularity amongst middle-class sectors identified with the democratic left (Torre 2003,
Yet despite the rise of the FG, the PJ elected 28 senators, won 40% of the positive deputy vote, and gained 61 deputy seats in 1991; UCR, in turn, obtained 29% of the vote, 10 Senate seats, and 43 Deputy seats. In the gubernatorial elections of that year, UCR won two provinces and the PJ 14. In the 1993 midterm election, the PJ increased its number of Deputy seats won (64) and percentage of the deputy positive vote (43%), while UCR lost seats (41) despite managing to augment its own share modestly (30%). The results for the Senate mimicked those of the previous election. (DNE 2008d, DNE 2008e; Calvo & Murillo 2005).

The year 1993 was crucial because of the Olivos Pact (Pacto de Olivos)\(^{14}\), by which Menem and Alfonsín agreed to a series of fundamental changes in the national constitution such as the reduction of the presidential term from six to four years with the possibility of immediate reelection for an additional term, the direct election of provincial senators and for the city of Buenos Aires (now an autonomous entity) through the PR rule\(^{15}\), the direct election of the President and the Vice-President through the single-member district formula with run-off round, and the direct election of the Mayor of Buenos Aires (SGP 2005a; CDI 2005b). The new rules appeared to solidify existing two-partyism, but were allegedly enacted at the behest of a head of state intent on concentrating state power to defeat political opponents (Cheresky 2000), and even generated rejection amongst PJ (Leiras 2007) and UCR supporters, who in turn believed that the agreement amounted to ceasing from being an opposition party (Torre 2003,

\(^{14}\) The main points of the pact were converted into law through the enactment of Law 24.309 of December 29, 1993 (CDI 2005b).

\(^{15}\) Under this provision, there would be two Senate seats assigned to the most voted party slate, and a third one for the runners-up.
Menem was reelected in 1995 with 45% of the vote because of popular support for the Convertibility Plan and an influx of center-right voters he won over as a compensation for the loss of center-left voters. The PJ as a whole won 14 provinces, 43% of the positive vote for deputies, 69 Deputy seats, and 39 Senate seats. The FG (renamed Frente del País Solidario, FREPASO) outdistanced UCR by obtaining 28% of the positive presidential vote, which demonstrated its popularity among voters who wanted more state presence in the economy (an issue allegedly relegated by UCR and the PJ); but it only received 20% of the positive deputy vote and won 20 seats. In turn, UCR won 20 Senate seats, five provinces, 21% of the positive deputy vote, and 28 Deputy seats; but only received 17% for its presidential candidate. UCEDE obtained only 2.6% of the positive presidential vote and 3.2% of the positive deputy vote (Leiras 2007, 26; DNE 2006b, Torre 2003, 651-652; Calvo & Escolar 2005, 26-28; Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 179; Seligson 2003; Levitsky 2003). The new scenario forced the electorally weak UCR and the institutionally weak FREPASO into redefining their strategies: both conceded that criticism to the Convertibility Plan would undermine their future possibilities of electoral success (Leiras 2007, Levitsky 2003).  

UCR supporters had reasons for feeling betrayed: although UCR already lost substantial electoral strength, it remained a political force to be reckoned with thanks to its sizable legislative bloc, its large presence in the provinces (especially in the most populated ones), and its predominance in the city of Buenos Aires (Leiras 2007, 22). Besides this situation, electoral calculations were an element that was present in their eventual alliance. On the side of FG, it was more likely that it would be successful in the city and province of Buenos Aires than in the rest of the country. On the side of UCR, losing both elections was unacceptable because
Menem’s economic policies continued to generate positive results and silenced criticism within the PJ (Burgess & Levitsky 2003, 891), but new economic problems (income inequality, rising unemployment, recession) and displeasure with corruption and hyperpresidentialism (Torre 2003, 652; Burgess & Levitsky 2003, 891; De Luca 2008, 2-3) started to generate increasing criticism. Opposition parties took advantage: UCR turned into a vocal opposition force (Powers 1999, 547), and Economics Minister Domingo Cavallo left the government in 1996 out of differences with Ménem and created his own political party – the center-left Acción por la República (APR). UCR and FREPASO joined forces in 1997 and created Alianza por el Trabajo, la Justicia y la Educación, which was the biggest winner in the 1997 midterm election by obtaining 45.6% of the positive deputy vote against the 36.2% gathered by the PJ. APR only managed to obtain 3.9% of that vote, but it was enough to confirm its popularity within those outraged by political corruption (Torre 2003, 652; Levitsky 2003).

Undaunted, Menem pushed for another constitutional amendment that would allow him to run for a third term in 1999 (technically, a second term under the amended constitution), but his plans were vigorously opposed by Eduardo Duhalde, the Peronist governor of Buenos Aires province. Deeply concerned about an alleged extra-constitutional move, Duhalde schemed for years afterwards against Menem, dividing the party to the core. An internal primary was scheduled for April 1999, but after a PJ candidate lost a prior gubernatorial election (in what otherwise would have been an indication of popular support for his plans) Menem realized that the odds of succeeding were too great and withdrew. With the issue resolved, the primaries were suspended.
indefinitely and Duhalde was chosen as presidential candidate. The Alianza, in turn, held a presidential primary in 1998 in which Fernando De la Rúa (UCR) won the nomination. His large margin of victory over rival candidate Carlos Alvarez (FREPASO) exposed how fragile the Alianza was, but it was later agreed that Alvarez would become the vice-presidential candidate (Leiras 2007).

The 1999 presidential election showed how unpopular Ménem became and resulted in the first-ever defeat of Peronism in a presidential reelection campaign. Although the PJ won in 14 provinces (Burgess & Levitsky 2003, 891) and retained its Senate majority (Calvo & Murillo 2005, 210, table 9.1), it lost the majority in the Chamber of Deputies to the Alianza (99 deputies against 120). Also, De la Rúa won the presidency with 48.4% of the total vote against 38.3% for Duhalde; in turn, Cavallo (APR) won 10.2%. Duhalde’s campaign was based on traditional Peronist ideology and was critical of neoliberal economics, but the Alianza received the decisive support of many people that voted for Menem in 1995 because of the Convertibility Plan who were now disappointed with political corruption. Moreover, the PJ won in Buenos Aires province by winning voters from UCEDE and APR, which demonstrated that it could not win on its own (Levitsky 2003, DNE 2006c; Torre 2003; Calvo & Escolar 2005, 28; Calvo & Murillo 2005, 210, table 9.1).

2. A castle of cards? (1999-present)

The Alianza government promised to restore public confidence in political institutions and keep the negative externalities of neoliberalism in check, but soon faced controversy: members of FREPASO were implicated in corruption schemes, but no
indictments were made. In August 2000, the government was rocked by a bribery scandal, and De la Rúa’s unwillingness to investigate resulted in Alvarez’s resignation as Vice-President. Also, economic policymaking was constrained by Ménem’s Convertibility Plan, which was never dismantled; and reached a low when De la Rúa enacted austerity measures that worsened an economic recession. Consequently, the Alianza was defeated in the midterm election of 2001, in which the PJ won 17 provinces and seized a complete legislative majority. A new center-left party, Afirmación para una República Igualitaria (ARI), was founded prior to the election by former UCR legislator and anti-corruption crusader Elisa Carrió and was relatively successful, but the incidence of blank and null votes (20% combined) and abstention (26%) increased substantially (Levitsky 2003; Levitsky & Murillo 2003, 156; Floria & García Belsunce 2004; De Luca 2008, 3-4; DNE 2008g).

By late 2001, the economy unravelled further at the same time the IMF denied a request for a $1,600 million loan from the Argentine government. Capital flight also ensued, as the public withdrew as much as 1,300 million pesos from bank savings accounts in one day. The government reacted to both blows by limiting currency movements and bank withdrawals, in what was popularly known as corralito (“playpen”). The effects were adverse: the middle class – the main constituency of the Alianza – was deprived of their savings, and the informal economy (from which the poor were heavily dependent on) lost its major foundation. On December 19, demonstrations and looting were reported in many parts of the country, prompting De la Rúa to declare a nationwide state of emergency. The next day, Buenos Aires was overwhelmed by demonstrations, and 32 people throughout Argentina died in clashes between
demonstrators and police. That evening, De la Rúa announced his resignation and the provisional head of the Senate (who was next in the line of succession after the prior resignation of the Vice-President) assumed power. Two days later, the national legislature appointed Peronist Alberto Rodríguez Saá – the governor of San Luis province – as acting president. He announced a moratorium on international loan payments and the creation of a new currency, but resigned on December 30 allegedly because of lack of support from provincial governors (Floria & García Belsunce 2004; D’Adamo, García Beaudoux & Slavinsky 2003, 146; Levitsky & Murillo 2003, 154-155).

The power vacuum was filled by Duhalde, who was appointed on January 1st, 2002. He and his economics minister Roberto Lavagna (The Economist, 5/1/03) reversed part of the crisis by dismantling the Convertibility Plan and negotiating a debt payment schedule with international lenders, but Duhalde did not consider his presidency to be legitimate and was also beset by lingering divisions within the PJ. Even worse, personal savings were still restricted and those in US dollars were converted into less-buying pesos at a moment when individual income shrunk from $7,000 to $3,500; in response, middle class bank savings holders made rabid demonstrations demanding the end of the corralito, and hordes of unemployed citizens staged marches and traffic disruptions in the largest cities – all sharing the rallying cry “¡que se vayan todos! (“throw them out!””).

Electoral activity continued despite that environment: in the local elections of that year, Peronism won 15 provincial governments while UCR won 518 and two local parties won in Neuquén and Misiones (Tow [2008g]). In the mayoral election in Buenos Aires the most voted candidates were Mauricio Macri (Frente Compromiso para el Cambio) with 37% of the vote and Aníbal Ibarra (Fuerza Porteña) with 33%, but none had a majority.

18 The UCR joined forces with the Frente Cívico y Social in Catamarca province.
Ibarra won the run-off round with 53% of the vote against 46% for Macri (TSJ 2005; Tow [2008u]). A beleaguered Duhalde later announced that the next presidential election would be held ahead of schedule (The Economist, 7/4/02; The Economist, 2/28/02; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 1067-1068; D’Adamo, García Beaudoux & Slavinsky 2003, 146-147; Vacs 2006, 415; De Riz 2008, 49), but nevertheless political parties were at its lowest level of prestige prior to the presidential election (De Luca 2007, 5) and demands for establishing a direct democracy were rife (De Riz 2008, 49).

The two major parties of the first stage faced their most severe crisis yet. The presidential nomination of PJ was angrily contested between Rodríguez Saá and Menem, who was intent on retaking control of Peronism. Duhalde, who blamed Menem for his 1999 defeat, placed obstacles on a possible party primary and initially opted for Córdoba province governor Juan Manuel de la Sota, but in the end he supported Santa Cruz province governor and self-declared candidate Néstor Kirchner, himself a long-time opponent of Menem’s. To defuse the crisis, it was agreed that all three would become presidential candidates representing different Peronist groups: Frente Movimiento Popular / Unión y Libertad (Rodríguez Saá), Frente por la Lealtad / UCEDE (Menem), and Frente por la Victoria (Kirchner)\textsuperscript{19}. UCR went through a no less acrimonious presidential primary: after accusations of fraud, Leopoldo Moreau was awarded the nomination in March 2003. Other parties in contention were ARI and Movimiento Federal para Recrear el Crecimiento (MFR), created in 2003 by De la Rúa’s former minister of defense and economics Ricardo López Murphy (Vacs 2006, 415; Levistky &

\textsuperscript{19} After this non-celebration of a presidential primary, Argentine courts have prohibited any Peronist presidential candidate from utilizing the Partido Justicialista label (The Economist, 2/14/08). Nevertheless, that label was utilized by some Peronist senatorial candidates for the province of Buenos Aires in 2005 (DNE 2008).
Murillo 2003; *The Economist*, 3/20/03; *The Economist*, 5/1/03; DNE 2007b; D’Adamo, García Beaudoux & Slavinsky 2003, 147).

The presidential election was held in April 2003 and no candidate obtained the 45% of the vote required for absolute majority. Menem received 24% of the vote, most of it from the northern provinces; and Kirchner came in a very close second with 22% thanks to his own obscurity (which made him the “lesser of two evils” especially among the urban middle class) and the backing of Lavagna and Duhalde. López Murphy won 16% of the vote, Rodríguez Saá received 14.11%, and Carrió finished up with 14.05%. Moreau received only 2% of the vote. The returns were hard to take for Menem, who was sure that his political savvy and success in economic policy would secure him the reelection; but voters supported Kirchner because they were disappointed with the corruption schemes Menem was implicated into, and also blamed him for setting the stage for the 2001-2002 crisis. Furthermore, polls taken after the first round indicated that as much as 70% of respondents expressed their intention to vote for Kirchner against the 30% who would vote for Menem. The second round was scheduled for May 18, but facing very long odds (and denying Kirchner a popular mandate), Menem withdrew. Kirchner won the presidency by default (*The Economist*, 5/15/03; *The Economist*, 3/20/03; DNE 2007b; Levistky & Murillo 2003, 157-159).

Kirchner declared that he would not seek reelection (*The Economist*, 7/7/07), but also became a bold and successful president. Voters were optimistic about his ability for economic policymaking (D’Adamo, García Beaudoux & Slavinsky 2003, 149), and indeed he was able to initiate a significant recovery from the crisis with the help of Roberto Lavagna (*The Economist*, 6/17/06; *The Economist*, 10/20/05) – from the depths
of the crisis. Kirchner also took advantage of chronic leaderships voids within Peronism (De Riz 2008, 51) and concocted a plan to take control of the movement and dispense with Duhalde’s influence: he demanded the power to select 70% of the candidates for the legislative elections of 2005 and insisted on having his wife and Santa Cruz senator Cristina Fernández de Kirchner become a senatorial candidate for Buenos Aires province. Duhalde – who still dominated the Peronist machine in the province – was incensed and soon pressed for his wife Hilda to become candidate for the same post. Still, Kirchner’s move worked: though both candidates were elected, Fernández de Kirchner obtained 46% of the vote and Hilda Duhalde gathered 20%. Kirchner’s supporters became the major Peronist legislative bloc by winning 45% of the total Senate vote with 21 seats, and 43% of the total Deputy vote with 18 seats. In turn, Duhalde’s faction (which did not present Deputy candidates) obtained some 20% of the Senate vote and gained one seat. With that, Kirchner pushed Duhalde aside as the leader of Peronism and, at the same time, obtained the popular mandate denied by Menem’s exit from the 2003 presidential race (The Economist, 5/22/03; The Economist, 10/20/05; The Economist, 6/2/05; The Economist, 10/27/05; DNE 2008a; Calvo 2005).

A new party made a surprising performance in those elections: Propuesta Republicana, which obtained 7.6% of the Senate vote, won almost 7% of the Deputy vote, and had its main figure – Mauricio Macri – elected deputy for Buenos Aires province by a sizeable margin over Rafael Bielsa, Kirchner’s foreign minister. ARI was even more successful: it gained 8% of the Senate vote, almost 9% of the Deputy vote, and some of its candidates received significant shares of the vote (Marta Maffei was the most voted non-Peronist candidate in the Buenos Aires senatorial race, and Elisa Carrió was
elected deputy for the city of Buenos Aires) UCR could not match the performance of both upstart parties and was instead shaken by another internal division months before the legislative election, when party staged an internal primary in Buenos Aires province that pitted former president Alfonsín against reformist legislator Margarita Stolbizer. Alfonsín won the primary (The Economist, 9/1/05), but UCR obtained 7.7% of the Senate vote, almost 8% of the Deputy vote, and elected only three deputies (DNE 2008a; The Economist, 10/27/05; Calvo 2005).

Victory in the legislative election, sustained economic growth, and a 70% approval rate gave Kirchner great confidence, to the point of dismissing Lavagna and enacting more heterodox economic policies (The Economist, 6/17/06); yet not everything was rosy: Kirchner’s hyperpresidentialist attitude overstepped many political boundaries imposed by the constitutional order; and an energy crisis, rising inflation, political scandals, and electoral defeats in a number of local elections put him on the defensive. Lavagna responded to his dismissal and initiated the electoral season in earnest by announcing his presidential candidacy early in 2007, counting with the support of an odd couple – Alfonsín and Duhalde. Months later, Kirchner’s Peronists revealed their presidential nominee: Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Her nomination (for which no primary was held) was justified by the thought that she would be a figure more palatable to the international community and certain domestic actors (though there was also the possibility of Kirchner being reelected for a second non-consecutive term) (De Luca 2008, 6; The Economist, 1/11/07; The Economist, 5/17/07; The Economist, 7/7/07; The Economist, 10/29/07). Other declared contenders were Carrió and Macri (The Economist,
7/7/07), who won an election seen by many as an informal referendum on Kirchner’s presidency – the 2007 Buenos Aires mayoral race (*The Economist*, 2/7/07).

The general election was held in October 2007 and Fernández de Kirchner (Frente por la Victoria [FPV]) won the presidency with 45% of the vote, while Carrió – who left ARI and became the presidential candidate of Coalición Cívica (CC) – obtained 23%. Lavagna represented a coalition between UCR and anti-Kirchner Peronists known as Concertación para una Nación Avanzada (UNA), but obtained 16% of the vote. Finally, Alberto Rodríguez Saá (Frente Justicia, Unión, y Libertad; FREJULI), was left far behind with 7%. Voter participation was of only 76%, but the percentage of blank ballots reached 6%. Peronism as a whole won 11 Senate seats, a clear majority in the Chamber of Deputies, and 13 provinces (Tow [2008d]; Tow [2008j]; De Riz 2008, 62; DNE 2008h).

The current partisan environment remains fluid. While FPV is popular only amongst the urban poor and provincial voters (*The Economist*, 2/14/08) and Kirchner made inroads in uniting Peronism under his leadership due in part to the co-optation of leaders and members of other parties (transversality or *transversalidad*) (De Luca 2008, 7), he still has not won the full support of middle class voters or assuaged the reticence of other Peronist leaders (De Riz 2008, 65). Indeed, Alberto Rodríguez Saá announced the creation of a new political party – Otro País Es Posible – to which FREJULI could also integrate (*La Nación*, 8/28/08), and Peronism is fractured in a number of provinces (Tejerizo 2008). The unification of Peronism under Kirchner could give an opportunity to opposition parties to present themselves as powerful adversaries (*The Economist*,

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20 See also “Elecciones en Argentina: Presidente y Vice – 28 de octubre de 2007 (http://www.argentinaelections.com/Total%20pa%C3%ADD.pdf).”
2/14/08), and the current tribulations of President Fernández de Kirchner (rising inflation, the energy crisis, political scandals, rising crime, and a bitter feud with the agricultural sector related to a tax increase in exports) could also decide future elections against FPV and Peronism (De Riz 2008; *The Economist*, 2/6/08; *The Economist*, 5/1/08; *The Economist*, 7/24/08; De Riz 2008, 66).

Yet that outcome can only happen if opposition parties solve problems such as lingering personalism; by the same token, their lack of truly national organizations impedes their opportunity to extend outside urban centers (De Riz 2008, 68; Galván 2006, 125). To make matters worse, former FREPASO leaders were co-opted into FPV and UCR is currently divided between its orthodox faction and a group known as Radical Federal Movement, which has openly supported Peronist candidacies but does not wish to separate from the larger organization (Galván 2006). The panorama may not be entirely bleak, however: besides the election of Mauricio Macri, Socialist Hermes Binner won the governorship of Santa Fe province in 2007 (De Riz 2008). While fragmentation is still high, some observers see it as the appearance of new mechanisms for interest aggregation that compensate for diminished political representation and confirm the institutionalization of the electoral system (Tejerizo 2008). The question now becomes: can opposition parties take advantage of these opportunities, change their strategies, and be successful enough to win the next major electoral event – the legislative elections of 2009 – and set the stage for the next presidential election?
Theory and evidence in the Argentine case

1. The 1973 party system
   
a. The antecedent condition

The parties in this system were utility maximizers within a larger context set by democratic transition: the goal after the demise of the 1966 regime was not simply to relegalize political parties, but to let them exercise their role as rational actors. It was hence expected that political parties should have striven to outperform their opponents now that they were given the opportunity to do so again. There was no vote-maximizing government for a time because of the 1966 military regime, but the objective embraced by parties in the March 1973 general election was election and competition for political power then was likely for the sake of carrying out policies and not for the spoils of office. If we take into account the special presidential election of September 1973, we could say that FREJULI had the objective of being reelected. Yet regardless of whether there was or nor a vote-maximizing government, parties were connected with voter self-interest (i.e., to carry out policies) and were looking for votes in the political market (voters are buyers and parties are sellers). Given the number of parties that competed in March 1973, this seems to indicate that an element of the pattern of interactions that characterized this party system is its multiparty configuration. In terms of dynamics, however, UCR and FREJULI were the main protagonists and made moves and countermoves against each other – as Maor’s (1997) view of Sartori argues more generally – despite their historically narrow distance regarding socioeconomic positions (Galván 2006, 118, note 1).
Yet partisan self-interest was not the only relevant factor in part because *the electoral system provided different incentives for partisanship*, especially the PR rule. On the one hand, PR created the conditions for a multiparty system (Rae’s sixth differential proposition) in terms of the total number of parties: not only did left-wing, center, right-wing and provincial parties win a combined 73 seats in 1973, but the effective number of legislative parties (which was 2.34 during the years of UCR hegemony and 1.63 during the first two presidencies of Juan Domingo Perón) increased to 3.09 (Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 169, table 2). The logic in question was to extend the possibility of political representation to all parties; since the number of seats is scarce, all parties are encouraged to generate as much electoral support as possible to win seats. There is where the vote maximizing logic comes in. Yet the fact that the number of legislative parties was only 3 is due to two interrelated effects of the electoral system: PR consolidates the position of larger parties and under-represents small parties (Parrish, von Lazar and Tapia-Videla 1971, 257), and the rules as a whole limit the number of small parties by denying them seats (i.e., Rae’s fourth similarity proposition). That also correlates with the existence of a majority rule for presidential elections, which in Duverger’s ([1951] 1966) opinion creates two-party systems; in that case, the same drive to generate electoral support for particular candidates is present given that the Argentine presidency was still a highly coveted and indivisible political trophy. In all, the causal-complexity role of the electoral system was to structure vote maximization, particularly between UCR and FREJULI.

Another relevant exogenous factor is cleavages (i.e., Rae & Taylor’s [1970] behavioral cleavages) because a class-based divide between Peronism and UCR was
In other words, **FREJULI and UCR were the manifestations of a larger divide** (i.e., Peronism vs. anti-Peronism) **in which voters identified with different sides** (see also Lapu & Stokes 2009, 76). As explained in the diagram below, the divide interacts with the concept of rationality and the movementist character of both Peronism and UCR:

**Figure 2: Effects of Peronist and UCR movementism**

![Diagram](image)

In other words, Peronism and UCR represented different social sectors and strived for political supremacy, influencing party identification because voters embraced parties according to socioeconomic status: FREJULI earned the backing of workers, and UCR was supported by professionals, students, and employees. That was more manifest in the province of Buenos Aires, where the connection between workers and FREJULI was even closer (Canton & Jorrat 1978). At the same time, movementism also galvanized a desire to outperform the adversary electorally, which underscored the self-interest of both FREJULI and UCR. That is shown in their attempts to maximize votes, although FREJULI was much more successful. Most importantly, the negation of the adversary – instead of denying the existence of a party system – confirms its presence (Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 166)\(^{21}\). Yet there are two nuances: 1. Party identification was not based on ideological distance, but on intensity (Galván 2006, 118), and 2. The

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\(^{21}\) My translation. Italics added.
competition between FREJULI and UCR never reached an extreme (for reasons I will explain later).

The 1973 party system was hence a two-party one – weak and with a predominant party (FREJULI), but nevertheless sustained by two parties (Abal Medina and Suárez Cao 2002, 184, table 6). Ideologically, UCR represented the political center and both APR and FREJULI leaned towards the left, while APF was on the right. The conditions were not particularly conducive to ideological or programmatic polarization between FREJULI and UCR because of the political understanding between them, but they may have been so between both parties, the conservative APF, and the left-wing APR. Still, FREJULI had the upper hand in the electoral aspect of party strength, but UCR was not too far behind. In representational, affective, and organizational terms, the intensity of the Peronism / anti-Peronism cleavage gave FREJULI and UCR significant strength in all aspects; in comparison, APR and particularly APF had representational strength but were weaker on the other aspects. Though there were four relevant parties (FREJULI, UCR, APF, and APR [Canton & Jorrat 1978, 147]) – to use Sartori’s (1976) terms – and many other minor parties, the system was not a strictly multiparty one because FREJULI and UCR combined for 70% of the presidential vote in the first presidential election, for 86% in the second election, and for 72% of the legislative seats (Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002, 184, table 6). Moreover, UCR fared better than the other parties individually by receiving a comparatively higher percentage of votes in both presidential elections and the most Deputy seats – 51 against 13 for leftist parties, 22 for center parties, and 20 for right-wing parties (Ibid). In terms of volatility, Poblete Vázquez has measured it at 15.45% because political competition became centripetal rather than centrifugal; although
charismatic leadership (especially Perón’s) is also an explanatory factor for the low volatility, there were no conservative or left-wing voters to win over (Poblete Vázquez 2006a, Poblete Vázquez 2006b).

b. Institutionalization and party system stability

Regarding the institutionalization of this party system, the Peronism / anti-Peronism cleavage embedded its representative parties (FREJULI and UCR) in society by means of the intensity it provoked; and the encouragement of party politics through existing electoral rules legitimized all parties in the system. Nonetheless, state intervention did not encourage Peronism to become autonomous or institutionalized because it was not separate from Perón’s charismatic and excessively centralized leadership. In fact, as I mentioned before, there are doubts regarding whether Perón was truthfully willing to institutionalize his movement. A similar argument about charismatic leadership could be levied in the case of Ricardo Balbín, but presumably UCR was more institutionalized and its leadership was less autocratic. Still, in terms of Sitter (2002) and Bakke & Sitter’s (2005) argument, a first step towards institutionalization was made when the parties engaged in their rational behavior, (especially FREJULI and UCR) thanks to the electoral system in place and the cleavage between Peronism and anti-Peronism. Proof that this pattern of interactions was embedded are the following percentages of positive and negative votes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1973</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1973</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Graham Yool (2006) and Gastiazoro (2004)
Table 4.2: Positive vs. negative votes – Average for the 1973 Argentine party system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputies</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governors</td>
<td>not available</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages for Deputy and gubernatorial elections were taken for March 1973. No information for Senate elections is included because those elections were indirect. The percentages for Deputy elections were adapted from Jones, Lauga & León-Roesch (2005)

Why did this party system collapse? First, we must consider that parties were not rejected for the most part due to a crisis of representation, as Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez (2006) define the concept. Rather, the demise of party politics in 1976 is part and parcel of the demise of Argentine democracy\(^{22}\). Existing electoral rules (such as PR) might have fragmented the system, but collapse was not because of narrow distances between parties, as Roberts & Wibbels (1999) would argue. APR and APF were too electorally weak to be relevant enough; hence, inter-party polarization not a cause either. The likeliest factor is the intensification of the political cleavage between Peronism and anti-Peronism, but how that unfolded deserves a closer look.

Because of the rapprochement between Perón and Balbín, this intensification was not because of irreconcilable differences between FREJULI and UCR; in fact, both parties made a commitment to political moderation for the sake of democratic governability. It is true that they made UCR too much of a loyal opposition to FREJULI and even made it indistinct from the government at several points (Landi 1979, 125), but that was not the real cause of the collapse. More precisely, the intensification of the political cleavage between Peronism and anti-Peronism was caused by radical Peronists and anti-Peronist political actors other than UCR, making it an attitudinal

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\(^{22}\) This statement relates to whether or not Argentina had a political culture that could sustain party politics on the longer term. I will return to that aspect in my assessment of alternative explanations.
cleavages. As a result of that, the positive effects of electoral rules (i.e., the promotion of partisanship and the legitimacy of parties) were overshadowed by political instability. Facundo Galván characterizes this divide as one between Peronists and non-Peronists and argues that Peronist polarization was restricted to elite groups (2006, 118), but that assessment ignores two key political actors: the socioeconomic elites and the military. The stalemate caused by the fragmentation of Peronism (Di Tella 1983, 203) played into the hands of a military increasingly critical of the government (Landi 1979, 126); although intervention was gradual, the military considered that the situation was too chaotic and that the only solution was to assume power and prohibit political parties (Hodges 1976, 167; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 1006-1007). The socioeconomic elites, in turn, were not only besieged by the economic plan of the government but tormented by the most militant factions of Peronism; indeed, pressure from the montoneros and the CGT intensified until the onset of the Proceso (Levitsky 2005a, 67). This atmosphere was compounded by the electoral weakness of conservative parties, which was compensated by the elites through their alliance with the military (Gibson et. al. 1990, 179-180). The participation of Nueva Fuerza and APF in the March 1973 election was perhaps as one last chance to influence policymaking without resorting to extra-constitutional tactics, but their unsuccessful showing probably convinced the elites that there was no intrinsic value in party politics.

In the final analysis, the 1973 party system was not fully institutionalized because it had low coherence and complexity. To its credit, it was not subverted or taken over by narrow interests (autonomy), and also signaled the resumption of normal

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23 Indeed, the lack of institutionalization within FREJULI opened the doors for increased and systemically destabilizing worker militancy (Levitsky 2005a, 67).
democratic politics after the 1966 regime (functional adaptability); but political violence, Peronist radicalism and visceral opposition to Peronism as a whole from conservative elites and the military undermined the legitimacy of party politics and reduced coherence. The relative alienation felt by conservatives did not translate into high complexity; once a political force to be reckoned with, Argentine conservatism was by now irrelevant. Generational adaptability was low because the major figures in party politics were Perón and Balbín, but that aspect did not spell doom for the party system as much as lack of coherence and low complexity, which in turn led to very minimal chronological adaptability.

2. The current party system
   a. The antecedent condition

   *Partisan self-interest is also present in the current party system, and competition for votes is not only for the power to enact policies and satisfy voter self-interest.* If O’Donnell’s (1973) description of presidential and gubernatorial elections as “important” still has applicability, it would be because of the access provincial governments have to political fringe benefits and the strong veto and decree powers of the presidency (Jones & Hwang 2005). In that sense, the fiercest competition during the first stage was between the PJ and UCR. The creation of the Alianza in 1997 also conforms to a rational mentality because represented a marriage of electoral convenience for FG / FREPASO and UCR (Leiras 2007, 144-145). *Currently,* although the party system is unbalanced (Torre 2005), the idea of parties as rational actors has not disappeared; the parties in opposition to Peronism exemplify that statement even if they
do not seem to compromise. The Peronists share the same idea, but the main
disagreement (as seen during Menem’s attempt at reelection in 1999 and after Duhalde
announced the rescheduling of the presidential election of 2003) is which faction should
win. Nevertheless, those rational capabilities have been exercised in the midst of a
context crafted by a number of exogenous variables, as I will argue below.

- The first stage

The following tables present some initial findings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>UCR/Alianza + PJ</th>
<th>Other parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>PI (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Alianza de Centro (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>FREPASO (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>APR (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for period</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DNE (2006a, 2006b, 2006c, and 2007a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>UCR/Alianza + PJ</th>
<th>Third-place party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>PI (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Frente Renovador (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>UCEDE (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Alianza de Centro (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>UCEDE (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>MODIN (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>FREPASO (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>APR (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 (August and September)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Local parties / APR (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 (October)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>APR (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>ARI (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for period</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


24 Calvo & Escolar (2005) combine the percentages obtained by UCR and PJ in legislative elections (including the totals UCR gained as part of the Alianza) as part of their larger argument that the party system of 1983 was a two-party one in the beginning. I follow the same procedure in all presidential, legislative, and gubernatorial elections held in the period and arrived at the same conclusion, as I will show later.

25 Elections were held in the provinces of Neuquén, San Luis, La Rioja, Misiones, and Tierra del Fuego.
Table 4.5: Argentine governorships won (1983-1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>UCR/Alianza + PJ</th>
<th>Other parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calvo & Murillo (2005, 212, table 9.2). Note: There were 22 provinces between 1983 and 1991, when Tierra del Fuego became a province in its own right. The province of Corrientes was under federal intervention in 199 and had no provincial governor until 1995.

This phase of the party system has been described as two-party (Gibson 1996, 127; Catterberg 1991, 50-53; Abal Medina & Suárez Cao 2002), moderate multiparty (Manzetti 1993, 125), and as a mixture of both (McGuire 1995, 228), but the latter is perhaps the most accurate because there were many parties and at the same time the PJ and UCR dominated. Although UCR lost a large part of the share of the presidential vote between 1983 and 1995 (Torre 2003), the combined percentage remained above 50% and even increased by 1999. Most importantly, the average also shows that UCR and the PJ have received the most presidential votes and have been able to ward off FREPASO in 1995. It is obvious that this two-party system weakened over time, but it never disappeared. By the same token, both UCR and the PJ won the most gubernatorial races (except in provinces that were won by local parties such as Movimiento Popular Neuquino in Neuquén province) and amassed the most Deputy votes (Calvo & Murillo 2005, 212, table 9.2).

The numbers also sustain the intersection between partisan self-interest and exogenous variables. First, party identification was promoted through constitutional provisions that elevated their political rank and permitted direct monetary and technical support from the state (Art. 38), confirming Müller’s (1993) argument. It is in fact the latter provision what is vital for the organizational strength of the parties. Moreover, Law 23.298 of October 22, 1985 (still in force), defines political parties as necessary
instruments for policymaking (Art. 2) and their creation by citizens as a right (Art. 1). There is also a link between the state and political culture that points to causal complexity, which is when democratic values are enshrined in positive law. The federal structure of the Argentine state also provided incentives by setting the stakes for vote maximization and framing party identification, since control of provincial government resources reinforces a reputation with constituents and sustains patronage and clientelistic ties necessary to maintain voter support. Another link between the state and political culture is that patronage politics sustained by the federal system became embedded in the local electorate. Both UCR and PJ have benefited from it, but the latter was able to extract even more resources and utilize them more effectively towards winning local elections (Jones & Hwang 2005); indeed, clientelism sustained its vote buying (Brusco, Nazareno & Stokes 2004) and patronage cemented the allegiance of the poor, the uneducated, and blue-collar workers. In contrast, the main constituency of UCR has been the upwardly mobile concentrated in the large provinces, minimizing the need to dispense patronage (Calvo & Murillo 2005, 221-222). In all, the effects of state intervention in these forms were to encourage political parties to perform their role as vote-maximizers and to provide structural incentives for party identification.

Some aspects of the electoral system are noteworthy. First, PR still creates the conditions for a multiparty system (Rae 1967), but the number of effective legislative parties remained between 2 and 3 (Calvo & Escolar 2005, 30, figure 1.4) because of its tendency to favor large parties (Parrish, von Lazar & Tapia-Videla 1971, 257). Second, the least populous provinces are overrepresented; and winners in large provinces receive only a few seats while in the smaller provinces a handful of parties may be able to fill the
most seats. While both UCR and the PJ have taken advantage of that, the latter is the
most benefited because provinces like La Pampa, Santa Cruz, La Rioja, and San Luis –
part of Argentina’s least populous quartile along with Catamarca and Tierra del Fuego –
have been its strongholds (Calvo & Murillo 2005). The Olivos Pact did not change the
PR formula, which was even extended to other elections. Third, local elections are
influenced by the Brand Laws (leyes de lemas), which permit provincial parties to present
different candidacies for the same posts; and by reforms such as redistricting and new
rules for candidate selection, which have sparked coattail effects, offered more
discretionary power over policymaking, shrunk the partisan offer, and provided
opportunities for the better financing of local party organizations. Once again, the PJ
stood to gain because the Brand Laws reduced fragmentation, and reforms underscored
the power of its local bosses. Curiously, those effects were even extended to the creation
of the presidential run-off round after the Olivos Pact, which enabled PJ to treat the first
round as an unofficial primary (Calvo & Escolar 2005).

Political culture is also relevant because *it cemented the legitimacy of political
parties as mechanisms for interest aggregation and public participation*. A
representative aspect is bossism: party identification and vote maximization at the local
level have much to do with the influence of party bosses and the resources they possess;
indeed, any party that controls the provincial government can seize the provincial
executive branch and all municipal governments, and has significant control over budgets
and the distribution of expenditures. That in part is a consequence of Argentine
federalism (hence the causal complexity mentioned earlier), but it enables bosses – who
are invariably the governors – to engage in the clientelistic and patronage activities that
sustain party allegiances (Jones & Hwang, 2005) and legitimize them. The result is the appearance of a powerful figure capable of antagonizing with national party leaders and with enough influence to mobilize voters. The PJ has been the most identified with this tradition (e.g., Kirchner in Santa Cruz, Duhalde in Buenos Aires, and Juan Carlos Romero in Salta [The Economist, 6/3/04]).

The second aspect relates to centrist voters. While they incorporated different concerns (the center-left was concerned with rule of law and transparency, and the center-right focused on economic stability), both sides shared a zeal for political accountability that originated in the grassroots human rights organizations that appeared during the Proceso and matured during democratization (Torre 2003, Torre 2005). In time, center-left voters denounced the undemocratic collusion of UCR and the PJ after the Olivos Pact, and center-right voters were deeply concerned about how career politicians were oblivious to efficient public policy and economic modernization. All that redefined individual attitudes towards certain parties: centrist voters were the main underpinning for the electoral fortunes of UCR and the PJ in the first years of the party system, but later withdrew their support (Torre 2003, Torre 2005). In terms of political subcultures, political parties appeared to acknowledge a moralistic undertone (especially UCR and the PJ), but skepticism within the middle class is indicative of more individualistic ideas.

However, centrist defection from the PJ and UCR did not spell displeasure with party politics as a whole. That fact underscores the third aspect of political culture: democratization. The objective was not just to restart vote maximization, but to advance

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26 Much of this tradition, however, is also due to the characteristics of Peronism itself. Ana María Mustapic describes Peronism as “a space for competition” with a very loose internal discipline and an unstable national organization where its dynamics are heavily influenced by the electoral cycle, giving opportunities to local bosses (2002, 156). Levitsky characterizes the PJ as a weakly institutionalized party with a fluid organization, no bureaucracy, and heavily contested and circumvented internal rules (2005b, 184).
the idea that party politics was the best vehicle for individuals to exercise their role as active participants in decision-making (hence the connection between these political culture beliefs and their reproduction through state intervention). Argentina’s “third wave” democratic transition was heavily influenced by the trauma left by the Proceso, which underscored a rupture with the past (Novaro 1997, 5) and a strong commitment to democracy. Civil society now demanded a reprieve from years of instability, and intellectuals condemned both military rule and guerrilla violence; hence, democracy was seen as better suited for achieving aspirations of rule of law, political stability, and human dignity (Vacs 2006, 408-409; Floria & García Belsunce 2004, 1036-1037). Furthermore, repression and policy failures discredited the Argentine military to a point where it could not be considered a trustworthy ally by any other political actor (Levistky 2005, 69), giving renewed incentives for a more civil party competition. In the case of centrist voters, they supported PI and UCEDE until their co-optation by PJ, and the appearance of APR and FG / FREPASO by the mid-1990s provided a new outlet. Levitsky argues that the middle class suddenly lost interest in party politics when politicians demonstrated a very loose commitment to constitutional rules and because the Convertibility Plan hindered an effective response to the economic slowdown (2003, 254-255), but that ignores this and other instances of realignment.

Regarding cleavages, the most significant was between Peronism and anti-Peronism, which was particularly salient in 1983. Indeed, in their groundbreaking analysis of how cleavages have been crystallized into Argentine party politics from 1912 to 2003, Noam Lapu & Susan Stokes conclude that there were class cleavages reflected in the major parties – PJ represented lower sectors, and UCR the middle and upper
classes (2009, 76). In part, those cleavages explain why both parties were eager vote maximizers and acquired a moralistic political subculture. The salience of that divide is proven by the combined percentages of both parties, which demonstrate a bimodal division of the electorate. What made the difference in 1983 was Alfonsín’s message, which enabled UCR to generate decisive electoral support because voters believed that Peronism was a culprit in the political instability that led to the *Proceso* (Calvo & Murillo 2005, 221; Powers 1999; Galván 2006, 118). After Ménem implemented neoliberal economic policies (and especially after the Olivos Pact), the divide was between Menemists and anti-Menemists; in it, UCR received an influx of lower sector voters and was pushed to the center, the PJ managed to retain its traditional constituency while shifting to the center-right, and the center-left FG / FREPASO was able to attract disaffected UCR voters in 1995 (Galván 2006; Lapu & Stokes 2009, 76). Most importantly, this new dimension also coincides with the appearance of APR and the dealignment of centrist voters as a whole. Moreno (1999) has argued that between 1995 and 1997 Argentines were divided along a liberal-fundamentalist dimension (nationalism, abortion, and religiosity) and a non-statistically significant dimension that combines education, religiosity and class; in that sense, the PJ represented the most liberal, FG / FREPASO was the most fundamentalist, and UCR occupied the center. Most importantly, this new dimension also coincides with the appearance of APR and the dealignment of centrist voters as a whole. Moreno (1999) has argued that between 1995 and 1997 Argentines were divided along a liberal-fundamentalist dimension (nationalism, abortion, and religiosity) and a non-statistically significant dimension that combines education, religiosity and class; in that sense, the PJ represented the most liberal, FG / FREPASO was the most fundamentalist, and UCR occupied the center. However, it was the Menemist / anti-Menemist dimension what generated the most intensity (Galván 2006, 120): Menem’s hyperpresidentialism, his economic proposals, and issues like corruption were major points in the activities of UCR and FG / FREPASO. In all cases, voters had attitudinal and behavioral inclinations that were

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27 A second dimension Moreno also identified combines education, religiosity and class, but it is not statistically significant.
captured by parties, and this identification was facilitated in turn by an electoral system that promoted partisanship and by political culture beliefs that extolled party politics and made patronage permissible.

The economic environment is also pertinent. While the PJ redefined itself in light of larger economic changes, the analyses of Burgess & Levitsky (2003) and Coppedge (2001) do not touch upon how “political Darwinism” influenced party interactions as a whole, which is connected with how the economic situation of voters influenced party identification through the articulation of interests. To begin with, the reduction of UCR’s share of the Deputy vote between 1985 and 1989 (Calvo & Escolar 2005, 23, table 1.1) coincided with the economic troubles that undermined Alfonsín’s popularity; if we follow Powers’s (1999) argument, inflation represented a serious obstacle to a dignified life and a solution from the government was demanded. In terms of party identification and vote maximization, that situation set the stage for Menem’s victory in 1989 because the economic crisis was widely associated to UCR and cemented the idea that neoliberal reforms were inevitable (Burgess & Levitsky 2003, 896). The next major issue – rising unemployment – became politically volatile because it was deemed unacceptable, coping mechanisms were scarce, and the existing political context provided avenues for transforming material demands into political demands. Though labor mobilization was one of those avenues and none of the major parties proposed to deviate from neoliberal economics, party politics was still an option: UCR became more critical of Menem’s policies (Powers 1999, 547) and increased its share of the Deputy vote in 1993 (Calvo & Escolar 2005, 23, table 1.1). After a setback in 1995, UCR reenergized the moment when the economy soured, but the comeback would not be to the point where
it could easily defeat the PJ. FREPASO, in turn, made economic recovery and center-left positions their trump card in 1995, but its success was not complete. The Alianza represented a moment in which voters made a connection between material and political demands (Powers 1999, 547)\textsuperscript{28} and became a vehicle for both anti-Menemist parties to maximize votes. In that context, it was very difficult for the PJ to win in 1999.

In sum, the main effect of the exogenous variables over partisan self-interest was the creation of voter self-interest – that is, the sieve through which voter hindsight and expectations towards parties went through. The result, as I mentioned, was a multiparty system with two-party dynamics, even if – as Catterberg (1991, 51) has argued – the ideological distances between the two major parties were very small. In terms of the number of parties, the winning presidential candidates were either from UCR or the PJ despite a tendency towards fragmentation between 1983 and 1995 (Calvo & Escolar 2005, 30), but it was not as dramatic in Deputy elections because of an effect of the PR formula: the more fragmented the provincial party system is, the lesser the number of legislative parties because votes are dispersed between more parties and there is a larger difference between the most voted party and its closest competitor (Calvo 2005, 159). The PJ was the strongest in electoral and organizational terms due to the existence of local cadres (Calvo & Murillo 2005) and the combination of electoral system, fiscal institutions and demographics; but UCR also had organizational strength (it won in 1983 and 1985, and narrowly trailed PJ in 1987 and 1997 [Calvo & Escolar 2005, 23, table 1.1]). The intensity of the two cleavages that materialized in this period explain that finding. In comparison, the other parties (including FREPASO) were not able to match

\textsuperscript{28} Powers analysis nevertheless ignores the weaknesses of both UCR and FREPASO, which were one condition that precipitated the creation of the Alianza.
the strength of UCR and the PJ. The Peronism / anti-Peronism cleavage sustains the representational strength of UCR and the PJ, while ideological distinctions (itself another classic element of party systems present in this case) did the same for the other parties. It also appears that the affective strength of parties was very palpable: parties like the PJ and UCR were embedded in society; while PI, APR, UCEDE and FG / FREPASO demonstrated to have popularity within certain segments of the Argentine electorate.

- The second stage

By 1999, the conditions were set for another antecedent condition that changed the existing pattern of interactions. The tables below provide some initial information:

| Table 4.6: Results of Argentine presidential elections (2003 and 2007) – in percentages |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Election                          | UCR/Alianza + Peronism | Third-place party |
| 2003                              | 63\(^{29}\)             | MFR (16)         |
| 2007                              | 69\(^{30}\)             | CC (23)          |
| **Average**                       | **66**                  | **19**          |
| **Average 1983-1999**             | **80**                  | **11**          |

Source: DNE (2007b) and IFES ([2008])

| Table 4.7: Results of Argentine Senate elections (2001-2007) – in percentages |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Election                          | UCR/Alianza + Peronism | Third-place party |
| 2001                              | 67                    | ARI (11)        |
| 2003                              | 55                    | Frente Nuevo (9)|
| 2005                              | 69                    | ARI (6)         |
| 2007                              | 39                    | CC (23)         |
| **Average for period**            | **57**                | **12**         |

Source: Carr ([2008a], [2008b] and [2008c]) and DNE (2008g). Note: Includes the percentages obtained by local factions of Peronism.

| Table 4.8: Results of Argentine Deputy elections (2003, 2005, and 2007) – in percentages |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Election                          | UCR/Alianza + Peronism | Third-place party |
| 2003                              | 56                    | ARI (5)         |
| 2005                              | 42                    | ARI (7)         |
| 2007                              | 39                    | UNA (17)        |
| **Average**                       | **45**                | **9**          |
| **Average 1983-1999**             | **78**                | **8**          |

Source: Calvo & Escolar (2005, 23, table 1.1), and Carr ([2008a] and [2008c]). Note: Includes the percentages obtained by local factions of Peronism.

\(^{29}\) Includes the percentages obtained by Kirchner, Ménem, and Rodríguez Saá.

\(^{30}\) Includes the percentages obtained by Fernández de Kirchner, Rodríguez Saá, and Lavagna.
Table 4.9: Argentine governorships won (2003 and 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>UCR/Alianza + Peronism</th>
<th>Third parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>18&lt;sup&gt;32&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tow ([2008e], [2008f], [2008g], [2008h], and [2008i])

The numbers show that the previous two-partyism is weaker now than before. To be sure, Peronism was not affected severely by the 2001-2002 crisis and the PJ lost less legislative votes between 1999 and 2001 (Torre 2003, 653, table 3), but the decrease in the combined UCR / Peronism share of presidential and Deputy votes shows that fewer voters identify now with either party. No single third party has been consistently successful so far, but their share of the presidential vote has increased slightly. The Deputy elections show a much more dramatic decrease in the combined Peronism / UCR share – from 78% in the first stage to 45% in the current stage, with a tendency towards a decrease between elections; in turn, third parties have increased their share modestly. More technically, the numbers show that the party system experienced three simultaneous processes: 1. An increase in electoral volatility, 2. Territorialization (an increase in the number of electoral parties<sup>33</sup>), and 3. Denationalization (individual parties obtaining different percentages of the vote in different provinces) (Calvo & Escolar 2005; Leiras 2007). Parties overrepresented in small districts (e.g., Peronism) were not severely affected, but those with a more visible presence in larger districts (e.g., UCR, APR and FREPASO) were (Leiras 2007, 29).

Nevertheless, the territorialization and denationalization of the 1983 Argentine party system is explained by how the exogenous variables at this stage combined with partisan self-interest. *One of those exogenous variables is political culture because of its*

<sup>31</sup> Includes the results of the 2002 election in Santiago del Estero, and of the 2001 election in Corrientes.
<sup>32</sup> Includes the results of the 2005 elections in Santiago del Estero and Corrientes.
<sup>33</sup> The tendency towards a low number of legislative parties has remained nevertheless (Calvo 2005, 159, figure 1).
connection with attitudes towards parties. The year 1999 was the culmination of the process of disenchantment that occurred during the prior stage, where “politics as usual” (corruption, patronage, self-interested political reproduction) became a deal breaker for centrist voters and exposed a gap between the political class and voters, while both the PJ and UCR did not adapt to the changes in popular attitudes (Torre 2005, 173). Moreover, the participation of APR and FREPASO in the failed De la Rúa presidency resulted in their political collapse when centrist voters equated them with the now-discredited PJ and UCR (Torre 2003, Torre 2005). What resulted from all that was not just the fragmentation of the non-Peronist electorate (Levitsky & Murillo 2003, 163), but a more shallow party identification within centrist voters and a particular type of “political Darwinism” (i.e., less votes to maximize). It is what Torre (2003) describes as a crisis of representation or a political “orphanhood” that manifested fully by 2001. Many centrist voters gave their support to the new non-Peronist parties, but in general those voters are more likely to disperse their votes rather than concentrating them on any particular alternative (Leiras 2007, 30). That aspect has been mentioned repeatedly as the reason why non-Peronist parties have had meager success so far in maximizing votes. Having said that, Peronist voters mobilized by patronage machineries helped their party survive the 2001-2002 crisis (Calvo & Murillo 2005, 223; Torre 2005, 178; Levitsky & Murillo 2003, 164), and UCR continues to have a political presence at the local level for the same reason (Calvo & Murillo 2005, 223).

The dispersion of the centrist vote can also be explained by cleavages. After the divide between Peronism and anti-Peronism ceased to have any significance (De Riz 2008, 50), the most visible cleavage by 2003 was a more traditional left / center / right
dimension\textsuperscript{34} represented by Carrió (center-left), López Murphy (center-right), and four actors at the programmatic center (Kirchner, Rodríguez Saá, UCR, and Menem) (Galván 2006). The key to understanding this continuum is the appearance of a median voter without a consistent ideological position coveted by all parties (Galván 2006). That voter is any of the political orphans – a centrist. As of this day, UCR and UNA appear to be at the programmatic center, PRO is in the center-right, and both ARI and CC are center-left. FPV allegedly intends to become a center-left party, but some observers either doubt that it will become so (De Riz 2008) or pose the larger question about what kind of centrism Peronism really represents (Galván 2006). Still, the fact that UCR and Peronism have been able to maintain a space in spite of these circumstances is because centrist parties have been unable so far to make decisive inroads at the local level, leading to the reappearance of UCR and Peronism and subverting the left / right dimension (Galván 2006, 125). Also, non-Peronist parties do not have a common agenda that can match and even be superior to Peronism (Leiras 2007, 30).

Regarding more traditional ascriptive and attitudinal cleavages, the following table provides some information:

\textbf{Table 4.10: Strength of cleavages in Argentina (in percentages, “very strong” plus “strong”)}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rich / poor</th>
<th>Owner / worker</th>
<th>Racial</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latinobarómetro 2007

The most salient dimensions are rich vs. poor and owner vs. worker, but only the former has any reasonable connection with current party politics. The owner / worker dimension currently prevails according to these numbers, but after the 1980s Peronism dispensed with its links with unions and substituted them for patronage and clientelistic networks.

\textsuperscript{34} Galván also argues that the Menemism / anti-Menemism dimension was also present, but not as decisive as this left / center / right dimension.
In this sense, it is likely that recent labor legislation, the recognition of certain unions by the state, and overall union support for Kirchner’s presidency (De Riz 2008, 54-55) were more a product of machine politics than a legitimate aggregation of interests. The rich / poor dimension crystallized as a political division between middle and low-income sectors (Lapu & Stokes 2009), but party identification did not always follow the convention of the prior stage: most of those who voted for Menem in 2003 and for Fernandez de Kirchner in 2007 were of low-income status and the middle class vote in both elections was largely non-Peronist (De Riz 2008, 63; Levitsky & Murillo 2003, 157-158), but many anti-Menem middle class voters supported Kirchner in 2003 (Levitsky & Murillo 2003, 157). Yet there may be a correlation between these class cleavages and the left / center / right dimension because the major parties are now competing against each other for centrist voters that do not have a consistent party identification (Galván 2006). That in turn presupposes the existence of a political culture and state institutions conducive to partisanship.

Another apparent cleavage dimension, as some have argued (De Riz 2008, 63; Lemmi 2008, 3), is urban vs. rural. In 2003, Menem triumphed in Córdoba (Tow [2008m]), but Rosario was won by Carrió (Tow [2008l]) and López Murphy was the most voted candidate in Buenos Aires. In 2007, Fernández de Kirchner won overwhelmingly in rural provinces where patronage is most prevalent (Salta, Santiago del Estero, and Formosa), but did not win in the aforementioned cities\(^\text{35}\); conversely, Carrió won in Rosario (Tow [2008n]) and Buenos Aires (Tow [2008o]), and Lavagna in Córdoba (Tow [2008p]). Lapu & Stokes argue that the urban / rural cleavage is currently

\(^{35}\) Fernández de Kirchner won nevertheless in two other urban centers – the cities of Mendoza and Tucumán.
irrelevant (2009, 78-79), but it may be connected in reality to the larger divide between middle-class and poor: although 37% of the votes for Fernández de Kirchner came from the province of Buenos Aires (De Riz 2008, 64) and Peronism has always been popular with its low-income residents (Lemmi 2008, 3), voters in the city of Buenos Aires have consistently given support to the middle-class non-Peronist parties (indeed, public opinion in Argentine large cities is considered a relevant factor in the formation of national public opinion [Lemmi 2008, 3]). On the other hand, the geographic diversity of the country creates a difficult situation for non-Peronist parties because the middle class has less of a presence in peripheral areas (Torre 2003, 662).

The state, particularly the electoral system, is also important because it still provides incentives for partisanship. Peronism continues to have huge electoral gains because PR and majority rules are still biased towards the party that wins the most votes, especially in the least populated districts (De Riz 2008, 68; Torre 2003, 662); but UCR has survived in part by becoming a local political force and taking advantage of those effects when competing against Peronism in a number of districts, allying with centrist parties in others, and even forming electoral coalitions with Peronists in a few others (Galván 2006, 137). As a matter of fact, UCR won 7 provincial governments, 13 Senate seats, and 31 Deputy seats between 2003 and 2007 (Tow [2008d], Tow [2008g], Tow [2008h], Tow [2008i], Tow [2008j], Tow [2008q], Tow [2008r], Tow [2008s], Tow [2008t]). On the side of other non-Peronist parties, the effects of the PR and majority rules are negative and presidential run-off rounds have contributed to fragmentation because the desire to reach that round prevents them from coalescing. This was obvious in 2003 (Galván 2006, 124) and 2007, when opposition parties wanted to reach the run-
off round with the intention of either create alliances or appeal to anti-Peronist strategic voting (Tejerizo 2008). Also, current legislation is permissive with the benchmarks for the creation and legal status of political parties, encouraging the widespread creation of local candidate slates and political parties that seek to benefit from coattail effects (De Riz 2008, 58); yet that aspect does not seem to be dangerous because most of those parties do not reach the 2%-of-the-vote threshold mandated for their legal status, party proliferation is seen as positive by some (i.e. Tejerizo 2008), fragmentation in 2003 was not particularly extreme (Galván 2006, 139, table 4), and the increase in the number of electoral parties does not translate in a similar increase in the number of legislative parties (Calvo 2005).

Finally, the economic environment created the following effects: 1. Unemployment and poverty were intolerable constraints, 2. A significant coping mechanism (bank savings) was put off limits by the government, 3. The government had to reverse the crisis, 4. The Alianza was not the best alternative, and 5. Whichever alternative would take over was not expected to sacrifice other values, such as democratic governability. In short, economic outlooks were a major influence for party identification. In 2003, MFR and ARI targeted those who supported the Alianza in 1999 and were affected by the crisis, but MFR adopted a much friendlier position towards neoliberal economics than ARI, Kirchner and Rodríguez Saá (Levitsky & Murillo 2003, 157). In 2007, the economy became one central issue and middle class voters expressed deep concern about inflation. Though Fernández de Kirchner was vague about her economic proposals, those who voted for her stated that opposition parties did not present real alternatives (De Riz 2008, 59; BBC News, 10/20/07; BBC News 10/30/07).
The resulting pattern of interactions ostensibly resembles weak two-party system, but it is more likely to be moderately-to-highly fragmented (Galván 2006, 139, table 4) because the 2001-2002 crisis and its prelude destroyed the prior two-party configuration and opened party competition, creating an offer of viable national options represented by Peronism (especially FPV), UCR, CC, PRO, and UNA. At the local level, provincial parties are another option. Although FPV is the strongest party electorally, opposition parties have opened a very limited but still visible electoral space. UCR is electorally weak in comparison to FPV, but remains competitive at the local level. Regarding organizational strength, Peronism as a whole still mobilizes voters thanks to its patronage machinery, but so does UCR. The difference between both is in the aspect of affective strength: less people identify now with UCR than with Peronism. In the case of other opposition parties, they are weak in most dimensions of strength, but what has enabled them to open the small space they have is its representational strength. In terms of ideology, the system shows clear ideological dimensions, although the major parties concentrate on the political center.

b. Institutionalization and party system stability

Regarding institutionalization, the percentages of positive and negative votes for presidential, deputy, and gubernatorial elections present key findings:

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36 This is his assessment for the 2003 presidential elections.
Table 4.11: Positive vs. negative votes – Argentine presidential elections (1983-1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1973-1976</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12: Positive vs. negative votes – Argentine Deputy elections (1983-1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1973-1976</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13: Positive vs. negative votes – Argentine gubernatorial elections (1983-1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One important finding from these tables is that beginning in 1991 the percentages of positive votes decreased across the board, which is likely, correlated with centrist
defections from the PJ and UCR. The appearance of FG / FREPASO, the patronage politics of the PJ, and the appearance of the Alianza in 1997 prevented a more dramatic decrease and even sparked an increase in the positive vote for governor and deputy between 1993 and 1995. That may also explain why positive votes for president and governor stabilized between 1997 and 1999, notwithstanding fluctuations in the percentages for deputy elections. In turn, the 2001-2002 crisis did have a significant effect over party politics: in comparison with the period 1973-1976, the percentage of positive votes for the first stage of the 1983 party system is lower, although the decrease is not dramatic.

The comparisons between the two stages of the 1983 party system and between the 1983 and 1973 party systems show that partisanship is now more open than before. The following tables show that the average percentage of positive votes is lower despite increases from 2001:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.15: Positive vs. negative votes – Argentine presidential elections (2003 and 2007)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1983-1999</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.16: Positive vs. negative votes – Argentine Senate elections (2001-2007)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Election</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1983-1999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perhaps the most important finding from the tables is that although voters have become disenchanted over time, the percentages of positive votes in all elections in both stages of the current party system are commanding – still over 50%. Leiras (in his interview with Passarello Luna [2008]) argues that Argentines are increasingly dissatisfied nowadays with the partisan offer, but a much more optimistic assessment would say that there is still an emotional involvement with party politics. This conclusion connects to Bakke & Sitter’s (2005) argument because party politics in 1983 were reactivated in the
midst of a larger democratization process, as it occurred in Eastern Europe. The fiercest competition was between the PJ and UCR in part because of the power and perks provided by provincial governments and the presidency; hence, *the long term choices in question were made in the midst of competition for these political prizes, as well as for political representation*. However, by the same token, we cannot conclude that Sartori’s (1969) assumption – political parties acting independently from the external environment – holds in this case because democratization provided a context for the self-interested motives of political parties. In the case of institutionalization, it also played a significant role, as I will explain later.

The parties did not make their long-term choices without the structural preconditions established by the Argentine state (e.g., the constitution and Law 23.298) because they imprinted all political parties with legitimacy by considering them essential democratic institutions. Nevertheless, *those incentives did not result in the institutionalization of Peronism*, though the PJ and the current factions of Peronism were legitimized. Another effect of the state in party system institutionalization relates to local politics: given Argentina’s federal system, the newfound importance of local politics leads to the preeminence of machine politics, particularly in rural areas (Levitsky & Murillo 2003, 161).

In terms of cleavages, *the ones that appeared between 1983 and the present embedded parties in society* (or at least contributed to their continued relevance) through their focus on immediate attitudinal and behavioral concerns. Combined with the legitimacy of parties and the stakes at hand, the divide between Peronism and anti-Peronism provided an opportunity for a competition for votes between UCR and the PJ
that generated enough intensity to seize attention; indeed, both parties obtained the most presidential and Deputy votes between 1983 and 1999. The Menemism / anti-Menemism cleavage appeared at a moment when centrist voters were openly displeased with the PJ and UCR, but those voters supported APR and FREPASO as more more representative forces. Vote maximizing considerations made FG / FREPASO and UCR form the Alianza, but its overall acceptance should be understood from the standpoint of how the Menemist / anti-Menemist divide materialized (anti-Menemist voters were not entirely happy with UCR, but would not budge to Menem). Finally, the current left / right dimension has made parties still relevant despite skepticism and the 2001-2002 crisis because of its association with political competition between middle-class and popular sectors (and in a very minor way between urban centers and rural areas).

Regarding the economic environment, Coppedge (2001) and especially Burgess & Levitsky (2003) mention how the PJ became electorally successful after adapting to new conditions; more precisely, the PJ had high incentives to adapt (the extent of economic crisis, bridging a credibility gap with international finance, opposition to UCR) and its loose structure facilitated change (Burgess & Levitsky 2003). Nevertheless, the most visible effect of economics over the institutionalization of the pattern of interactions is connected to outlooks that translate into demands parties have to aggregate if they want to maximize votes. Voters who were concerned with inflation under Alfonsín gave their support to Menem and the PJ in 1989 and 1995, and those who were affected by economic recession transferred their votes to the Alianza in 1999 (Leirás 2007, 28); before that, UCR and FREPASO intensified their opposition to the PJ. In all instances, economic issues became a reason for legitimizing the existing parties as vehicles for
expressing voter-self interest even if the PJ never became a truly rational organization. In 2003, the presidential candidates presented either neo-liberal (Ménem and López Murphy) or leftist (Rodríguez Saá, Kirchner, Carrió) proposals for the economy, which reflects different conceptions at the citizen level: on the one hand, Argentina experienced growth under market-friendly policies, but on the other many people blamed them for the 2001-2002 crisis. Perhaps the only exception is the presidential campaign of 2007, in which the economy was a central issue but no party offered concrete positions.

Finally, political culture offers the last clues because support for democracy is still considerable and the norms that encourage participation in public affairs through political parties have remained. Although few statistics reflecting support for democracy before 1995 were found, respondents in a survey made in 1988 gave low marks to politicians (Catterberg 1991, 55) in an indication of popular demands for more resolute and less institutionally constricted executive action and the sudden appearance of political outsiders (Levitsky 2003, 247). However, that was not a cause for concern because that same survey also revealed that political parties were held in higher esteem, and that this dissatisfaction with politicians has been equated to similar situations in more established democracies without negative implications for party system stability (Catterberg 1991, 55-57). Moreover, the premium placed on machine politics imposes conditions that are very difficult for anti-politicians to overcome (Levitsky & Murillo 2003, 161). Also, some of the political outsiders that did appear (pop singer Ramón Ortega and race car driver Carlos Reutemann) were actually personalities with no political experience but had sympathies with Peronism (McGuire 1995, 232). Finally,

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37 Ortega and Reutemann were nominated under instructions from Ménem (with whom they had ties) as candidates for the governorships of Tucumán and Santa Fe, respectively. Both candidates won.
surveys made between 1982 and 1989 revealed an agreement amongst respondents on political systems based on periodic elections (Catterberg 1991, 41, table 4.1), and similar polls made between 1992 and 1995 found another tendency to value civilian governments more positively than military governments (Adrogué, 1998, 392, figure 2). While support for democracy during the first stage was not based on notions such as tolerance of opposition and restrictions on freedom of the press, an acceptance of its participatory notions (i.e., periodic elections) was “highly consensual (Catterberg 1991, 45).”

This does not mean that there were not any extremist parties (see Powell Jr. 1981). One such party was Movimiento por la Dignidad y la Independencia (MODIN), a right-wing populist party created in 1991 and led by former military rebel Aldo Rico. Its best showing was in the 1993 legislative election, when it won 5% of the vote and elected four deputies (by far the best showing by an individual third party in that election), but finished in fourth place in the 1994 constitutional assembly elections with 9% of the vote. By 1995, its presidential and legislative candidates obtained only 1.7% of the vote each. When the 2001-2002 crisis struck, Rico found no willing supporters and eventually joined the PJ, while his party saw its share of the presidential vote reduced to 0.16% in 2003 (Levitsky 2005a, 77; Levitsky & Murillo 2003, 160; Szusterman 1996; DNE 2008e; DNE 2006b; DNE 2007b). The likeliest explanation for MODIN’s electoral irrelevance (and for why participatory democracy was highly supported during the 1980s) is located in a political culture held democratic governance more positively than military rule; indeed, the authoritarian experience of 1976 made conservatives renounce to any collusion with the military, and transformed the PJ into a mainstream political party with an electoral mentality (Levitsky 2005a, 69; Cheresky 2000, 50). Likewise, the
characteristics of UCR / PJ two-partyism have discouraged anti-system parties (Catterberg 1991, 51).

For the current stage of the party system, the following numbers from Latinobarómetro surveys from 2001 to 2007 provide important indications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democracy is preferable to any other form of government (%)</th>
<th>I would not support a military government under any circumstance (%)</th>
<th>Democracy has flaws, but is the best system of government (%)</th>
<th>I am satisfied with democracy (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noteworthy to mention that although Argentines are not satisfied with democracy (except in 2006) the percentage of those who preferred democracy over any other form of government increased between 2001 and 2002 (the years of the crisis). That latter finding correlates with a tendency in respondents to qualify democracy as a way for economic improvement and development, which was revealed in the Latinobarómetro surveys of 2004, 2005 and 2006.

How do those statistics translate into the institutionalization of the 1983 party system, especially after the crisis? Calls for casting blank ballots were vigorously made prior to the 2003 election (Levistky & Murillo 2003, 156) and the overall pre-electoral environment was not enthusiastic (The Economist, 3/20/03), but voter turnout was

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38 Parts of this information were taken from The Economist (8/15/02).
calculated at 78% of the registry – not too different from past electoral contests\textsuperscript{39}. Participation decreased to 71% by 2007, but it is still high. Most importantly, there was a very significant decrease in blank and null votes from 20% in 2001 to only 2.5% of the total vote in that election (\textit{The Economist}, 5/1/03; Levitsky & Murillo 2003). The following statistics from the all Latinobarómetro surveys since 2001 provide a glimpse into what explains this situation\textsuperscript{40}:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Year} & \textbf{No democracy without parties (%)} & \textbf{Voting is efficacious for change (%)} \\
\hline
2001 & -- & -- \\
2002 & -- & -- \\
2003 & -- & 54 \\
2004 & -- & 65 \\
2005 & 64 & 64 \\
2006 & 64 & 69 \\
2007 & -- & -- \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Attitudes in Argentina towards political parties (I)}
\end{table}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Year of survey} & \textbf{Positive trends} & \textbf{Negative trends} \\
\hline
2002 & Virtually no trust in political parties & \\
2003 & 59% thought that politicians had the chance to restore their image & 8% trust political parties; 44% would vote for a political party \\
2004 & 65% believed that voting is efficacious for change & 39% would vote for a political party \\
2005 & 64% believed that democracy could not exist without political parties. & 3% would work for a political party \\
2006 & 64% believed that democracy could not exist without political parties; 69% believed that voting was efficacious for change. & 4% would work for a political party \\
2007 & & 14% trust political parties \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Attitudes in Argentina towards political parties (II)}
\end{table}

Granted that Argentines do not equate democracy with the existence of a party system (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2006), the percentages associated to the statement “no

\textsuperscript{39} D’Adamo, García Beaudoux & Slavinsky argue that this sudden interest in the presidential election was due to polls that presented the possibility of a third candidate – neither Peronist nor of UCR – contesting a run-off round. López Murphy was said to be that third candidate (2003, 148-149). We should not forget also that in Argentina voting is mandatory.

\textsuperscript{40} Parts of this information were taken from \textit{The Economist} (8/15/02).
democracy without parties” lead to the conclusion that party activity is still a necessary condition for Argentine democracy. Skepticism against parties is evident (De Riz 2008, 57), but it is not extensive to party politics as a whole and a crisis of representation is not in sight. By the same token, the electoral victories of Hermes Binner and Mauricio Macri could not have occurred in a polity where organized political parties were rejected, and both of them cannot be considered anti-politicians. Connected with the statements about support for and satisfaction with democracy (and especially with the percentages of positive votes), the statement implies that voters still value the participatory aspects of democracy as a way to improve the political system. The connection made between democratic governance and political liberties (e.g., freedom of expression and association) facilitate party politics because those liberties are fundamental for its existence. By the same token, since democracy is also equated with economic improvement, it also provides an incentive (or perhaps a precondition) for partisan activity inasmuch as there are opportunities for citizens to influence in economic policymaking through the periodic change in political leadership.

Furthermore, Latinobarómetro 2006 revealed that Argentines are among the least willing in Latin America as a whole to participate in contentious politics – 8% believe protest movements are effective for change and 9% would participate in non-authorized manifestations. This is consistent with Levitsky & Murillo’s (2003) finding that during the 2003 presidential elections disruptive voting was not widespread and no anti-system candidate received measurable support, although it also relates to how Kirchner has been able to co-opt the moderate leaders of the protest movements (De Riz 2008). The following table provides more information:
Table 4.22: Support for contentious politics in 2005 and 2006 (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sign a petition</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in authorized demonstrations</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in unauthorized demonstrations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in lootings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in building or factory occupations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in traffic blockages</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latinobarómetro

Two other elements of Argentine political culture also explain the resiliency of the 1983 party system: patronage politics and political bossism. Both aspects are connected in a way, as powerful provincial governors are also major suppliers of state largesse (The Economist, 6/3/04). In fact, 25% of Argentines declared to know more than one case of political clientelism according to Latinobarómetro 2005. In the final analysis, patronage politics and bossism provide incentives for some aspects of party activity.

In conclusion, if we abide strictly by Huntington’s definition of institutionalization as the acquisition of value and stability, the 1983 Argentine party system is institutionalized; indeed, in the opinion of Abal Medina & Suárez Cao, it is “the most consolidated institution (in terms of stability and predictability) of the Argentine political system (2002, 166)”41. Its deep roots in the Argentine polity – deeper than its 1973 predecessor – has contributed immensely in its survival of the 2001-2002 crisis. This is not to say that it escaped undimmed, but it did not collapse entirely. This system has high chronological and generational adaptability because it has subsisted for the last 25 years and because leaders like Menem and Alfonsín were eventually substituted by the Kirchners, Carrió, Macri, López Murphy and others. It also has high autonomy because no social actor has taken over the system for its own benefit, and an

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41 My translation. Parenthesis in the original.
even higher level of functional adaptability because the structuring of political competition did not become an end itself as much as the institution. Complexity is perhaps too high, but some see fragmentation as proof of how important party politics is for Argentines. Perhaps the most indicative aspect of the institutionalization of this system is coherence: despite popular skepticism against political parties, agreement on the boundaries and procedures of the party system is complete and no anti-political or anti-party movement worth mentioning exists in Argentina today. In the final analysis, paraphrasing Alan Angell (2007), a change in popular support for different parties or crises of public confidence in parties such as the one that nearly destroyed the 1983 party system are not the same as a shift in the basis of the system, which has not occurred.

An assessment of alternative explanations

1. The number of parties

The 1973 party system did not disintegrate because of the existence of too many parties. By the same token, the 1983 party system was not on the verge of collapse because of the volatility and excessive polarization associated with multiparty systems. In reality, the 1973 party system and the first stage of the 1983 party system were technically two-party since the two most supported parties were FREJULI / PJ and UCR. In the 1973 system, that predominance and their agreements as members of La Hora del Pueblo should have averted systemic instability as Powell Jr. (1981) would predict and – although competition was not balanced given the electoral strength of FREJULI – established a modicum of the restraint Midlarsky (1984) would argue for. That did not contribute to institutionalization because it undermined UCR’s capability to
counterbalance the government, but it was only a catalyst for the reason why the political system disintegrated, which was the collusion between elites and the military. In the case of the 1983 party system, the alleged volatility and polarization of multiparty systems were not as critical as the political realignment of centrist voters and the economic crisis that provoked the rabid reaction of citizens.

2. Political culture and the 1973 party system

The discussion about the institutionalization of the 1973 party system points to the fact that political culture was a contradictory factor. It is true that the electoral system encouraged partisanship, but the confrontation between Peronists and anti-Peronists was overwhelming. In that context, La Hora del Pueblo became a liability for UCR, which was relegated to the role of custodian of the constitutional order. Also, both left-wing insurgency and right-wing violence were not abated, so the resumption of party politics occurred at a time when social forces were still beyond control. This does not mean that there were no democratic forces (UCR was one of those) and that there were no attempts at strengthening democratic governability (La Hora del Pueblo is the main example), but the political environment was not conducive to institutionalized party politics. In short, there was no democratic political culture – in the sense of norms that encourage political toleration – that could sustain party politics on the longer term, and any legitimization of political parties through the electoral system was weakened by contentious politics and disloyal opposition.
3. Post-modernization and the current party system

Moreno has concluded that post-material cleavages are salient and that there are clear distinctions between less educated conservatives and educated liberals (1999, 135-136). Klesner (2007) argues something similar: post-materialist values are a better predictor of political activism than mixed (materialist and post-materialist) attitudes. However, *Argentina presents a contradiction that makes post-modernization not entirely effective at explaining party system stability*: despite Moreno and Klesner’s findings, Inglehart & Welzel have concluded that Argentina (in 1990) had almost no self-expression values but at the same 60% of respondents support democracy (2003, 74, figure 4). There has been little change since the 1990 survey, as shown by the latest chart; in it, Argentina had a self-expression value of approximately 0 (point) 25 (Inglehart [2006]) while at the same time – as shown by the Latinobarómetro surveys – support for democracy is very evident even if satisfaction with it is low.

None of this means that there are no post-materialist issues; the 2007 wave of Latinobarómetro found that of the two most pressing problems in Latin America (crime and unemployment), Argentines believe that the most important is crime (25% of respondents). Still, we should also understand that Argentina is not an advanced industrial society even if its economy improved from the time of the 2001 crisis, so materialist issues still exist.

4. Cognitive mobilization

As I have done with the prior two cases, I will compare Argentina and the United States from the standpoint of education and employment in the service sector. The year
1975 was chosen as the only full year under the 1973 party system for which enrollment information was found. The year 1984 is the first full year after the start of democratization; hence its inclusion in the table below. Because no enrollment data was found for 2006, the most recent statistics are from 2005.

Table 4.23: Enrollment in college (tertiary) education – Argentina and the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>596,736</td>
<td>677,535</td>
<td>1,077,212</td>
<td>1,918,708</td>
<td>2,082,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>11,184,859</td>
<td>12,242,000</td>
<td>13,710,150</td>
<td>13,595,580</td>
<td>17,272,044</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.24: Total population – Argentina and the United States

<table>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>26,049,360</td>
<td>29,853,928</td>
<td>32,580,860</td>
<td>37,274,398</td>
<td>38,747,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>215,972,990</td>
<td>235,824,990</td>
<td>256,097,549</td>
<td>287,836,763</td>
<td>299,846,449</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.25: Percentage of the total population enrolled in college education – Argentina and the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.26: Percentage of the labor force in the service sector – Argentina and the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The larger conclusion from these tables is that cognitive mobilization does not describe accurately the 1973 party system and presents inconclusive findings for the current one. No labor statistics were found for the 1973 party system, but Argentina lagged behind the US during that period and nevertheless had citizens interested both in politics and in party politics. In that sense, positive cognitive mobilization (i.e., more party identification through college enrollment) did not occur and citizens were externally socialized by cleavages.

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42 These numbers were obtained through my own calculation of averages based on the percentages of males and females in the sector for the 1990-1992 and 2000-2005 periods.
For the current system, the figures found show that Argentina has not been able to catch up with the US in how many workers belong to the service sector (although the difference between both countries is not large). Regarding college enrollment, Argentina caught up with – and at one point surpassed – the US during the first stage of the current party system, which may suggest (more so than service sector employment) that a considerable number of people have been cognitively mobilized. Positive votes have decreased (i.e., negative cognitive mobilization), but so has interest in politics: 9% would try to convince someone else on their political views in 2006 (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2006). Yet the aforementioned facts could explain denationalization and perhaps electoral volatility, but do not explain territorialization. In that latter aspect, the appearance of more electoral parties in a setting like post-crisis Argentina could also indicate more interest in politics, or what Dalton (1984) defines as cognitive partisanship. That is similar to Tejerizo’s (2008) conclusion – the fragmentation of the party system indicates the appearance of new and welcome avenues for interest aggregation and the resilience of party politics rather than the harbinger of instability. Likewise, Klesner (2007) has argued that Argentines with higher education tend to be very active politically.

5. Interpersonal trust

Klesner also concludes that Argentina has a coefficient for interpersonal trust of only 2.27; ironically, it is the largest in his sample. The reason he gives is that political activism arising from voluntary associations is not widespread; in fact, membership in cultural and educational organizations is more likely to led to political activism. Low
interpersonal trust, however, has been revealed as far back by the 2004, 2006, and 2007 waves of Latinobarómetro:

**Table 4.27: Interpersonal trust in Argentina (in percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This question was not included in the 2005 report.

This could point to the conclusion that the 1983 party system should have broken down because lack of interpersonal hinders concerted efforts, including political behavior. However, the continued existence of political parties contradicts that conclusion because during the late 1990s FREPASO represented a set of outstanding issues and the years before the 2001 crisis saw the existence of many more political parties. Also, out of the 2001 crisis came ARI and MFR as mass political groups. Finally, the existence of UCR – though precarious – and all the factions of Peronism also prove that Argentines do have a capacity for concerted political action that springs from a notion of interpersonal trust, though instigated by external circumstances.

No conclusions in this regard related to the 1973 party system can be made because pertinent data was not found; nevertheless, the 1973 party system exhibits a clear case of disloyal opposition, but not from any political party against the government. Given its longstanding misgivings against Peronism, UCR would have been expected to be a disloyal opponent, but it eventually “buried the hatchet” and made a deal with FREJULI. In reality, disloyal opposition came from the conservative groups and the military, although the former were responding to the same anti-democratic attitudes displayed by the radical Peronists. At the same time, there was more interpersonal trust within UCR than within Peronism, judging from its internal division. Attrition resulted in the seizure of power within the movement of its the labor sector, but by then the 1976
military coup was imminent. For the 1983 party system, the political culture that values democracy more than military authoritarianism explains why there has been no visible disloyal opposition in Argentine politics. No statistics of interpersonal trust were found for any year before 1996, but if we remember Inglehart’s (1997) definition of the concept we can see that there was virtually no disloyal opposition during the first stage of the 1983 party system: by and large, PJ accepted UCR’s victory in 1983 and UCR did the same when PJ won the 1989 election. In the current phase, to be sure, UCR, Peronism, and non-Peronist parties have become mutually exclusive forces and there are differences between UCR and the major non-Peronist parties, but this does not mean that any political group has resorted to extreme measures against their rivals. Most importantly, no political group in Argentina has recently made any approaches to the military.

6. The economic environment and the 1973 party system

The economic environment was also an irrelevant factor; while the confrontation between elites and the Peronist government was based on the effects of economic policymaking, it did not translate into a more widespread creation or articulation of interests, as Powers (1999) argues more generally. The qualms harbored by elites regarding economic policy could have resulted in more vocal conservative parties, but that was not the case. Also, the case is not representative of a mass of voters facing economic hardship from which political interests were created, so the conditions listed by Powers are not applicable. By the same token, there was no “political Darwinism” or pressures on specific parties to adapt to changing economic conditions: at the time, Argentina was still implementing economic policies akin to import substitution.
industrialization, and FREJULI was not experiencing the ideological change it would go through during the 1980s (i.e., it was still a worker-based party).

Conclusion

The pattern of competitive interactions represented by the 1973 Argentine party system reflects the conjunction between vote maximization and a larger milieu in which political cleavages and the electoral system played a role; more precisely, as far as causal complexity goes, vote maximization was encouraged by an electoral system that fostered partisanship on the lines of the venerable divide between Peronism and anti-Peronism. There were political parties other than FREJULI and UCR, but their competition for votes generated the most attention. However, the intensification of the cleavage between Peronism and anti-Peronism resulted in the weakening of democratic governability, which in turn undermined the party system. That cleavage summarizes in part the political environment of the time, which made the socioeconomic elites (the most vocal anti-Peronist group) consider non-democratic means in order to compensate for their political weakness.

Both stages of the current party system are sustained by political culture, certain characteristics of the Argentine state, cleavages, and the economic environment, interacting in concert with partisan self-interest in a way that also shows causal complexity. For the first stage, the most repressive military regime in Argentine history encouraged the state to elevate party politics to full legal status and citizens to embrace democratic political culture like never before; all that resulted in the expression of voter self-interest articulated in terms of attitudinal and behavioral dimensions (i.e.,
political ideas, opinions about economic policy), and in the resumption of party politics as partisan vote maximizing behavior without any systematic restrictions other than democratic governability. The electoral system structured vote maximization, and patronage (a by-product of Argentine federalism) became a useful tactic to secure party identification. Those aspects made the party system weather the 2001-2002 crisis, although it did not escape unharmed: the crisis not only resulted in a transformation from a multiparty system with two-party dynamics to a multiparty one, but in a more convoluted partisan environment. In the current stage, political parties try to maximize votes located mostly in the center of an ideological political cleavage and also within the middle and lower classes; while partisan identification is determined in by patronage, socioeconomic status, the articulation of economic demands, and unwavering support for democracy.

One question posed by this case is whether party system institutionalization should include organizational institutionalization. On the one hand, Mainwaring & Scully (1995) argue that political parties must have a coherent and institutionalized organization in terms of the routinization of internal rules and procedures in order for a party system to institutionalize, but on the other hand – despite the chaotic nature of Peronism in its past and current partisan manifestations – Abal Medina & Suárez Cao (2002) have concluded that the Argentine party system has one hallmark of institutionalization: predictability. More research is warranted to solve this conundrum, but an intuitive proposition is that the criterion of autonomous internal organizations should be revised.

The last question we should ask is if Argentina’s party politics are still a possible game, or maybe if the proverbial glass is half empty or half full. The panorama is not
necessarily positive given that ARI, CC, PRO, and UNA are still building national organizations, the economy has become a life-or-death concern, political institutions are still frail, and political parties are not completely trusted. Still, there are reasons to think that this game is worth playing – political parties are more trusted than the military, anti-systemic behavior and contentious politics are unpopular, and voter participation is still high even after the worst of the crisis. Only time will tell for sure, but there is a considerable chance that the game is still possible.
Chapter VII
CHILE: SETTING THE EXAMPLE?

Within the study of Latin American politics, Chile has been regarded as one of the very few places with a long tradition of democratic politics based on a party system with strong institutionalized parties deeply embedded in society (Mainwaring & Scully 1995) and a visible public interest in political affairs. Scholars like J. Samuel Valenzuela (1995) have challenged that exceptional quality of the Chilean political system, especially since that tradition has had more negative consequences; indeed, it has been argued that excessive political polarization was the cause of the atrocious military coup of 1973 and the authoritarian regime that was imposed afterwards. Since 1989, party politics have made a return that could be characterized as triumphant, and Chile seems to reacquire an exceptional quality within a region more notorious as of recently for mistrust in political parties and party systems. The country is certainly not immune to that tendency of mistrust, but in comparison with the countries in my sample (and the region as a whole) there seems not to be serious issues regarding party system institutionalization.

In chapter II, I made some remarks about why I did not choose electoral volatility as a variable to be analyzed in this project, and I focused in part on Mainwaring & Torcal’s (2006) claim that Chile had more electoral volatility than the United States and other developed countries. To reiterate what other observers of this case have argued, the empirical evidence points to a much different assessment; that is, the apparent volatility does not indicate and neither correlates with the equally apparent stability of the party system. Moreover, the relevant parties (to use Sartori’s [1976] terms) are only two, which in theory should be equal to less volatility because the electoral turnover is very narrow. This aspect may indicate the exceptionality of the Chilean party system, but the questions
we must ask are if it is in fact the case, how did it occur, and why. In other words, the relevant queries are what caused the interruption of party politics in 1973, and what are the variables that provide stability to the current system. Three exogenous variables appear to be the most salient in both party systems: cleavages, political culture, and political environment. A fourth factor, the electoral system, is also a major explanatory variable, but only in the case of the current party system.

As I have done in the three prior cases, I will answer those questions with the methodology I presented in chapter III. The case oriented approach will incorporate a narrative of party politics in Chile between 1964 and 1973 and between 1989 and the present day, which will be preceded by an exposition of party politics up to 1964. The exposition will be longer than in the other chapters because Chile established an organized party system earlier than the other cases and I found extensive information on party politics since the 19th century that could not be ignored. Similarly, the exposition of the authoritarian period (1973-1989) will also be longer than in the Argentine and Peruvian cases – although not by too much – because it is necessary to mention the most crucial actions taken by the regime to curb party politics and to burden democratic transition, which have direct relevance to how the current pattern of party interactions was created. For the variable-oriented approach, I will compare the party systems of 1964 and the current one to determine whether or not my main hypothesis has unfolded in this case and, if it does, how did it occur. The foci on exogenous variables influencing partisan self-interest and the possibility of causal complexity will be retained from the previous case studies.
The main conclusions I propose for this case are that partisan self-interest, cleavages, the economic environment, and state intervention were the most visible in the 1964 party system in that they underscored heightened political mobilization, but some of them also set the stage for the hyperpolarization that preceded the 1973 coup by making party politics at that time a zero-sum game. Some of those variables (self-interest, cleavages, state intervention) are present in the current party system, but political culture is equally pertinent. This particular combination of variables has created a party system represented by two coalitions with visible differences in certain aspects that nevertheless practice loyal opposition and even have some agreements in economic policymaking. There is causal complexity in both party systems, and the case studies will provide more details on that aspect.

*Cleavages at work*

Chile was one of the most remote outposts of the Spanish Empire in Latin America, belonging to the Viceroyalty of Perú; while autonomous, the Viceroy reserved the prerogative of decision-making in sensitive or urgent matters. The main economic activities were agriculture, cattle, and mining; but none compensated for the enormous expenses from the Spanish crown in administration, public works, and defense. In succeeding centuries, as it happened in most of Latin America, the Creoles and the Spanish-born were divided by the many disadvantages of the colonial system and Chile saw its first but unsuccessful independence revolt early in the 19th century, coinciding with the French invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. The forced restoration of colonial power generated deeper resentments: led by Bernardo O’Higgins and helped by
Argentine José de San Martin, the Chileans defeated the royalists in a key battle in 1817, after which O’Higgins was declared Supreme Director (i.e., head of state) of Chile. After news of a large-scale royalist counteroffensive were spread, O’Higgins declared Chilean independence on February 1818, only to be defeated and forced to retreat the following month. The patriots regrouped and won decisively in April, but it would not be until some years later that violence ended definitively (Skidmore & Smith 2005, 109; Villalobos 1996, Collier & Sater 2004, 37-38).

The new state was homogeneous in many respects. There were very few people of either indigenous or African descent, and the remaining ethnic groups were Creoles and mestizos (Collier 1993, 2) – both descendants of white Europeans. There were also no center / periphery divisions because for the most part the provinces farther from Santiago (the national capital) were too weak to impose their will. Still, the Creoles (including their aristocratic elite) were at the apex of the social pyramid over the larger mass of impoverished and mostly rural-based mestizo laborers (Collier 1993, 2), although there was also a middle class composed of small businessmen, low-ranking public servants, artisans, mine owners, and small landowners (Villalobos 1996, 186-189). Compromises ended with politics: Out of fears of a royalist reaction, O’Higgins managed to enact a constitution in 1818 that created a single-chamber Congress composed, a nationwide judicial system, and three ministries (Government and Foreign Affairs, Treasury, and Defense). Afterwards, a strong state was no longer desirable: the Supreme Director faced controversy because of his anti-aristocratic and anti-clerical stance, the economic

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1 The Catholic Church cooperated with the Spanish authorities in inculcating blind obedience to the King and supervised public education, while the Spanish monarch – under the patronato – was practically the chief administrator of the Catholic Church in the colonies (Collier & Sater 2004, 22; Valenzuela 1995, 9). The secular new state retained the patronato and was also permissive to Protestant immigrants and
burdens of an expedition he assembled to defeat the royalists, and the involvement of government ministers in a series of political assassinations. When O’Higgins attempted to extend his mandate through a new constitution in 1822, the upper class strongly opposed. Beleaguered and overtaken by a military rebellion, O’Higgins resigned in 1823 and went into exile in Peru, where he lived until his death in 1842 (Villalobos 1996, 175-181; Collier & Sater 2004, 46-48).

The first Chilean political groups appeared in the 1820s around liberal / conservative, clerical / anti-clerical, and federalist / unitarian cleavages. They were not political parties in our contemporary understanding, but they were vehicles for the upper class to vent its internal disagreements; indeed, it espoused the importance of liberal values, but not everybody was committed. Two groups were prominent: the traditionalist, pro-clerical, and pro-unitarian pelucones (“big wigs”); and the liberal, anti-clerical, and federalist pipiolos (“novices”)\(^2\). The pipiolos were the most influential in the chaotic years that followed O’Higgins’s downfall, but the pelucones – later supported by the followers of O’Higgins and the estanqueros led by Diego Portales\(^3\) – were restless: in 1829, after an alleged electoral fraud, the o’higginistas led a revolt against the government that ended with a truce in which a pipiolo became the commander of a unified national army. Hostilities resumed after the pelucones encroached in power, declared all congressional acts null, and ousted the sitting president. The ensuing civil

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missionaries, thus straining the relations between church and state (Valenzuela 1995, 9-10). That played a role in the political events of the 1850s, which will be mentioned later.

\(^2\)The pelucones were named after the wigs worn by colonial aristocrats (Burnett 1970), but the origin of the name pipiolo is unknown (Villalobos 1992, 194). Still, Burnett believes that the name pipiolo originated from the low social upbringing of its members, something confirmed by Collier & Sater’s finding that a number of would-be pipiolos acquired social mobility through military prowess (2004, 42).

\(^3\) The estancos were tobacco holdings transferred in the 1820s from the Chilean state to a trading house owned by Portales and José Manuel Cea in return for their assistance in servicing the burgeoning foreign debt. When their heavy-handed enforcement of the monopoly caused hostility and repayments were not made, the state retook the holdings (Collier & Sater 2004, 46).
war resulted in defeat for the pipiolos (Collier & Sater 2004; Collier 1993, 2; Villalobos 1996; Valenzuela 1995, 8).

The de facto government – in which Portales was the main power broker and which solidified pelucón dominance – enacted a new constitution in 1833 that promoted the Catholic Church to a position of great influence, created a strong presidential authority, and established a unitary system. The electoral franchise was restricted, but it nevertheless included voters that were a reliable source of support (i.e., artisans and shopkeepers). Still, the pelucones also resorted to intimidation, fraud, bribery, and arrests to dissuade opposition voters; in general, political dissent was severely punished. In addition, the pelucones also dominated the Congress, winning every time with no opposition (Collier 1993). Ironically, the pipiolos had a small chance for success thanks to the single ballot, single plurality electoral system in place. Taking advantage of that, the pipiolos soon struck deals with other opposition groups and presented joint candidates for local elections, though courting favor with local bosses was also helpful (Scully 1995, 102-103). Then, in 1836, Chile was at war with the Peru-Bolivia Confederation, which sparked pipiolo conspiracies on the coattails of opposition to the conflict. One of its victims was Portales, who was murdered in 1837 by a military unit that disobeyed an order to be sent to the front (Collier 1993). The defeat of the Peru-Bolivia Confederation in 1839 prompted the Chilean government to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards its opposition (Collier 1993), which became a matter of fact with the election in 1841 of Manuel Bulnes, the general who led the Chilean troops in the offensive that won the war. Although he did swayed for authoritarian tendencies, he was considered a symbol of national unification because of his earned prestige; during his presidency, all sides were
incorporated into the political system. Amicability would not last long: when a
government minister was dismissed after losing the president’s favor, the pipiotos found
a golden opportunity to regroup. The pelucons were alarmed by the sudden spike in
pipiolo agitation, prompting them to coalesce around Manuel Montt as their presidential
candidate for the next presidential election (Valenzuela 1995, 9; Collier 1993, 8).

The California Gold Rush of the 1840s and subsequent trade with the United
Kingdom resulted in increased demand for Chilean agricultural exports; however, the
sector never provided enough revenues to the state and was eventually demoted to a
minor status. Mining and nitrates soon took over in influence, and the Chilean
landowning aristocracy now shared their social and political influence with mine owners
and an ancillary merchant sector. For the rest of the 19th century, the social composition
of Chile was characterized by a complex structure in which owners dominated over
peasants and a smaller but nimble commercial workforce, with middle sectors and native-
born urban workers in an intermediate position. Landowners were more interested in
mine holdings than mine owners in agriculture; as a result, the former saw an expansion
of their power and influence (Skidmore & Smith 2005, 113-114; Rueschemeyer,
Stephens & Stephens 1992, 176). Most importantly, economic development and past
experience led to a more structured party system for two reasons: the landowning
aristocracy that matured during the 19th century was precisely the same Creole upper
class that occupied the apex of the post-colonial social pyramid; and political competition
between elite factions became a norm and was made extensive to other social groups.
Hence, the pelucons and the pipiotos became part of the first political system in South
America with institutionalized competition between political parties (Scully 1995, 102).
That pattern of party interactions – based on the clerical / anti-clerical cleavage – was set after the election of Montt as president in 1851 (Valenzuela 1995, 9).

Although Montt did not hesitate in overwhelming political opponents, he nevertheless was independent, respectful of constitutional legality and a supporter of the power of state oversight over the Chilean Catholic Church, known as patronato (see note 1); in fact, when in 1856 two priests challenged the presidential decision to dismiss the Archbishop of Santiago, Montt’s most important minister, Antonio Varas, persuaded the priests to withdraw their suit. By then, the embattled Archbishop convinced a number of pelucones to embrace clericalism, permanently dividing the group. The pro-Church pelucones created the Sociedad Amigos del País, later known as the Conservative Party (Partido Conservador)⁴; while the pelucones who supported Montt and Varas founded the National Party (Partido Nacional or Partido Montt-Varista). The pipiulos opposed both pelucón factions, but those who opposed Bulnes in the 1840s and now opposed Montt and Varas originated the Liberal Party (Partido Liberal), while an extremely anti-clerical faction created the Radical Party (Partido Radical) (Scully 1995, 103; Valenzuela 1995, 10). The parties were divided in issues other than religion (i.e., presidentialism vs. parliamentarism, centralized authority, civic liberties) (Burnett 1970, 163; Valenzuela 1995, 10-11), but the clerical / anti-clerical cleavage was be the most prominent political division for many decades. Deep down, interactions between those parties were characterized by the existing electoral system, which favored constant inter-party coalitions but also condoned rather irregular activities from the government (under whichever party): it created candidate slates for all contested political positions; and

⁴ The pelucones as a whole were already known as such, but that name became inextricably related to the pro-clericals after this controversy (Valenzuela 1995, 10).
influenced voters excessively over the voters (particularly public employees or members of the national militia). Opposition parties soon targeted some of those voters and created a number of political clubs (Valenzuela 1995, 12-13). In a way, the creation of those clubs somewhat changed the cleavage structure by creating new attitudinal and behavioral concerns around electoral reform, but the clerical / anti-clerical cleavage remained firmly in place.

After Chile became the major producer of guano as a result of the War of the Pacific of 1879, the nitrate industry saw the creation of the first labor unions – initially mutual aid societies created to alleviate the deplorable conditions in the fields. Labor organizing later expanded to urban centers, where the situation was equally dismal. Most of the workforce was local-born, which made unions thoroughly organized and very vocal in national politics; yet most parties were not interested in incorporating workers. The Radicals had a faction that wanted the party to overcome the clerical / anti-clerical cleavage and pay attention to labor issues, but they were unable to convince their fellow party members, left the party, and created the Democratic Party (Partido Democrático) in 1887. From the beginning, the Democrats – representing the rising middle class – were active in labor organizing and advocated for major social, economic and political reforms, but remained on the fringes of mainstream politics (Skidmore & Smith 2005, 112-113; Scully 1995, 105-106; Villalobos 1996, 339; Valenzuela 1995, 20).

The decade between 1881 and 1891 was particularly acrimonious, characterized by new church / state squabbles. Radicals and Nationals were willing to support the ensuing anti-clerical measures, but the pro-clerical Conservatives were determined to oppose them. The legislation was eventually enacted thanks in large measure to the work
of interior minister José Manuel Balmaceda, who took a leading role in the process. The heavy-handed way in which the measures were enacted justified in some the opinion that presidential power had to be limited, while Radicals and Nationals did not take sides with the president and returned to their long-standing stance against electoral manipulation (Blakemore 1993, 36-38; Collier & Sater 2004, 149-150). Balmaceda became president through fraud and the forced withdrawal of its nearest rival (Collier & Sater 2004, 150); he was conciliatory at first, but with the intention of ensuring support for a domestic program based on heavy expenditures in infrastructure, education, and the military. By 1888, Balmaceda signaled that opposition to his policies would not be tolerated, and intervened in the congressional elections of that year, after which loyalists seized all Cabinet posts. The Nationals, who at first did not object to strong presidential authority, now joined forces with Radicals, Conservatives, and even many Liberals in opposing Balmaceda (Valenzuela 1995, 14; Blakemore 1993). After the national legislature rejected an increase in nitrate taxes, Balmaceda did not submit a budget and extended the appropriations of the previous year during the congressional recess. The Congress reconvened and ousted Balmaceda, after which a bloody civil war broke out. The defeat, resignation, and suicide of Balmaceda marked the start of the so-called “Parliamentary Age” (Villalobos 1996, 316-319; Burnett 1970, 166; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 115-116; Valenzuela 1995, 14) or “Parliamentary Republic,” but also the first time since 1830 that an elected president was forcibly deposed (Valenzuela 1972).

The first president of the new republic, Admiral Jorge Montt, was elected in 1891 without any opposition, and his withdrawn attitude towards politics facilitated a reinterpretation of the still-official 1833 constitution that required the presidential Cabinet
to be sustained by a congressional majority, although some characteristics of presidentialism remained. Deeper reforms designed to cut all government influence over the electoral system were implemented through the enhancement of municipal authority (where most of the electoral system was based) and the disbandment of the national militia. The electoral system itself adopted the cumulative vote formula; though it was used in elections for the Chamber of Deputies since 1874, it was now extended to elections for all posts (including presidential elections through the electoral college system). Citizens were now permitted to cast votes for their preferred candidates regardless of party list, with the winners decided by simple majority (Valenzuela 1995; Collier & Sater 2004, 188). As a result of those reforms, political parties were persuaded to expand their national organizations and prepare different strategies for each locality, making electoral campaigns more competitive. Vote-buying was still common, but even that irregularity attested to a level of interparty competition that was different from previous years (Valenzuela 1995). This competitive atmosphere was particularly characterized by party coalitions that came and went as political circumstances dictated; in fact, political parties at this time have been described as by-products of legislative dominance that originated when legislators made strategic pacts with local political leaders (Valenzuela 1972, 183). In general, coalition politics at this time had four characteristics: 1. No party could win a presidential election on its own, 2. Conservatives and Radicals could not agree on the same candidates, 3. Neither Radicals nor Conservatives could select a presidential candidate from their own ranks because the Liberals would then take sides with the opposite extreme and win the election, and 4. The
Liberals could not agree on a single candidate that would unite their factions (Valenzuela 1995, 18).

At the same time, Chile was experiencing a long period of intense labor agitation; between 1911 and 1920 alone, there were 293 strikes mobilizing a total of 155,000 workers. Success was nevertheless limited and repression was unrelenting – the bloodiest episode occurred in 1907, when 1,000 striking nitrate workers and their families in the town of Iquique were executed. Mutual aid societies remained active, while others tried unsuccessfully to elicit the support of established political parties. World War I coincided with a nitrate boom, but the economy entered a recession – and agitation accelerated – when that demand slackened after 1918 (Scully 1995, 106-107; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 117; Collier & Sater 2004). Coalition politics continued obliviously: the conservatives won the majority in the Chamber of Deputies in 1915, while the liberals seized the majority in the Senate. The president elected that same year was a conservative candidate (Blakemore 1993, 70).

The workers found an ally in the middle class, which understood workers’ struggles and gained their support for a common political project represented by a charismatic and seasoned Liberal politician – Arturo Alessandri. After winning a senatorial race in Tarapacá (a Liberal Democrat bastion) in the 1915 election, Alessandri announced his presidential candidacy in 1920 and promoted that ambition from his position as Minister of the Interior, a post he held briefly after the liberal coalition won the legislative majority in 1918 congressional election. As a result, the coalition split; those who did not agree with Alessandri left and joined other parties in the Liberal Union (Unión Liberal), which nominated Luis Barros Borgoño as presidential candidate.
Alessandri, who was nominated by a another coalition, campaigned for an “evolution within legality (evolución dentro de la legalidad)” that included major electoral reforms, the separation of church and state, mandatory primary education, currency stabilization, and gender equality. The presidential election turned out to be extremely close because Barros Borgoño won 176 electors and Alessandri obtained 177; it took the intervention of an “honor committee” to finally decide the presidential election in favor of Alessandri (Villalobos 1996, 344-345; Collier & Sater 2004; Valenzuela 1995, 19; Blakemore 1993, 70-71).

Governmental deadlock dominated Alessandri’s presidency: he was intent on enacting his reforms, but the Senate – dominated by his opposition – obstructed constantly. Alessandri’s coalition increased its bloc in the Chamber of Deputies after the 1921 election, but could not dislodge his opposition from Senate majority. Undaunted, Alessandri campaigned during the 1924 congressional election in the southern provinces (unheard of at the time) and used executive power in a way that reminisced the electoral interventions of old; as a result, his party won the legislative majority. Alessandri later stated that labor issues should be addressed within a regulated framework, and became impatient with constant worker demands, while junior military officers – particularly majors Marmaduke Grove and Carlos Ibañez del Campo – were increasingly critical of parliamentary stalemate, especially after experiencing current social issues first-hand through the conscription of peasants and the many operations staged to quell urban disturbances. Alessandri’s political enemies found allies in senior military officers, but neither one was able to stop the junior officers. On September 2, 1924, the junior officers entered the gallery of the Senate and voiced their support of the president. A few days
later, the officers agreed on a series of demands suggested by Ibáñez, including the enactment of Alessandri’s labor code, the dismissal of three Cabinet ministers (including the Minister of Defense), and the creation of the praetorian “military-naval committee.” The officers met with Alessandri, who refused to dismiss the ministers; but unexpectedly the whole Cabinet resigned. General Luis Altamirano was then appointed by Alessandri as his new front-man, and on September 8 he forced the national legislature it to pass the labor legislation and other bills. However, the military-naval committee refused to disband until more thorough sociopolitical changes were implemented, overpowering Alessandri and forcing him to resign and into exile in the United States. On September 11, Altamirano and two other officers seized power as a military junta and shut down the national legislature (Villalobos 1996, 345-347; Scully 1995, 107-108; Caviedes 1979, 157-158; Collier & Sater 207-211).

The military government took the initiative in setting the stage for a Conservative to become a presidential candidate in a future election, but the junior officers – wary of what they perceived as a conservative restoration and believing that the senior officers betrayed the anti-parliamentary movement – began to conspire. The Conservative candidacy was formally announced on January 8, 1925, prompting a demand from Radicals and Democrats for the return of Alessandri (who was in Italy at the time). The junior officers staged a countercoup on January 23 and invited Alessandri to return. There was some resistance, but negotiations for the formation of a new government de-

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5 Scully’s (1995, 107) account of that labor legislation is less positive: although, it reflected a compromise between Liberals and Conservatives, it was biased towards employers and called for an active state regulation of unions. In the end, he continues, none of the parties were satisfied and, rather, the conditions were set for a much more repressive system.

6 César Caviedes (1979, 157) mentions that Alessandri was actually forced to resign the day of the coup. Villalobos (1996, 347) points out in turn that the legislature did not accept his resignation and, instead, gave him permission for an extended period outside the country.
escalated tensions. As part of those negotiations, Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (now a colonel) was appointed Minister of Defense (Collier & Sater 2004, 211-212). Alessandri returned triumphantly to Chile on March 20 to complete his presidential term, ruling out the reconvening of the Congress and making symbolic gestures towards labor; nevertheless, he did not hesitate in quelling social unrest with force if necessary, and retained Ibáñez in his post. The last months of his term were crowned by the passage of a new constitution that strengthened the powers of the executive branch, abolished the electoral college system, and set presidential terms to six years7. Congressional elections were now held under a revised version of proportional representation (the creation of party coalitions under the joint list provision), and the composition of the legislative chambers became determined by population (Chamber districts were made multimember, with a seat equaling 30,000 inhabitants). All electoral events were now under the purview of a permanent national electoral board composed of former legislative leaders and current magistrates. Finally, the separation of church and state and social justice responsibilities were elevated to constitutional rank. Months later, the government enacted the General Election Law (Ley General de Elecciones) of September 23, 1925, which established the “regulatory bylaws” governing all electoral events. Women were technically allowed to vote at this point, but since there was no express provision in the new law they remained disenfranchised until 1949 (Villalobos 1996, 347-349; Caviedes 1979; Scully 1995, 108; Collier & Sater 2004, 212-213; Francis 1973, 15; McDonald 1969, 456-457; Parrish, von Lazar & Tapia-Videla 1971, 257).

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7 As Collier & Sater point out (2004, 213), it was not a return to full presidentialism because the provision under which the legislature could block presidential initiatives remained in place. That would play a significant role after the 1964 presidential election (Francis 1973, 15; Alexander 1978, 82).
The constitutional separation of church and state diminished the centrality of the old clerical / anti-clerical cleavage and added the element of socioeconomic issues to party competition (Coller 1993; Collier & Sater 2004, 227; Valenzuela 1995, 29). While the clerical / anti-clerical cleavage never disappeared, it was not crystallized by specific parties as neatly as the socioeconomic dimension; in fact, there were clear left, center, and right dimensions in a socioeconomic spectrum, each having its own religious divide (Valenzuela 1995, 37). Voters now realigned from the aristocratic parties of the past to more socially progressive ones (Caviedes 1979, 160); hence, left-wing parties would be finally able to reach their fullest electoral potential (Valenzuela 1995, 34). The Communists were the most visible within miners, railroad workers, and industrial laborers; although workers parties appeared decades before (Burnett 1970, 168-169), the Communists – a splinter group of the Workers Socialist Party of 1912 – were more thoroughly organized (Scully 1995, 108; Valenzuela 1995, 34). The Radical Party incorporated teacher unions and state employees, but acquired a different character from other parties with union support (Valenzuela 1995, 29-30) and adopted Keynesian economics (Drake 1993, 101). The Democrats were perhaps the least favored within workers, but retained significant loyalty from popular sectors. The Liberals lost considerable electoral support (from 44% between 1844 and 1903 to 28% in 1924), causing an ideological shift to the right extreme of the new socioeconomic dimension. In turn, many Conservatives were attracted by Catholic social doctrines (Valenzuela 1995) and became proponents of semi-corporatist social welfare initiatives (Drake 1993, 100). A series of basic givens governed these interactions: 1. No Conservative could be a presidential candidate of a coalition because the other partners would not approve it, 2.
Radicals and Conservatives could neither agree on a platform nor on a Liberal presidential candidacy, 3. The Radicals were the pivotal partner because they could reach common ground with any party (indeed, they would become an influential centrist party over the years [Scully 1995, 111]), 4. The main basis for coalition-building was a programmatic understanding and the promise to share key government positions, but minor partners had little expectation to be part of the government or to influence in policymaking, and 5. Independent candidates could only win if no two major parties formed a coalition or if they were supported by it (Valenzuela 1995).

Ibáñez’s political ambitions were boosted when members of most of the existing parties wanted him to become a presidential candidate, because of which the rest of the Cabinet resigned. Remaining as the only minister, Ibáñez then expressed his refusal to resign and that he would have the power to confirm all presidential decrees. Alessandri’s reaction was to appoint Luis Barros Borgoño – his rival of 1920 – as Minister of the Interior and later Vice-President, but Alessandri resigned for a second time in October 1925 and Ibáñez remained as the sole political power broker. Nevertheless, Ibáñez was not a presidential candidate in the special election held after Alessandri’s resignation – a Liberal Democrat won the election with 72% of the vote. Ibáñez remained as disruptive as ever, and the new president was too anchored to the old parliamentary politics and too weak to ward off criticism and legislative in-fighting. The political crisis of the last years of Alessandri’s presidency and an alleged relaxation of social discipline provoked in some a yearning for strong political leadership; with that, Ibáñez became Minister of the Interior in February 1927, from which he undermined presidential authority. The
The president was forced to resign on the following May, and Ibáñez was elected president with 98% of the vote. (Collier & Sater 2004, 214-215).

At first, Ibáñez observed constitutional legality and was supported by the middle class, spearheading a vast infrastructure program funded by heavy international investment in Chile’s mining industry. Later on, declaring himself above party politics, he jailed or sent into exile politicians of all ideologies (including Alessandri), restricted the press, curbed political dissidents, repressed labor unions, ordered the dissolution of the Communist Party, and commanded the remaining parties to submit lists of their congressional candidacies for his approval. Besides the national police force (Carabineros), Ibáñez counted on economic growth (revenues from nitrates, taxation, and customs; and a trade surplus) as a foundation for his dominance; predictably, the crash of 1929 hastened the demise of the dictatorship. While Alessandri and Marmaduke Grove (now a colonel) were involved in several plots, the failing economy unraveled the government and caused street demonstrations. Repression did nothing to stop the downfall of Ibáñez, who resigned in July 1931 (Villalobos 1996, 351-352; Scully 1995, 108; Caviedes 1979, 158; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 119; Collier & Sater 2004).

Ibáñez’s demise unleashed a power vacuum political parties were not yet prepared to fill. Several presidencies came and went between July 1931 and October 1932, and segments of the military staged a coup on June 4 that created the Socialist Republic of Chile. A countercoup was staged afterwards by another military factor after the junta broke apart, but the new government would also be short-lived. After two caretaker presidencies, presidential and congressional elections were scheduled for October; political parties did not have enough time to campaign, but a prompt return to
institutional legality was imperative. Alessandri returned to politics as the presidential candidate of a coalition of Liberals, Radicals and Democrats and won with 54% of the vote, stating publicly that he would continue with the policies that made him famous during the 1920s. The unexpected runner-up, with 17.7% of the vote, was Colonel Grove, formerly the minister of defense of the Socialist Republic and banished to the Chilean territory of Easter Island after a failed plot. The Radicals won the majority of legislative seats (34 deputies, 9 senators), while the other pro-Alessandri parties became the major opposition bloc with 42% of the congressional vote (Caviedes 1979, 158-160; Scully 1995, 108-109; Villalobos 1996, 352-353; Collier & Sater 2004). New political groups and parties were created after this election, expanding the number of parties in the system, such as the Socialist Party, the Agrarian Party (*Partido Agrario*), and the National Socialist Party (*Partido Nacional Socialista*). Also, a group of young Conservatives who adhered to Catholic social doctrine, led by Eduardo Frei, created Falange Conservadora in 1935 as a challenge to Conservative orthodoxy, but for a time the new group remained within the larger organization (Valenzuela 1995; Collier & Sater 2004, 227-228).

Alessandri’s unprecedented second term started with the formation of a multipartisan Cabinet, but the Radicals were more interested in forming a coalition with the left (where they could dominate) and soon left the government. Still, Alessandri’s economic policies reversed the effects of the economic crisis of 1929, and government parties were successful in the municipal elections of 1935. Undeterred, Communists and Socialists joined forces with Radicals and created the Popular Front (Collier & Sater 2004), which faced a right-wing coalition composed of Liberals (including Alessandri),
Conservatives, Agrarians, Democrats and Radical dissidents in the legislative election of 1937. The latter won with 49% of the vote, while the Popular Front gathered a disappointing 39% and had to decide the thorny issue of the presidential candidacy for the 1938 election; the Socialists wanted Grove, but later accepted the candidacy of Radical Pedro Aguirre Cerda. There were also internal disagreements on the right: Finance Minister Gustavo Ross was nominated, but the falangistas rejected his support from mainstream Conservatives, thus abandoning the party and renaming their group Falange Nacional. Ibáñez made a brief return to politics as the presidential candidate of the Popular Liberating Alliance (Alianza Popular Libertadora), a coalition formed by his followers, National Socialists and a few Socialists; but a coup against Alessandri orchestrated by the National Socialists in 1938 forced Ibáñez to withdraw (not before encouraging his supporters to vote for Aguirre Cerda) (Caviedes 1979, 162-165; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 120; Drake 1993, 104-105; Valenzuela 1995; Collier & Sater 2004, 233-234). After an intense and bitter campaign, Aguirre Cerda won the presidential election with 50.2% of the vote against 49.3% for Ross (Villalobos 1996, 356; Caviedes 1979, 166; Collier & Sater 2004, 234).

Intense partisan bickering continued after the election of Aguirre Cerda: the falangistas and the National Socialists were in a way strategic allies of the Popular Front (Caviedes 1979, 168), but Liberals and Conservatives – who were the legislative majority – were intent on blocking legislation (Collier & Sater 2004, 214). Despite that, the government was able to implement critical policies (Collier & Sater 2004) and political stability was somehow maintained because the industrial and agricultural elites forced the Popular Front to moderate its rhetoric (Scully 1995, 111-112); indeed, Aguirre Cerda
reneged on a campaign promise to enact land reform for fear of provoking increases in the price of food, which would cause a negative backlash within his urban supporters (Collier & Sater 2004, 241). Another element contributing to stability was that all parties – including the Communists – engaged actively in the “compromise state” (*estado de compromiso*), in which parties and the state brokered deals in areas such as economic policy (Scully 1995, 112). Yet the Popular Front broke apart due to internal antagonisms and its parties participated more-or-less separately in the legislative elections of March 1941, in which a Radical-Communist coalition claimed the majority in both houses and the other parties suffered losses (Collier & Sater 2004, 242; Scully 1995, 110, table 4.1; Caviedes 1979, 169-172). The German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 revived the Popular Front as Communists, Socialists, and Radicals made public their position against fascism, but Aguirre Cerda, had to resign because of poor health and died late in the year. A new presidential election was scheduled for the following year and Ibáñez became once again a presidential candidate but Radical Juan Antonio Ríos won the presidency with 55.7% of the vote (Collier & Sater 2004, 242-244; Caviedes 1979, 173-174).

Economic success and the heterogeneity of the winning coalition prompted “the most destructive split that had occurred within the parties in the country since the early 1930s (Caviedes 1979, 176).” Ríos reshuffled his government several times after disagreements within the Popular Front and factionalism within the Radicals. Later, after the president refused to dismiss Liberal ministers, gave diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union, and did not sever ties with Francoist Spain, the Radical Party expelled any member who agreed to serve in the government, although the Radicals themselves took
part of the negative aspects of coalition politics (clientelism and pork-barreling, in particular). Those developments, as well Radical encroachments in the state bureaucracy and the participation of the government in a number of questionable deals, alienated the Radical left-wing, which later created the Democratic Radical Party in 1946. Socialists, Liberals and Conservatives also experienced internal turmoil: in the congressional elections of 1945, Liberals and Conservatives obtained a combined 41% of the vote and left-wing parties suffered a severe loss. The Radicals only suffered a minor setback (Caviedes 1979, 176-177; Scully 1995, 113; Villalobos 1996, 357; Collier & Sater 2004, 244-245).

President Ríos resigned in 1946 because of terminal cancer, and presidential elections were scheduled for September 4. Gabriel González Videla – a leftist Radical supported by the Communists – won a plurality of the vote and the Congress was prompted to settle the election after the runner-up, Eduardo Cruz-Coke (supported by Conservatives and falangistas), refused to concede. To secure victory, González Videla chose the rather perplexing option of promising both Communists and Liberals (two parties occupying mutually exclusive extremes) that they they would be included in his government; with that, he was elected president by 136 votes to 46. By then, the atmosphere of the Cold War set in, as Liberals and Radicals left the government after the Communists seized three government ministries and made gains in the 1947 municipal elections. González Videla dismissed the three Communist ministers and in 1948 – with support from all parties – enacted the Law for the Permanent Defense of Democracy (Ley de Defensa Permanente de la Democracia), which effectively banned the Communist Party and disarticulated unions. Only a handful of Socialists that later became the Popular
Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Popular), led by Salvador Allende, opposed the ban (Collier & Sater 2004, 247-248; Caviedes 1979; Scully 1995, 113; Skidmore and Smith 2005, 121; Fernández Jilberto 1985, 100).

Chileans were now experiencing a very strong anti-party sentiment: the last several elections were fraudulent, Radical presidencies doled out government jobs to win political favor, inflation was out of control, and the party system fragmented severely (Caviedes 1979, 188-189; Scully 1995, 113; Collier & Sater 2004, 250; Francis 1973, 11). Moreover, the Law for the Permanent Defense of Democracy and union repression made the elected government look authoritarian, the Socialist Party broke apart, and rising inflation resulted in negative economic prospects for the lower and middle classes (Fernández Jilberto 1985, 99). Liberals and Conservatives were the most voted legislative parties in 1949, but only won a combined 40% of the vote; in turn, the Radicals obtained 22%, and the legal left-wing parties gained only 9%. Most importantly, nearly one third of the seats went to the many non-mainstream parties that appeared by this time (Collier & Sater 2004, 250-251). With the party system in disarray, Ibáñez (who won a Senate seat in 1949 [Alexander 1978, 36]) was nominated by the Agrarian Labor Party (Partido Agrario Laborista), an obscure and ideologically imprecise political party that was nevertheless popular with Chileans dissatisfied with traditional party politics (Caviedes 1979, 190-191; Villalobos 1996, 357; Scully 1995, 115). Ibáñez won the presidency in 1952 with 46.8% of the vote – a plurality, but clearly outdistancing his nearest contender. Salvador Allende returned to the Socialist Party and became the joint Communist-
Socialist candidate\textsuperscript{8}, but received 5.5\% of the vote (Caviedes 1979, 191; Collier & Sater 2004, 253).

The next 12 years were marked by the accession to power of figures with little or no connection with the established party system, which is presumably why Robert Alexander (1978) categorizes this period as an interregnum between the end of the prior party system and the 1964 election. Ibáñez was perhaps the most emblematic; his popularity increased at the same time established parties and politicians lost credibility (Alexander 1978, 36). Known as “the General of Hope,” he portrayed himself as a leader above all partisan persuasions with a sense of social justice and patriotism, and while his positions were imprecise his rhetoric nevertheless struck an emotional chord with voters, especially from the middle and lower sectors (Coller 1993, 123). Ibáñez’s appearance also transformed political competition in the countryside: traditional loyalties were broken, and the peasantry was more open to co-optation by other political groups in an atmosphere of increased political competition, affecting Liberals and Conservatives (Scully 1995, 116). The expectations of those who supported him would eventually be dashed. Another anti-politician was Jorge Alessandri, who had a favorable reputation as a successful businessman, an austere man, and a senator and former finance minister during González Videla’s presidency. He also had a distinguished political pedigree, being the son of former president Arturo Alessandri and the brother of two former senators (one of them was a presidential candidate in 1946) (Angell 1993; Alexander 1978, 46; Francis 1973, 33). At a moment when Chileans wanted to return to normal party politics, Alessandri also represented a lingering desire for political leaders untainted by party politics as usual (Collier & Sater 2004, 258).

\textsuperscript{8} Scully (1995, 115) believes that the Communists supported Ibáñez as well.
Faced with rising inflation, Ibáñez made a turnaround from his campaign positions and implemented an orthodox program of reduced public spending and wage ceilings recommended by a mission from the Klein-Sachs financial firm of New York City. Inflation eased, but a recession ensued and social discontent rose (Alexander 1978, 40; Drake 1993 123-127). With only 19 deputies and three senators on his side and looking forward to dominate the Congress, Ibáñez urged his variegated coalition to merge, but instead there were 20 ibañista political parties competing in the 1953 legislative election. Ibañismo elected 53 deputies and 13 senators, but opposition parties became the congressional majority. Opposition to Ibáñez was particularly manifest in 1954, when a copper miners’ strike spread to other sectors of the economy; Ibáñez declared a state of emergency in many areas of the country and requested congressional permission to suspend constitutional rights, but the legislative majority denied the request and overturned the the state of emergency (Collier & Sater 2004, 254). Ibáñez’s presidency was also weakened by splits in the government coalition involving his now-erstwhile supporters in the Partido Socialista Popular (Alexander 1978, 43). That turmoil coincided with the appearance of two partisan organizations that would play leading roles in later years. Socialists, Democrats, and Communists created the Popular Action Front (Frente de Acción Popular, FRAP) in 1955 on a platform that favored nationalization and economic redistribution and rejected any coalition with right and center parties (Scully 1995, 116; Fernández Jilberto 1985, 103; Coller 1993, 127; Alexander 1978). The other party was a fusion of the falangistas and dissidents from other parties: the Federación Social Cristiana, created in 1955 and renamed Christian Democratic Party (Partido Demócrata Cristiano) in 1957. The Christian Democrats were under the leadership of
Eduardo Frei and became popular with urban squatters, rural workers, the middle class, and women (Coller 1993, 127; Alexander 1978, 44-45).

Defeats in the municipal election of 1956 and in the legislative election of the following year convinced Ibáñez to surround himself by right-wing groups in an apparent attempt to exorcise himself from his 1920s dictatorship (Alexander 1978, 39; Drake 1993, 123; Caviedes 1979, 200), especially since there were increases in the legislative vote share for the Radicals (from 14% to 22%), the Conservatives (from 10% to 18%), the Liberals (from 10% to 15%), and the falangistas / Christian Democrats (from 3% to 9%). The FRAP, in turn, obtained 11% of the vote (Drake 1993, 128; Collier & Sater 2004, 256). Ibáñez also countered the blows with the legalization of the Communists; and with an electoral reform that eliminated the literacy requirements for enfranchisement, suppressed the joint list provision for Deputy and mayoral elections, imposed the approval by national party leaderships of all electoral pacts, banned vote-buying, and instituted the secret ballot by changing the rules on the creation of party lists. Both legislations were ostensibly a revenge on Radicals, Liberals, and Conservatives; but they contributed to the eventual return of more normal patterns of party competition (Caviedes 1979, 204; Scully 1995, 116-117; Alexander 1978, 45; Parrish, von Lazar & Tapia-Videla 1971, 260). They also penalized irregular electoral practices that until then were common in rural areas, undermining the predominance of the landed oligarchy and their political parties and giving opportunities to Christian Democrats and the left to generate electoral strength (Scully 1992, 135).

With Ibáñez discredited, some of the major presidential candidates for 1958 were Salvador Allende (FRAP plus minor parties and ibañistas), Luis Bossay Leyva...
(Radicals), and Eduardo Frei (Christian Democrats). Jorge Alessandri was also a presidential candidate and received the support of Liberals and Conservatives, themselves motivated by their electoral weakness and the loss of Catholic voters to the Christian Democrats (Scully 1992, 125). Both parties believed nevertheless that their move was justifiable in tactical terms, since it was unlikely that they could win (together or separately) even a plurality of the vote and it was thought that Alessandri would attract a multi-class bloc of voters disenchanted with party politics (indeed, Scully argues that Alessandri’s candidacy was “a form of antiparty politics [1995, 118]). Alessandri won the presidency with 31.5% of the vote over Allende (28.3%), Frei (20.7%), Bossay Leyva (15.5%) and a dark-horse candidate who claimed to be to the left of the FRAP – former priest Antonio Zamorano (3.3%) (Alexander 1978, 46; Angell 1993, 142).

Despite winning with the assistance of Liberals and Conservatives and (at least initially) by the socioeconomic elites, Alessandri resented being labeled as a champion of the status quo (Alexander 1978, 47; Angell 1993, 143); indeed, his first Cabinet was composed of non-partisan technocrats like himself (Collier & Sater 2004, 258). Some of the policies he implemented were the substitution of the currency from Chilean pesos to escudos, housing projects, and an agrarian reform (Alexander 1978, 47), but his macroeconomic policies were not exactly orthodox even if he favored economic liberalization during the campaign. In fact, he combined incentives for foreign investment with increased state investment with the objective of encouraging domestic private entrepreneurship (Collier 1993, 143). For a time, the policies were effective: the GDP rose, unemployment decreased, and inflation declined between 1958 and 1961 (Collier 1993, 143-144). In political terms, Alessandri’s approach won the favor of voters, as
Liberals and Conservatives won 30% of the vote in the municipal elections of 1960 (in which the Radicals were nevertheless the most voted party) (Collier & Sater 2004, 258). However, economic disruptions (e.g., mounting fiscal and balance of payments deficits, increasing foreign debt, and spiraling inflation), difficulties in implementing an agrarian reform, and his decision to freeze wages sparked strikes and bloody urban clashes. Alessandri was then forced to include Radicals in the government, thus renouncing to his prior non-partisan position (Collier & Sater 2004, 259-260; Angell 1993, 144-145; Alexander 1978, 47).

The congressional elections of 1961 became a watershed moment not only because of the important role center parties took afterwards, but because Alessandri was chastised for the economic turmoil. The Radicals made a brief resurgence as the majority party in the Chamber of Deputies and – along with Liberals and Conservatives – filled more than half of the contested seats, while the FRAP (allied with the remnants of *ibañismo*) obtained 22.7% of the vote (12% for the Communists and 10.7% for the Socialists). In turn, the Christian Democrats increased their share of the Deputy vote by 3% – the largest amongst all parties (Caviedes 1979; Scully 1995, 118; Collier & Sater 2004, 259; Valenzuela 1995). The municipal elections of 1963 were another heavy blow for Alessandri: although abstention was high and the Radicals held their ground, Liberals and Conservatives (with whom the Radicals formed the Democratic Front [*Frente Democrático*, FD] in October 1961) lost electoral support. Conversely, the Christian Democrats won more votes than the Radicals, and the FRAP won 23% of the vote (Collier & Sater 2004, 260). From then on, the Christian Democrats would become the
major center party, winning the favor of many voters on both left and right and making inroads into the labor movement (Valenzuela 1995, Alexander 1978, 48).

The 1961 congressional election also sowed the seeds for a damaging period of political polarization that would materialize late in the decade, exemplified in part by the Christian Democrats: unwilling to form coalitions (Scully 1992, 155) and full of confidence after their electoral success, they led the charge against Alessandri much to the annoyance of the FRAP. At the same time, the Radicals moved to the right after allying with Liberals and Conservatives, (Caviedes 1979, 215; Collier & Sater 2004, 261), all parties entrenched themselves in positions along the left-center-right continuum (Scully 1995, 118), and an electoral reform in 1962 (which made voting mandatory, simplified ballots and voter registration, prohibited electoral pacts for senatorial elections, and outlawed electoral fraud) resulted in the expansion of the electorate to almost three million in 1964. Many of the new voters represented low social sectors (workers, urban poor and peasants), but others belonged to the middle class. Yet regardless of that, voters demanded economic and social change at a moment when the socioeconomic elites (who were benefited by Alessandri’s policies) refused to become a modernizing force. The alternatives to the elites’ project differed: the Christian Democrats proposed reforms within the existing political system, while the FRAP advocated for radical change (Alexander 1978, 52; Valenzuela 1995, 45; Collier & Sater 2004, 259; Angell 1993, 146; Francis 1973, 14).

The set was now set for the presidential election, for which the major candidates were Radical leader Julio Durán (FD), Eduardo Frei (Christian Democrats), and Salvador Allende (FRAP). Durán was expected to win, but a special congressional election to fill a
vacant seat held in the conservative province of Curicó in March 1964 – touted by the overconfident Radicals as an informal referendum on Alessandri’s presidency – was won by a FRAP candidate with 39% of the vote against the FD candidate’s 32%. The upset forced Durán to withdraw, but he was convinced by the Christian Democrats (fearful that his supporters might vote for Allende) to return as the presidential candidate of the Radical Party, which already left the FD. Liberals and Conservatives also feared an Allende victory and realized that a coalition with the Christian Democrats was the only way to prevent it, but both parties also resented Frei’s criticism of Alessandri’s government. Nevertheless, pragmatism made them give their grudging approval to Frei even if he refused to make concessions in return. The campaign was hard-fought and bitter and both the Christian Democrats and the FRAP spent unprecedented amounts of money, some of it from foreign donors (West Germany and the US funded Frei, and Marxist countries funded Allende). In the end, Frei won the election with a commanding 55.6% of the vote against the 38.6% obtained by Allende, while Durán obtained only 4.9% of the vote (Caviedes 1979, 215-218; Scully 1995; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 124; Collier & Sater 2004, 261-262; Alexander 1978, 49-50; Francis 1973, 13).

Clash of ideologies: The 1964 party system


Chileans had high expectations for Frei’s presidency, known by the catchphrase of the Christian Democrats during the campaign – “Revolution in Liberty (“revolución en libertad”)” (Skidmore & Smith 2005, 125).” Although their concept of “communitarian society” was not clearly defined, the Christian Democrats presented themselves as being
between capitalism and Marxism (Francis 1973, 14) and unambiguously in favor of democracy and social reform (Collier & Sater 2004, 307). They were already active within peasants and the urban poor, and Frei promised during the campaign to nationalize the mining industry, enact an agrarian reform, and encourage the creation of neighborhood organizations and peasant labor unions (Alexander 1978, 49). Yet Frei was also supported by many in the political right and the urban middle class because the Christian Democrats’ declared position at the political center contributed to generate electoral support from a cross-class constituency. Moreover, Frei was also supported by Catholics even if the Christian Democrats declared to be a non-confessional party – the 1964 presidential election coincided with the self-renewal of Catholicism during the Second Vatican Council and a more unambiguous social commitment on the part of the Chilean Catholic Church (Collier & Sater 2004, 307-308). Frei was also influenced by French social Christian thought and the reformist papal encyclicals of the 1960s (Francis 1973, 14).

Nevertheless, right-wing parties expected Frei to modulate his reformist approach in exchange for their grudging support, and the FRAP immediately made public its opposition to the new government. Also, the Christian Democrat government not only had to deal with congressional prerogatives such as the blocking of initiatives from the executive (which ordinarily called for party coalitions), but could only count on 23 deputies and 4 senators against an overwhelming majority for opposition parties (124 deputies and 40 senators combined). Hence, Frei’s first proposals were either defeated or did not survive legislative committees, provoking stalemate. The Christian Democrats made a major electoral issue out of that situation for the 1965 congressional race with
mixed results: they did not win the majority in the Senate, but became the largest bloc in the Chamber of Deputies by electing 82 of 147 Deputies and increasing their share of that vote to 43%. Socialists and Communists also increased their share but only slightly (to 22%), and the Socialists even lost some ground in the Deputy election (11% to 10%). Liberals and Conservatives went from 30% of the Deputy vote in 1961 to 12% in this election; likewise, the Liberals did not win Senate seats and elected only 6 Deputies, and the Conservatives could not augment their two-seat Senate bloc and won only three Deputy seats. In terms of vote shares for the Deputy election, their losses were of about one half of the previous total – the Liberals went from 14% to 5%, and the Conservatives decreased their share from 16% to 7% (Valenzuela 1995, 40, table 1; Collier & Sater 2004; Caviedes 1979, 230; Alexander 1978, 66-67).

The electoral victories of 1964 and 1965 prompted the Christian Democrats to reject coalition politics outright; many even displayed a sense of hubris that would later be resented by the rest of the political spectrum, compounded by the dispensation of patronage based on partisan and ideological criteria. Frei even utilized public opinion after 1965 to pressure opposition parties into approving legislation. The Christian Democrats were thus spared of the wheel-and-deal of coalition politics, although legislation had to be modified to appease the left and the right (Collier & Sater 2004, 311; Alexander 1978, 59-60; Francis 1973, 15). There was also factionalism within: by 1966, there were tensions between the oficialistas (the supporters of Frei), the rebeldes (the left-wing faction), and the terceristas (those critical of Frei but more moderate than the rebeldes). Their differences were more complex, but a major point was the pace of the

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9 It has been argued, however, that the Christian Democrats were in a quandary because the left rejected any association with them and the right resented the center-left inclination of the party; as a result, the Christian Democrats could not perform the balancing act of a center party (Moulián 2002, 242).
promised reforms. The internal disputes were also bolstered by increasing Chilean dependence on foreign aid: the US (hoping that the Christian Democrats would become the “natural” political alternative) dispensed the largest amount of direct economic aid anywhere in Latin America – $720 million between 1961 and 1970 through the Alliance for Progress. The rebeldes soon believed that the government was adopting a non-revolutionary attitude, prompting them to circulate rumors of corruption within the oficialistas (Angell 1993, 149; Collier & Sater 2004, 310; Francis 1973, 17). Still Frei could now embark more confidently in enacting his policies – communal organizing was encouraged, state expenditures on education increased, and poverty was minimized. New housing projects and hospitals were built, but there were some setbacks in both initiatives. The agrarian reform proved problematic: 400 agrarian estates were expropriated by 1967 and 120,000 peasants were unionized, but landowner opposition was vigorous, some demanded more radical changes, and only 20,000 peasants (out of 100,000) were given land. Also, the nationalization of Chilean copper resulted in increased production and revenues to the state, but not without negotiating with the major mine owners (US-based corporations Kennecott and Anaconda) in terms largely favorable to the latter (Angell 1993; Collier & Sater 2004; Francis 1973, 28; Oppenheim 2007, 49).

In the meantime, attempting to stop the apparent disintegration of the right, Liberals, Conservatives, and a number of smaller parties created the National Party (Partido Nacional) in May 1966. Its main constituency were at first the socioeconomic elites, but they later incorporated middle and lower sectors disdainful of Christian Democrat reformism and joined a larger ideological bloc composed of non-partisan elites
and the extremist group Fatherland and Liberty (Alexander 1978, 67-68). Inside the FRAP, the Cuban Revolution inspired many Socialists and the extremist Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria – created in 1965 – to adopt armed struggle, but figures like Salvador Allende still favored the electoral process. (Collier & Sater 2004, 321-322). In addition, the Socialists kept antagonizing with the Communists for control of the labor movement and the left; although the former augmented their monetary and organizational resources, they did not have the same influence on the labor movement as the Communists. The Radicals now became a left-wing party and began to consider an alliance with the Socialists and the Communists, but that foreshadowed an internal division that would result in its decline. There were also two new political parties that originated from the old Democratic Party of the 1880s: the Partido Democrático Nacional (PADENA), supportive of Frei and the Christian Democrats; and the Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Demócrata), aligned with the FRAP (Alexander 1978).

By 1967, economic growth stagnated (Francis 1973, 28) and inflation rose, which forced Frei to enact a scheme that tried to establish worker-run industries and curb consumer demand. Opposition by labor and the right forced its abandonment. Also, the Senate denied Frei permission to make a diplomatic visit to the United States, in another episode of inter-party bickering. At the same time, the rebelde and tercerista factions took control of the Christian Democratic party organization, unleashing differences between Frei and Jacques Chonchol, the major figure in agrarian reform (Angell 1993; Collier & Sater 2004, 320-322). The Christian Democrats managed to win 35.6% of the vote in the municipal election of that year, outdistancing the Nationals (14%, or about 10% less from the last election) and both Socialists and Communists (a combined 28%,
or about 5% more from the last election), but both rebeldes and terceristas remained active (Caviedes 1979, 237-239; Collier & Sater 2004, 309, table 11.1). Dissension within the Christian Democrats was resolved early in 1968 at their national convention, where Frei appealed to the party membership to elect a governing board that would cooperate with his administration. His request was accepted (Alexander 1978, 64).

Since Frei constantly mobilized public opinion, Chileans were drawn deeper into the political process (Francis 1973, 16). At the same time, the Christian Democrats lost many middle class voters out of frustration with economic and tax policies, and both left and right received an influx of new members. Political competition soon turned centrifugal and the party system degenerated into a three-way war between left, right, and center with no possibility of compromise (Caviedes 1979, 250; Scully 1995, 121; Alexander 1978, 107). Concurrently, social mobilization reached unprecedented levels and leftist political violence began to escalate, fueling the fears of the right (Collier & Sater 2004, 324). Against that background, Chileans were convoked to participate in the congressional election of 1969, which resulted in a major snag for the Christian Democrats: although they increased their Senate bloc and were the most voted party in the Deputy election, their share of that vote diminished to 29% from its all-time high of 43% in 1965. The Nationals, in turn, became the main opposition party after obtaining 20% of the Deputy vote, outpacing the Radicals (13%), the Socialists (12%), and the Communists (15%). PADENA and the Social Democrats had no elected legislators (Alexander 1978, 75; Valenzuela 1995, 40, table 1; Collier & Sater 2004, 324).

Just after the election, Carabineros evicted a group of squatters near the southern town of Puerto Montt, killing eight people and wounding another 50. The left placed the
blame on Frei’s Minister of the Interior; consequently, Jacques Chonchol, the Christian Democrat *rebeldes* and a number of *terceristas* left the party and created the Unitary Popular Action Movement (*Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria*, MAPU) (Angell 1993, 155-156; Collier & Sater 2004, 324-325; Oppenheim 2007; Alexander 1978). The Radicals held their national congress the following June, expressing their intention of aligning with Socialists and Communists and expelling a number of party leaders who opposed that idea (including Julio Durán, the 1964 presidential candidate) (Alexander 1978, 74). Some political parties already chose their presidential candidates: the Christian Democrats nominated Radomiro Tomic, formerly the Chilean ambassador to the United States; Chonchol became the MAPU candidate, and poet Pablo Neruda was chosen by the Communists. Former president Jorge Alessandri was a favorite within the right, but he did not accept the nomination right away. However, a military rebellion in October 1969 by the Tacna army regiment – the “*tacnazo*” – forced him into accepting, since the leader of the rebellion, General Roberto Viaux, had the support of many in the right. That same month, a new left-wing coalition was formed: Popular Unity (*Unidad Popular*, UP), grouping Communists, Socialists, Radicals, the MAPU, and Acción Popular Independiente (a new party composed by former *ibañistas* and dissidents from other parties). The expelled Radicals, along with others that abandoned their party, formed the Radical Democrat Party (*Partido de la Democracia Radical*), positioned within the right (Collier & Sater 2004, 325-327; Alexander 1978).

Also in 1969, Frei and the Congress sparred over a package of 11 constitutional reforms. Nine of them were approved in late December by the combined votes of the Christian Democrats and the Nationals over the opposition of the UP; the rejected
amendments required an elected president to declare to the Congress the elements of the socioeconomic program to be implemented, and allowed the president to dissolve the Congress once in a term and call for new elections. The amendments that were approved were the adoption of a popular plebiscite provision on issues where the executive and the legislative branches were in disagreement, the creation of a Constitutional Tribunal that would judge on the actions of both the president and the Congress, the expansion of presidential powers, the streamlining and diminution of congressional powers, and lowering the voting age to 18 years and nullify literacy requirements for the electoral franchise (except for congressional elections) (Alexander 1978, 82-84). Although some of these amendments increased presidential discretion over economic policy, it was perhaps too late for Frei; his socioeconomic policies as a whole were intuitive, but they could only reap long-term benefits after the expiration of his term. Shorter-term achievements were made, but policies required redistribution policies and short-term sacrifices on the part of certain social segments and were, hence, politically harmful. Also, while Frei remained popular, his policies did not curb obstinate issues like inflation, which dented the political possibilities of the Christian Democrats (Alexander 1978; Francis 1973, 28; Collier & Sater 2004, 320).

It was in the midst of this setting that the presidential campaign of 1970 took place. Tomic was by-and-large the heir apparent to Frei, but he initially rejected the nomination until August 1969, when he was formally chosen. Noted for his oratory, he proposed a deepening of Frei’s policies but also kept his distance by envisioning a “national, popular, and democratic revolution”, proposing the nationalization of banks, and demanding the rejection of existing agreements with the copper barons. His
campaign nevertheless faced many dilemmas: he considered himself as a leftist but could not persuade the *rebeldes* who formed the MAPU to return to the Christian Democrats, while at the same time he could not take advantage of Frei’s popularity (in any case, his ego excluded any association with or dependence on the current president). On his part, Alessandri – who was supported by the Nationals and the Radical Democrats but denied vehemently being the favorite candidate of the wealthy – called for the end of demagogic politics and the restitution of law and order, but expressed vague positions on the major issues. He retained the anti-political stance that propelled him to power in 1958, but his team of advisors was controversial: a number of them were technocrats, but others did not have a meritocratic reputation (Francis 1973; Alexander 1978; Collier & Sater 2004, 327).

The UP, in turn, created a program that reflected the laboriously-obtained consensus between its composing parties, but the presidential nomination would be more acrimonious. Salvador Allende’s selection by the Socialists was just as rancorous because of internal disagreements and his three unsuccessful presidential campaigns, but once he was chosen in January 1970 the other UP parties eventually rallied around him. Other considerations played a role: the Socialists would not admit a Radical as a unified presidential candidate, and the Communists – despite preferring anyone but a Socialist – believed that supporting a non-Marxist candidate would have alienated the Socialists and fragment the coalition (Alexander 1978, 122-123; Collier & Sater 2004, 327). Once on the campaign trail, Allende went on to expand on the program of the UP, by which he promised the expansion of health services and other social welfare initiatives, the acceleration of the agrarian reform, and to provide state financial and technical assistance

Some observers predicted that Alessandri would win the presidential election, but electoral trends gave Allende the advantage; in any case, given existing polarization, the election was closer than expected. The final results gave a plurality to Allende (36% of the vote) over Alessandri (34.9%) and Tomic (27%), prompting the Congress to decide the final outcome. Chile was in a state of heightened tension for the next two months – the economy almost ground to a halt, Allende’s supporters threatened violence, and the right desperately tried to convince the Christian Democrats to elect Alessandri, who nevertheless announced that if elected he would not take office to allow for new elections (although it was later discovered that the CIA attempted to buy votes in his favor). A number of military officers assisted by the United States (including General Roberto Viaux) staged a coup to prevent Allende from taking office, but General René Schneider – the army chief of staff – publically declared that his branch would respect constitutional legality and the electoral process. Schneider later became the target of the plot concocted by the officers with the assistance of Fatherland and Liberty: a kidnap made seen like an operation by a left-wing group that would force the military into intervening. The plan was set into action on October 22, but Schneider unexpectedly fought back. He was gravely wounded, shocking the country and prompting his successor – General Carlos Prats – to declare that the military stood by its promise of not interfering in the election (Collier & Sater 2004, 328-329; Alexander 1978, 125-127; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 127; Caviedes 1979, 258; Silva 2006, 442; Oppenheim 2007, 47).
The final act was played by Allende and the Christian Democrats: concerned that a UP government would subvert constitutional order, the Christian Democrats demanded Allende to maintain political parties, political freedoms, and the autonomy of the branches of the government; respect the discipline and internal procedures of the armed forces; and allow for the continuation of unions and the right to strike. Those demands eventually became the Statute of Constitutional Guarantees, to which both Allende and the Christian Democrats agreed. On October 24, 1970, the Congress formally proclaimed Allende as the winner of the presidential election by a vote of 153 in favor and 35 against. General Schneider died the following day; afterwards, the conspirators were apprehended and General Viaux was convicted and jailed (Alexander 1978, 127-128; Collier & Sater 2004, 329; Oppenheim 2007, 35).

2. The road to the other September 11 (1970-1973)

The stunned right was uncertain about how to oppose Allende, with the added element that General Schneider’s assassination forced it into moderation. The Christian Democrats were also indecisive, but adamantly rejected a coalition with the Nationals. Leftist euphoria and apparent popularity provided energy for the government to vigorously implement the UP program, more commonly known as the “Chilean road to Socialism” (“vía chilena al socialismo”): nationalizations, income redistribution, demand-side macroeconomic policies, the acceleration of agrarian reform and peasant labor organization, the creation of a unicameral legislature, and the inclusion of citizens in government entities and decisions – all within the boundaries of the constitutional system. The UP doubted that socialism could be implanted overnight, but felt that the
program laid the basis. Some of its major measures were successful: on July 11, 1971, the Congress unanimously approved a constitutional amendment that nationalized all copper production; and the agrarian reform (led by MAPU leader Jacques Chonchol, now minister of agriculture) expropriated almost 1.5 million hectares of private-owned land during the first six months of the Allende government – almost one half of what Frei accomplished during his presidency. although the Christian Democrats were the most voted party (25% of the vote), Socialists and Communists were not exactly successful in the municipal election of 1971 (22% and 17% respectively against 25% for the Christian Democrats and 18% for the Nationals), but UP parties won a combined 49% of the vote. Furthermore, government-led expansion was creating growth; industrial production, wages, and the GDP were increasing, and unemployment was falling (Silva 2006, 442; Angell 1993; Collier & Sater 2004; Oppenheim 2007, 48-49).

Unfortunately for Allende, the UP was fragmented as a whole and within individual parties. The first division occurred as early as 1971, when reorganization within the Radicals and their adoption of a Marxist ideology caused a dissident group to leave the party and create the Radical Left Party (Partido de Izquierda Radical). Allende’s Socialists were split between two different radical factions that advocated for a full-fledged social revolution, a moderate faction that was committed to democracy but had little influence, and a number of followers of the president. One of the radical factions, led by Aniceto Rodriguez, grudgingly agreed to cooperate with the UP; while the other, led by Carlos Altamirano, was less committed to the coalition. Differences were settled in January 1971, when the Socialists chose a new central committee composed by supporters of Altamirano, who became secretary-general. Finally, since it

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10 Party coalitions were prohibited by the existing electoral law, so there were no UP candidacies as such.
was not known how exactly the UP program would be implemented, there were also disagreements between parties: the moderates (Radicals, Communists, and Allende’s Socialists) were adamant in attracting the middle class and in their observance of the constitutional order, even if it mean negotiating with the opposition and slowing the pace of reforms. The radicals (chief among them Altamirano’s Socialists) believed that the program had to be implemented more quickly through popular mobilization, and viewed Allende’s presidency as a transitional stage towards social revolution; in preparation, they intensified existing social divisions as much as possible and even cooperated with the MIR (Angell 1993, 159; Alexander 1978; Oppenheim 2007, 56). Other differences were also on policy matters – there different views on which industries should be nationalized, delaying the presentation of the enabling bill (in reality, a constitutional amendment). Policy and even ideological differences were compounded by organizational disarray: decisions were supposed to be collegial, but the electoral strength of Socialists and Communists gave them more weight on internal decision-making. There were also no established rules to enforce party discipline; and the distribution of ministries between UP parties (based on an agreed-upon quota) exacerbated factionalism and weakened administrative authority and executive control over the civil service. In the face of these organizational flaws, Allende remained in a middle position and relied more often than not on securing clear mandates from all members of the coalition, reducing his policymaking abilities (Oppenheim 2007). Those mandates were almost impossible to come by since the radicals within UP kept pressing for their own ideological positions, further constraining Allende (Collier & Sater 2004, 332).
But not all problems plaguing Allende presidency were limited to the UP. Another critical aspect was that the government coalition was not the congressional majority; although the 1969 election was a sobering shock for the Christian Democrats, they were nevertheless the majority party with 20 senators and 47 deputies. In all, opposition parties had 32 Senate seats and 93 Deputy seats, while the UP only had 18 senators and 57 deputies. Having UP in the minority further constrained Allende, especially in economic policymaking. The results of the municipal elections of 1971 were welcome, but the balance of power between government and opposition remained unchanged. Facing a hostile legislature, the best alternatives were to win the full support of the Christian Democrats or, at least, negotiate with them (Angell 1993; Oppenheim 2007, 46). Events took a different turn.

By mid-1971, pending the presentation of the enabling bill, some private corporations (e.g., the national phone company, a subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraph) were expropriated without congressional authorization\(^\text{11}\). The Nationals and the right were livid on top of being already incensed by wealth redistribution policies; they and the Christian Democrats believed that Allende was abusing his legitimate powers. Though some Nationals were conspicuously strident, they remained as a whole within the constitutional order at this point. Another controversy was the assassination of Frei’s minister of the interior by leftist radicals who were granted amnesty by Allende; the Christian Democrats soon accused the president of condoning leftist extremism. A Deputy election held in July in the Valparaíso district was narrowly won by a Christian Democrat supported by the Nationals, PADENA and the Radical

\(^{11}\) Oppenheim points out that what actually occurred was that the government did not become the owner of some corporations. Rather, the measure was intended to make the government an administrator in order to deal with temporary concerns such as labor-management disputes and supply difficulties (2007, 54).
Democrats; and in September, the Nationals unsuccessfully brought a motion in the Chamber of Deputies to impeach the minister of economics. In October, while the government presented the nationalization bill to the Senate, the Christian Democrats presented a different version to the Chamber of Deputies – the Hamilton-Fuentealba bill, named after its main Senate sponsors – that required the government to reverse expropriations that were not approved by the Congress. The issue remained deadlocked for a time; in the meantime, the government continued with its unilateral expropriations. In November, Allende introduced the bill that would make the Congress unicameral, but opposition entrenched. The issue was left unresolved until 1972, when the proposal was defeated (Silva 2006, 442; Alexander 1978; Oppenheim 2007; Collier & Sater 2004, 346-347; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 128).

Rising opposition to Allende was also caused by the sudden negative march of the economy, especially since the implemented policies were inflationary. Before the end of 1971, the currency became overvalued, government expenditures and fiscal deficits rose, tax revenues decreased, copper production and prices diminished, there was a $90 million deficit in the balance of payments, and service of the soaring foreign was placed in a moratorium. To make matters worse, labor strife was on the rise and stocks of consumer goods were diminishing. The result was that the middle class and small business were now squarely against the government. A picturesque protest was the “March of the Empty Saucepans” of December 1971, where middle and upper class housewives banged cooking pots in the streets of Santiago to protest against inflation and consumer good shortages. The opposition impeached the Minister of the Interior in the Chamber of Deputies after it was known that UP militants assaulted the demonstrators, but the
minister was transferred to the Ministry of Defense before the Senate initiated its own proceedings (Skidmore & Smith 2005, 128; Angell 1993, 161-162; Silva 2006, 442-443).

The Valparaíso Deputy election of 1971 also had important effects within the Christian Democrats: the remaining terceristas within the party opposed the support of Nationals and Radical Democrats to the Christian Democratic candidate, sparking a wave of resignations that began a month after the election. The dissidents soon formed Christian Left (Izquierda Cristiana), which immediately joined the UP and later received an influx of members from MAPU, including Jacques Chonchol. The Christian Democrats now became a more homogeneous party, although minor disagreements remained – some party members rejected any negotiation with the UP, and others (including Eduardo Frei) were less sanguine but still skeptical (Alexander 1978, 283-285).

The year 1972 was even more difficult for Allende. In the economic realm, policymaking was disorganized and unsuccessful, agrarian reform polarized landowners and peasants, the United States unfurled a secret plan to deprive Chile of all economic assistance and foreign lending in reprisal for not compensating the owners of expropriated American holdings, opposition parties refused to balance the budget and blocked tax reforms, and entrenched economic interests deliberately sabotaged government initiatives out of contempt for Allende or for monetary advantage (Skidmore & Smith 2005, 129; Oppenheim 2007, 59; Angell 1993; Alexander 1978, 160). On the political realm, the UP lost two local congressional elections in January 1972. In addition, the Hamilton-Fuentealba bill was approved in February with the encouragement of the opposition. Attempts at compromise were made the following month; the first one was
apparently successful, but Allende announced that the Socialists opposed the agreement. Consequently, the Leftist Radicals left the UP and joined the opposition. The president later vetoed parts of the Hamilton-Fuentealba bill and sent it back to the Congress, after which another negotiation was made between June and July. It resulted in a request to UP and Christian Democrat legislators to draft a compromise bill by June 29, but the complexity of the content area slowed the process considerably. On July 5, days after the deadline passed, the Leftist Radicals – with the support of the Christian Democrats – motioned to override the presidential veto. The proposal was approved by simple majority, creating a major constitutional discrepancy arising from the vague wording of the provision enabling a plebiscite in case of executive-legislative deadlocks approved at the end of Frei’s presidency (Allende insisted that congressional overrides of amendment vetoes required the same two-thirds majority necessary in bill vetoes, but the opposition maintained that since the issue could have been settled in a plebiscite that majority was not needed). The issue remained dormant for many months, but from that point on the Christian Democrats began to consort with the Nationals. In the meantime, the UP won a congressional election in Coquimbo district, but narrowly (Oppenheim 2007, 60-61; Angell 1993, 167; Collier & Sater 2004, 348).

Social mobilization and polarization intensified further. Left and right-wing extremists clashed against each other on the streets, and in October, the truck owners’ association staged a nationwide strike after Allende decided to nationalize land, air, and sea transports firms in the southern town of Aisén and opposing truckers were arrested. That strike was soon seconded by shop owners, Nationals, and Christian Democrats; and prompted the government to requisition trucks, call for volunteers to transport goods, and
urge workers to keep factories open. The latter petition resulted in the appearance of a spontaneous grassroots leftist organization, known as “popular power” (*poder popular*): workers seized enterprises and spearheaded self-defense and self-help initiatives. The opposition bloc in the Congress then moved to impeach a number of government ministers, but the whole Cabinet resigned soon afterwards. Allende then appointed a new Cabinet that included three military officers, including General Carlos Prats as minister of the interior. Prats negotiated with the truckers, resulting in an agreement that ended their strike in early November. The civilian-military Cabinet – which was opposed by segments of UP – remained in place for five more months, but there were already rumblings of disloyalty within some military officers\(^\text{12}\). Equally ominous was that Nationals and Christian Democrats now began to work more closely (Collier & Sater 2004; Oppenheim 2007; Alexander 1978, 303-305).

The congressional campaign of 1973 started in the midst of a politically noxious environment – the opposition was intent on winning the two-thirds majority needed to override presidential vetoes and impeach Allende, and the UP needed a great victory to retain their legislative bloc and prevent the impeachment. Party coalitions were barred under the electoral law, but the national electoral board permitted the creation of “confederated” parties. As a result, UP parties formed the Federation of the Popular Unity (*Federación de la Unidad Popular*, FUP), and opposition parties (Christian Democrats, Nationals, PADENA, Radical Democrats, and Leftist Radicals) created the

\(^{12}\) For most of the Allende presidency, the military remained in a position of political neutrality and its autonomy was respected by the government; moreover, there were even increases in arms spending and pay, from which the military obviously benefited from. However, the relations between Allende and the military became strained after a number of incidents, such as Fidel Castro’s long state visit in 1971 and the existence of a separate presidential armed bodyguard detail composed of UP radicals. Prats’ appointment as government minister exacerbated disagreements (Angell 1993, 176).
Democratic Confederation (Confederación Democrática, CODE). The campaign was the fiercest yet, but the results were inconclusive: CODE obtained 56.5% of the vote (29% for the Christian Democrats and 21% for the Nationals), but did not obtain the two-thirds majority and even lost seats. In turn, FUP won 43.5% of the vote (19% for the Socialists and 16% for the Communists), but increased its legislative bloc and secured the electoral support of lower sectors13. With party politics at a stalemate, both Christian Democrats and Nationals (as well as disloyal military officers) now agreed that the only way out was through a military coup, for which plans were made soon after the election (Angell 1993, 176; Alexander 1978; Oppenheim 2007, 68-69; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 130; Collier & Sater 2004, 351).

School reform presented another venue for a clash between government and opposition, but also exposed the still-existing rifts between moderates and radicals within UP / FUP (Collier & Sater 2004, 352). That same month, copper miners loyal to the Christian Democrats staged a 70-day strike that crippled the economy, denied that UP / FUP had the support of all workers, and provoked more dissension inside the government coalition. Allende later announced that small tracts of land would be subject to the agrarian reform, and in May enacted the parts of the Hamilton-Fuentealba bill that were not vetoed. The constitutional issue left dormant since 1972 was reawakened with that decision, but in June the Constitutional Tribunal refused to decide alleging lack of jurisdiction (Angell 1993, 176; Collier & Sater 2004, 353; Oppenheim 2007; Alexander 1978, 311). Then, on the morning of June 29, 1973, the army’s Second Armored Regiment opened fire on the presidential palace and the Ministry of Defense in a brief

13 More precisely, the FUP obtained 43.39% of the deputy vote and 42.1% in the senatorial vote, but CODE received 54.74% and 56.2%, respectively (Caviedes 1979).
rebellion popularly known as “tancazo.” General Prats ordered the surrender of the troops, but at the same time groups of workers – urged by Allende – seized factories that for the most part never returned to their owners afterwards. The “tancazo” resulted in the deaths of 22 civilians and soldiers, 32 wounded, some 50 soldiers under arrest, and in Allende’s decision to appoint military officers in the Cabinet once again (including General Prats as minister of defense). The issue of nationalization was taken again at the behest of the Catholic Church, but Allende and Christian Democratic leader Patricio Aylwin did not reach a compromise. A new trucker strike began in late July, spreading to other economic sectors between August and September (Angell 1993, 176, Alexander 1978; Oppenheim 2007; Alexander 1978, 321-322).

Also in August, the armed forces uncovered attempts made by the MIR, MAPU and the Socialist radicals to incite rebellions within the services; in a speech given in September to the central committee of the Socialist Party, Carlos Altamirano conceitedly admitted his role in the plan and simultaneously warned Allende that he may not count with his support unless more radical policies were enacted. An outraged Allende eventually decided to break with the Socialist radicals, but Altamirano’s declaration solidified the resolve of the disloyal military officers to plot what became the decisive blow. Initial steps were taken between mid-August and early September with changes in the high commands of the air force, the navy, and the army (General Prats was forced to resign and was substituted by General Augusto Pinochet, believed to be a constitutionalist). On August 22, after months of discrepancies with the Supreme Court
and the Comptroller General\textsuperscript{14}, the Congress declared that Allende violated the constitution and called upon the armed forces and \textit{Carabineros} to restore legality and order, with which the road to the coup was opened. The day chosen by the conspirators was September 11 – a day when, ironically, the president planned to announce the celebration of a plebiscite on a number of hot-button issues, including nationalization. The coup began early that morning with the occupation of Valparaíso by the navy (whose chief of staff was substituted just before the start of the coup) and of Concepción by the army. Upon receiving news, Allende left his residence for the presidential palace, which was later left unprotected after the \textit{Carabineros} security detail – told that their superiors supported the coup – left their posts. Nevertheless, Allende refused to surrender or even to be granted safe passage out of Chile. In the climax of the coup, the air force bombèd the palace in preparation for a subsequent ground assault by the army. Allende perished that afternoon in an apparent suicide. After the operation finished, the UP / FUP government was substituted by a military \textit{junta} composed by General César Mendoza, director of \textit{Carabineros}; General Gustavo Leigh, chief of staff of the air force; Admiral José Toribio Merino, chief of staff of the navy; and Pinochet, who presided the body (Angell 1993, 177; Collier & Sater 2004, 356-357; Oppenheim 2007; Alexander 1978; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 132-133).

\textsuperscript{14} The Comptroller General (\textit{Contralor General}) was a post created in 1943 to provide oversight of financial matters, with the same status as the Supreme Court. It also had the prerogative to issue a summons on the head of state for failure to implement or violation of law (McDonald 1969, 458, note 8).
Is it exceptional? The current Chilean party system

1. The rise and slight fall of Pinochet (1973-1989)

Intent on creating a society in which political differences would be superseded, the junta ordered the dissolution of the Congress and the prohibition of the MIR and all UP / FUP parties upon taking power. It was soon clear that simply curbing the left was not enough: MIR and UP / FUP sympathizers were subject to a harrowing wave of incarcerations, forced exiles, kidnappings, tortures, and summary executions. A well known figure from the Allende presidency was one of the many victims of political repression: General Prats, killed in his Argentine exile in September 1974\textsuperscript{15}. It was also announced that all other parties (Christian Democrats, Nationals, Radical Democrats, and the Radical Left) were “in recess;” though its meaning was not clarified, in practice it translated to their inability to function as political parties. However, the Christian Democrats – after blaming UP / FUP for the coup – remained active for a time and its two top leaders (president Patricio Aylwin and vice-president Osvaldo Olguín) dared to criticize the regime in 1974. Years later, the Christian Democratic Party was banned along with the Radical Left and Radical Democratic parties (the Nationals decided to disband after the coup as a patriotic gesture) (Alexander 1978; Oppenheim 2007; Angell 1993; Collier & Sater 2004; Valenzuela 1995, 53).

In July 1977, Pinochet announced his plan for transition to civilian rule, which was slated to end by 1985 with the election of the president for a six-year period by a legislature in which a third of the legislators would be appointed by Pinochet. That

\textsuperscript{15} Another victim was Socialist Orlando Letelier, an ex-ambassador to the United States murdered in Washington, DC in 1976. Both Letelier and General Prats were assassinated by the Directorate of National Intelligence (Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional, DINA), an agency created by the regime (Oppenheim 2007).
timetable changed when a new constitution was enacted in 1980; the document not only forced a more protracted transition to civilian rule, but kept the bar on political parties, allowed for Pinochet to remain as president until 1989 with the possibility to remain in power for eight more years if he won a national plebiscite, extended the prescribed presidential term from six to eight years without immediate reelection (except during the transition period), and created nine non-elected Senate seats\textsuperscript{16}, among other provisions. The opposition mobilized to stop the enactment of the constitution even if circumstances were unfavorable (Oppenheim 2007, 116-119), and found another opportunity in an economic slowdown caused by rising oil prices and the debt crisis of 1982. Two coalitions appeared between August and September 1983: Christian Democrats, right-wing activists displeased with the regime, a number of Socialists, the Radicals, and other small groups formed the Democratic Alliance (\textit{Alianza Democrática}, AD) under the leadership of Socialist Ricardo Lagos; and the Communists assembled the People’s Democratic Movement (\textit{Movimiento Democrático Popular}) along with the allendista Socialists and the remainder of the MIR. Both coalitions staged constant street demonstrations that the regime confronted at first by negotiating (particularly with AD) and later by unleashing more repression. In the meantime, the disbanded Nationals soon discovered that the regime was also disdainful of them and that the entrepreneurial sector was being left out of economic policymaking in favor of the technocrats known as “the Chicago boys.” The disappointed Nationals created parties such as the Partido Republicano and Projecto de Desarrollo Nacional, which joined the opposition in the

\textsuperscript{16} The new Senate seats were to be filled by any former president with at least six years in office, past Supreme Court justices, a former Comptroller, a former university rector, any ex-government minister, and any former military chief of staff or director of \textit{Carabineros} (Oppenheim 2007, 118). Those senators occupied the seats for life (Collier & Sater 2004).
early 1980s in its demand for a return to democracy. Others in the right, such as long-
time activist and influential presidential adviser Jaime Guzmán, joined forces with the
technocrats and created Independent Democratic Union (Unión Democrática
Independiente, UDI) in 1983 (Collier & Sater 2004; Alexander 1978, 351; Oppenheim

In August 1985, AD parties (with the assistance of the Archbishop of Santiago)
signed the National Agreement for the Transition to Full Democracy (Acuerdo Nacional
para la Transición a la Plena Democracia), by which they proposed changes to the 1980
constitution that would hasten democratic reform. That document was further sustained in
1986 by a second agreement titled “Bases for Sustaining a Democratic Regime” (Bases
de Sustentación del Régimen Democrático), but by then mobilization waned without
dislodging Pinochet and his opposition realized that the only viable way to confront the
regime was to utilize its own institutions, especially since the campaign for the
constitutionally-mandated presidential plebiscite was looming. Electoral registration
initiated in early 1987 with every advantage given to regime supporters (non-Marxist
parties were allowed to register provided that they collected 33,500 voter signatures). For
their part, Socialists, the MAPU and the Christian Left (all still prohibited under the
constitution) co-aligned in the Party for Democracy (Partido por la Democracia, PPD),
led by Lagos; while other left-wing groups formed United Left (Izquierda Unida) in June
1987. UDI was present as well as National Renewal (Renovación Nacional, RN), a heir
apparent to the old Nationals that appeared in 1983 – both campaigned for the “yes”
option. Only the Communists rejected to participate (Collier & Sater 2004; Oppenheim
By 1988, the Christian Democrats were now willing to work with the left and the Socialists renounced to their revolutionary rhetoric, establishing a foundation for a broader coalition before the plebiscite (Valenzuela 1995, 53). The coalition becomes a reality in February, when Socialists, Christian Democrats and the other opposition parties joined forces into the Concertación de Partidos por el No. Later, on August 30, the junta announced that the plebiscite would be held on October 5, limiting the campaign to only one month; and that Pinochet would become a presidential candidate. Regime stalwarts had every reason to be confident in a resounding victory, but in reality a storm was gathering: RN expressed concern about the poor organization of the “yes” campaign; and Pinochet was unwilling to present himself as a vote-seeking politician, much to the chagrin of his advisers. Conversely, the Concertación carried a better organized campaign, delivered a message of political reconciliation and moderation, targeted young voters, received economic assistance from the United States (through the National Endowment for Democracy), and made an effective use of the scant media time given by the regime (Oppenheim 2007, 162; Collier & Sater 2004, 379-380; Angell 1993, 194-196).

Participation in the plebiscite was an overwhelming six million voters (equivalent to 97% of the register and 92% of the eligible voter population), and the results were equally remarkable: 43% voted “yes” and 55% voted “no”, with only 2% of the ballots null or void. The stunned regime did not concede defeat until early the next day. Although Pinochet promised to keep his transition timetable on schedule, he was also furious with the outcome of the plebiscite and was now intent to make the road to civilian
rule as cumbersome as possible. Thus began the Chilean democratic transition (Oppenheim 2007; Collier & Sater 2004, 380; Angell 1993, 195-196).

2. Party politics with a baggage (1989-present)

The months following the referendum were characterized in part by political negotiations between the regime and the opposition coalition, now renamed Concertación por la Democracia. During the early months of 1989, both sides agreed to a package of constitutional amendments that eliminated the restrictions on political parties, increased the number of elected senators from 26 to 38, facilitated constitutional amendments by abolishing the two-third legislative majority requirement, and temporarily shortened the presidential term to four years. The agreement fell short of the expectations of the Concertación, but the amendments were approved in a special referendum held in late July 1989 by 86% of the voters (Oppenheim 2007, 163; Collier & Sater 2004, 381).

Most importantly, the period after the referendum was also characterized by frenzied electoral activity. The Concertación created a common program and a legislative slate for the upcoming general election of December 1989, but choosing a presidential candidate proved to be more difficult. It was expected that the nominee would be a Christian Democrat, but the party had to settle a intense internal battle between Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, the son of the former president and a rising star within the party; and Patricio Aylwin, who was finally chosen on the coattails of his leadership during the referendum campaign. The Communists presented their own list of candidates, but declared their support to Aylwin. The right had five different parties presenting legislative slates, including RN and UDI; nevertheless, both parties agreed on the
nomination of former finance minister Hernán Büchi. A second right-wing candidate was millionaire Francisco Javier Errázturiz, who claimed to be a centrist and campaigned under the flag of his own political machine, Unión de Centro-Centro (Angell 1993, 197; Oppenheim 2007; Collier & Sater 2004, 380-381; Valenzuela 1995, 51).

Pinochet remained on the sidelines but enacted the so-called “tie-up laws” (leyes de amarre), by which there were restrictions imposed on the Congress to investigate and prosecute any violations committed by the regime, and he remained as chief of staff of the army until 1998, among other provisions. The Concertación opposed the laws at every turn, but not always successfully (Collier & Sater 2004, 381; Angell 1993, 197-198). Pinochet also enacted a new electoral law in which each Senate and Deputy district would be composed of two seats that could be won by a party slate provided that it obtained more than two thirds of the vote. That provision had the obvious intent of benefiting pro-regime parties, which could win single seats with minimal shares of the vote (Oppenheim 2007, 163). Despite the obstacles, the general election was another great triumph for the Concertación: Aylwin won the presidential election was won by with 55.2% of the vote against 29.4% for Büchi and 15.4% for Errázturiz. Concertación parties were also successful in the congressional election, winning 51.4% of the Deputy vote and 72 seats against the 34.1% and 48 seats obtained by the right-wing parties, which formed the Democracia y Progreso (DP) coalition. In the Senate, the Concertación won 22 seats and DP gained 16, but the nine non-elected senators appointed by Pinochet increased the pro-regime legislative bloc to 25 senators and deprived Aylwin of a legislative majority. Still, the electoral process was free and fair, participation surpassed 90%, and extremist parties on both left and right were virtually ignored by voters. Aylwin

Aylwin’s presidency – which concentrated in the areas of democracy consolidation, human rights, and socioeconomic aspects – was relatively effective, especially in the latter; indeed, the enacted policies (e.g., control of the money supply, a change in the exchange rate and, increased corporate and sales taxes) resulted in positive economic growth for 1992, 1993 and 1994. Most legislation was initiated by the executive branch, but the climate of compromise and cooperation between the Concertación and the right – which also had the intention of incorporating the latter into the new political system – facilitated passage and implementation. Aylwin also enacted a compensation scheme for victims of state repression, and created the Rettig Commission, which confirmed 2,279 cases of disappearances, tortures, and executions committed between 1973 and 1990 – half of them involving Socialists, Communists, and members of the MIR. However, Aylwin had to face the entrenched resistance of the still-powerful remnants of the regime: the Chilean courts took very few cases of human rights violations, and when the government proposed constitutional amendments between 1992 and 1993 right-wing parties blocked most of them (including the abolition of the non-elected Senate seats). Nevertheless, both sides agreed to schedule municipal elections for June 1992, in which the Concertación won 60% of the vote against 30% for the right-wing coalition, renamed Participación y Progreso17 (Collier & Sater 2004; Silva 2006, 453; Valenzuela 1994; Agüero 2003, 302; Oppenheim 2007, 108; Ministerio del Interior [2008a]).

17 Up to that point, all mayors were appointed by Pinochet (Collier & Sater 2004, 387).
All parties were preparing for the next presidential campaign by mid-1992. With Aylwin not aspiring for reelection, the Christian Democrats contemplated the possibility of nominating finance minister Alejandro Foxley, but a faction pushed for the nomination of Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle. His eventual victory over Foxley in the first-ever Christian Democratic primary worried the leftist elements of the Concertación, who wanted a Socialist to be the nominee even if it could give an opportunity to reactionaries. The issue was settled when Frei Ruiz-Tagle was chosen over Ricardo Lagos, Aylwin’s minister of education and the likeliest choice of the Socialists. Meanwhile, the right remained disunited: RN presented one of their young leaders as the presidential nominee, but the party itself was divided and UDI rejected the choice. Differences were reconciled when Arturo Alessandri Bresa, grandson of former president Arturo Alessandri, was nominated (Valenzuela 1994, 252-254; Collier & Sater 2004, 388). In the end, thanks to his own prestige and Aylwin’s accomplishments, Frei Ruiz-Tagle won the 1993 presidential election with 57.4% of the vote over Alessandri Bresa (24.7%). There were Senate elections in six regions of the country, and the Concertación won more than 1 million votes against the 700,000 gained by Unión por el Progreso de Chile (the right-wing coalition). The Concertación also won the Deputy election with 55.4% of the vote and 70 seats against the 36.6% and 50 seats gained by the right (Agüero 2003, 303; Valenzuela 1994, 254; Ministerio del Interior [2005c]; Ministerio del Interior [2005d]).

While Frei Ruiz-Tagle did not have an extensive political background and was hence not as admired for his political talent as his father was, he followed the same cautious approach of Aylwin and was able to set the course for reforms in the judicial system and municipal governments, the streamlining and modernization of the state
apparatus, and the subordination of the military to civilian authority. Frei Ruiz-Tagle inherited and expanded the economic growth initiated by Aylwin (in which the GDP increased 6.7% every year between 1994 and 1998, foreign debt obligations decreased, and there was an increase in foreign investment), but by 1998 he had to grapple with the aftermath of the Asian economic crisis of 1997 and with negative growth and rising unemployment by 1999. The government also attempted to amend the 1980 constitution, but the only implemented change was an amendment that reduced the presidential term from eight to six years, enacted in 1994 (Silva 2006). Cases of ranking officers of the secret police and Carabineros during the regime who eluded and even defied prosecution for human rights violations were another challenge in which the government was not always successful. In August 1996, a lawsuit was filed in Spain against Pinochet and others for the assassination in 1976 of a Spanish national employed by the Economic Commission for Latin America; the case was decided initially by the Chilean Supreme Court in favor of two secret police operatives previously found guilty of the murder. When that lawsuit was filed, the Chilean government protested. Also, after Pinochet retired as army chief of staff in March 1998, he was given the rank of chief of staff emeritus and sworn in as senator. There were controversies inside the Concertación caused by some of Frei Ruiz-Tagle’s decisions, but at least the coalition remained united (Skidmore & Smith 2005, 137; Collier & Sater 2004; Oppenheim 2007).

There were municipal elections in 1996, in which the Concertación was victorious over Unión por Chile (the right-wing coalition) but saw its share of the vote decrease to 56%. In those same elections, Joaquín Lavín won the reelection as mayor of a Santiago district with 77% of the vote, leading an attempt by UDI to displace RN as the standard-
bearer of the right (Collier & Sater 2004, 406; Ministerio del Interior [2008b]). The Concertación was the most voted bloc in the 1997 congressional elections (Ministerio del Interior [2005e], Ministerio del Interior [2005f]), but its share of the vote was of 50% and there were signals of rising voter skepticism – abstention was at 13.7% (with about 1 million potential young voters unwilling to register), and null votes registered 13.5% (Skidmore & Smith 2005, 137; Collier & Sater 2004, 406; Oppenheim 2007, 235). A number reasons explain the rise in negative votes: the mandatory character of suffrage, dissatisfaction with political alternatives (Agüero 2003, 298), the meager success of Concertación governments in consolidating democracy, fatigue after almost 10 years in power, accusations of grassroots demobilization in favor of elitist leadership, a decrease in the share of the Christian Democratic vote, and disregarded criticisms of neoliberal economics (Oppenheim 2007, 235).

Then, in 1998, Pinochet was indicted in Spain for human rights violations committed against Spanish citizens and placed under house arrest in the United Kingdom, pending an extradition hearing. After incessant requests from the Chilean government, Pinochet was declared medically unfit to stand trial and released after 16 months, hailed as a hero by his supporters upon his arrival to Chile (Silva 2006, 453-454; Skidmore & Smith 2005, 137-138). Pinochet’s arrest sparked a renewed interest within Chile in bringing a closure to human rights abuses and destroyed his invulnerability, since the Supreme Court revoked his congressional immunity and was placed under another house arrest in January 2001. However, Chilean justice declared him physically unfit to stand trial in Chile and charges against him were dismissed in 2002 (Silva 2006, 454; Collier & Sater 2004, 408; Oppenheim 2007).
The events had an effect on the 1999 presidential election, which was held shortly before: right-wing parties now dissociated themselves from Pinochet, and the Concertación did not incorporate human rights issues as part of its campaign. Both sides, however, still had to choose a nominee. RN leader Sebastián Piñera ambitioned being chosen candidate but withdrew in January 1999, clearing the way for the nomination of Joaquín Lavín. Inside the Concertación, the Socialists rallied behind Ricardo Lagos (Frei Ruiz-Tagle’s minister of public works), but Christian Democrat Andrés Zaldivar also vied for the nomination. Lagos was formally nominated after defeating Zaldivar in a primary held in May 1999 with 71% of the vote against 28%, but his concern with assembling a campaign team that represented all Concertación parties deprived his bid of much impetus. At the same time, Lavín’s allure as a non-partisan and effective administrator (especially amongst centrist voters and lower sectors affected by neoliberal economics) was overwhelming, Zaldivar was intensely courted by the right and even received the veiled support of Pinochet, and many right-wing activists were unnerved by Lagos’s candidacy (Agüero 2003; Collier & Sater 2004; Oppenheim 2007, 235-237). The election became close: Lagos won 47.9% of the vote, but Lavín forced a second round by winning 47.5%. The Concertación changed its campaign and was later reinforced with votes from unaffiliated left-wing militants and middle-class female Christian Democrats; as a result, Lagos won the second round with 51.3% of the vote against 48.7% for Lavín (Agüero 2003; Collier & Sater 2004, 409). After the presidential election, the Concertación dominated in the municipal elections by winning 52% of the vote against the 40% of Alianza por Chile (the right-wing coalition) (Ministerio del Interior [2008c]).
Lagos was immediately challenged by less-than-favorable economic conditions between 2000 and 2003, sowing seeds of doubt with neoliberal economics within the Concertación. Lagos decided did not challenge economic orthodoxy, and his steadfastness was rewarded: a free-trade agreement with the United States was signed in 2003 (although Chile had to make significant concessions), and counter-cyclical measures successfully reversed the general economic slowdown. Moreover, Lagos presided over a reduction in poverty levels and an increase in the minimum wage; but the areas of education, retirement pensions, and health care proved to be demanding policy areas. Indeed, the government aimed at providing minimal standards, increase funding, and expanding oversight; the legal and procedural frameworks instituted by the regime (i.e., privatization and deregulation) were difficult to change (Oppenheim 2007; The Economist, 3/31/05).

Regarding democratic consolidation, Lagos managed to do what none of his predecessors could: changes were made in the 1980 constitution to include the permanent suspension of the unelected Senate seats, reduce presidential terms from six to four years without immediate reelection, and by and large dismantling most of the structure bequeathed from Pinochet. The binomial electoral system remained untouched, but it was given the status of “organic law,” which hinted at the possibility of future changes. Civil-military relations improved with the admission by the armed forces of their commission of human rights violations during the regime, and the appointment in 2002 as Minister of Defense of Socialist Michelle Bachelet, the daughter of an air force general tortured by the military after the 1973 who died deceased while in custody and a victim of torture herself. Furthermore, after the confirmation by the National Commission on Political
Imprisonment and Torture of 28,000 cases of torture during the regime, the government enacted a compensation law favoring victims of repression in 2004 (Oppenheim 2007; *The Economist*, 9/15/05).

Alianza por Chile could not overcome the factionalism of the right, which reached new heights after an RN legislator made allegations of sexual misconduct against two UDI senators in 2003. UDI filed charges of slander against the legislator, and accused RN of damaging the popularity of Joaquin Lavín; his intervention in the crisis reduced tensions, but resulted in renewed hostilities between UDI and RN prior to the 2004 mayoral and town council elections (for which he appointed a committee to select the candidates). It was also revealed in a survey that Lavín’s intervention was not likely to improve the internal dynamics of the coalition, and was even hurting his chances for victory in the next presidential election (*The Economist*, 11/13/03; *The Economist*, 3/25/04). The Concertación won the majority in the elections, although the margin of victory was of 10 percentage points for town councils (47% to 37%) and of 7 percentage points for mayors (44% to 38%) (Ministerio del Interior [2008d], Ministerio del Interior [2008e]). Nevertheless, Concertación politicians were involved in political scandals, and citizens now began to shelter disappointment with the political class in general. At the same time, economic growth (6.3% by 2005) resulted in cultural changes that buttressed individualism and the idea that politics was irrelevant to everyday life, which magnified a lack of interest in politics that developed during Pinochet’s regime (Oppenheim 2007, 244-245).

The suddenly sour environment did not seem to hurt Lagos, who had a 70% approval rate by the time the 2005 electoral campaign began in earnest (Siavelis 2007,
There were many mitigating circumstances, but the Concertación could nevertheless count on Lagos’s popularity and his success in economic policy, political reform, and human rights. Nevertheless, the presidential nomination was unresolved for a time: with most male politicians in discredit because of political scandals, the likeliest nominees were Bachelet and Christian Democrat Soledad Alvear, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Alianza por Chile forced the Concertación’s hand: Lavín (UDI) was the favorite for the nomination, but on May 14 the RN declared its support to Sebastián Piñera, who supported the “no” option in the 1988 plebiscite and was convinced that he could attract centrist voters from the Concertación. Indeed, his entrance into the presidential race hurt Alvear’s popularity, forcing her to withdraw in May 2005; as a result, Bachelet was awarded the nomination for the Concertación – the first female presidential candidate. Both Lavín and Piñera were nominated as presidential candidates for the Alianza and agreed that whomever won the first round would be the chosen candidate for the run-off (Oppenheim 2007, 246-247; Siavelis 2007, 71; The Economist, 8/12/05; The Economist 1/12/06; The Economist, 5/19/05 Ministerio del Interior [2005i]).

Social equity and Bachelet herself were the major campaign issues; the Alianza portrayed her as unfit for office because of her limited political experience and personal characteristics (woman, agnostic, and single mother), but despite a less-than-stellar performance in the media she countered by asserting that being a non-typical candidate was a positive quality. Bachelet also promised to lead a participatory, grassroots-oriented government focused on human rights, which resonated even with Lavín and Piñera (who also made the same promise). In the first round of the presidential election, Bachelet won
46% of the vote, Piñera gathered 25%, and Lavín obtained 23%; although both right-wing candidates were far from Bachelet, she did not win the majority and a run-off round was scheduled. As agreed, the winner of the first round (Piñera) was chosen to represent the Alianza (Oppenheim 2007, 247-248; Ministerio del Interior [2005i]; The Economist, 12/8/05). In the meantime, supporters of leftist candidate Tomás Hirsch (who obtained 5% of the vote in the first round) and working class women who voted for Lavín switched their votes to Bachelet. Thanks to the influx of voters and Piñera’s difficulties in winning the lower class vote, Bachelet won the presidency with 53% of the vote – more than what Lagos obtained in 2000. In turn, Piñera’s 46% did not match Lavin’s share in the last election (Oppenheim 2007, 248; Ministerio del Interior [2005j]; Siavelis 2007, 71; The Economist, 12/8/05). The Concertación won more than 2.5 million votes for senators against 1.7 million for the Alianza (Ministerio del Interior [2005g]), as well as winning 51% of the Deputy vote and 65 seats against the 38% and 54 seats for the Alianza (Ministerio del Interior [2005h]).

Bachelet made public her intention to maintain the counter-cyclical measures enacted by Lagos and implement broad initiatives to deal with poverty and youth unemployment, a much-needed reform of the pension system, and human rights legislation. She also promised a renewal of the Cabinet and that policies like pension reform would be enacted with significant input from society, making good on her campaign promise of leading a participatory government (The Economist, 12/8/05; The Economist, 1/19/06; Oppenheim 2007, 250-251). Meanwhile, Pinochet died in December 2006 amidst the grief of his admirers and the scorn of his detractors. The government, mindful of Pinochet’s indictments for human rights violations and even tax evasion, did
not organize a state funeral and sent the Minister of Defense to a memorial service made by the military. Neither Lavín nor Piñera were present at that service, and the military chiefs of staff and the director of Carabineros sat with the minister and not with Pinochet’s surviving family (The Economist, 12/13/06).

There have been many successes (The Economist, 3/29/07; The Economist, 1/10/08), but challenges have sprung and still remain. After the electoral system was successfully downgraded to the status of organic law (Rubano Lapasta 2007, 369) and a presidential commission chaired by Christian Democrat Edgardo Boeninger advised to reform the system, the government announced its proposal to the effect in April 2007. However, RN was skeptical and UDI stiffly opposed (Oppenheim 2007, 250; Rubano Lapasta 2007, 370), even accusing the government of trying to shift attention from more immediate problems18. In a legislative session held last May, the government could not muster the necessary votes for passage of the electoral reform (60 out of 71 votes), although it was later announced that the proposal would be resubmitted at a later time19.

Also, in early 2008, the Minister of Education was impeached after the disappearance of $560 million from ministry accounts. While more indicative of faulty bookkeeping than of generalized corruption, it exposed an antiquated civil service system still operating under laws and procedures established during the regime, compounded by poor accountability and the impression that the Concertación has been utilizing state agencies for patronage and electioneering resources (The Economist, 5/15/08).

More challenges come from a more vocal civil society. Noteworthy episodes are a massive protest in 2006 – the largest since the 1980s – by schoolchildren demanding a better education policy (The Economist, 9/20/07), and popular anger against the haphazard implementation of a bus system for Santiago (The Economist, 3/29/07; The Economist, 1/10/08; The Economist, 10/30/08). Sustained economic growth and decreases in unemployment have emboldened labor unions and their memberships, have been pressing more forcefully for better salaries with the encouragement of the Communist Party, particularly since it was found in 2006 that about 1 million workers earned less than the minimum wage (The Economist 9/20/07). The Chilean economy has performed much better than many in the region, but current spasmodic growth and increases in inflation and the prices of oil and gas have roused popular disquiet with the government (The Economist, 9/20/07; The Economist, 1/10/08; The Economist, 10/30/08). Minor cases of corruption by Concertación politicians have also aroused disappointment (The Economist, 10/30/08), as well as Bachelet’s shortcomings as chief executive (The Economist, 1/10/08) and her inability to promote new leadership (The Economist, 10/30/08). Finally, the Concertación is plagued by the most serious infighting in its history: Bachelet’s calls for unity and an electoral pact with leftist organizations could compel Christian Democrats to switch their support to the Alianza. Lagos and Frei Ruiz-Tagle have been mentioned as possible presidential nominees, and José Miguel Insulza – currently the secretary-general of the Organization of American States – has also shown interest (The Economist, 10/30/08).

Bachelet has responded to the challenges by renovating her Cabinet three times (the last reshuffle was made last January) (The Economist, 3/29/07), but a March 2007
opinion poll found that 71% believed that Bachelet lacked authority, and that 61% did not have confidence in her capacity to handle crises (The Economist, 3/29/07). Yet the most sobering shock so far occurred in the municipal elections held last October: the Concertación won 45% of the town council vote, but the Alianza seized a narrow majority in the more numerous mayoral vote (41% against 39%) and was triumphant in 8 of the 14 regional capitals. It was the first-ever major loss for the Concertación in a nationwide election, buoying the confidence of the Alianza in a victory in the next presidential election – likely, on the shoulders of Sebastián Piñera, favored by opinion polls as the clear front-runner (The Economist, 10/30/08).

The best way to conclude this part of the chapter is to say that voters are on a bind: while they chastened the Concertación, they also skeptical about the Alianza and are said to be apathetic because of the binominal electoral system (The Economist, 10/30/08). The next presidential election will be the most significant electoral event since 1989 insofar as it will be a tug-of-war between a center-left showing the strains of two decades in power and a right that still has not won the full confidence of voters.

Theory and evidence in the Chilean case

1. The 1964 party system

   a. The antecedent condition

   Chile had political parties that behaved consistently with Downs’s notion of the vote maximizing government (that is, parties in power want reelection, and parties in the opposition want to be elected). At the same time, competition was not exactly for prestige and income, but for political power as a vehicle to advance specific ideas of the
good society – or for that matter, to enact specific policies. While parties made use of patronage and other perks to curry favor with voters, competition for the control of patronage by itself does not explain the hostile competition between the parties in this system. Moreover, there was no agreement on a political agenda as Sartori (1969) would argue because Chilean party politics was led by three mutually exclusive groups (center, left, and right), and later by two (left and right, or perhaps center-right). How all this came into being can be seen clearly when we analyze the exogenous variables that played a role in influencing party identification and partisan self-interest.

Perhaps the most obvious of these variables – but not necessarily the most important – are cleavages. In a rejoinder to Mainwaring (1999) and Dix (1989), the 1964 party system was influenced by cleavages that underscored party identification and signaled hypermobilization under Frei and Allende and its ancillary bitter political antagonisms. As Lipset & Rokkan have argued, those cleavages manifested alongside socioeconomic lines and generated political parties; indeed, Chilean party politics owes a part of its development to two junctures and they encouraged the creation of particular patterns of partisan interaction: class conflict in the early 20th century, from which Socialists and Communists appeared; and the extension of labor mobilization to the rural sector, from which the Christian Democrats emerged (Scully 1992). The second juncture was the most salient for the 1964 party system not just because of rural mobilization, but because Jorge Alessandri’s presidency ended amidst a clamor for significant economic and social change and the entrenchment of conservatism (Alexander 1978, 52). During the Allende years, that cleavage also had a policy dimension; that is, whether the state or the private sector was the most effective economic actor (Goldberg 1975, 105). The
existing ideological lines were ostensibly reflective of the crystallization of those attitudinal and behavioral cleavages: the nationalistic and often pro-clerical Chilean right was adamantly conservative on the basis of a yearning for the paternalistic order of most of the 19th century, while the left was generally sustained by individuals frustrated with their immediate socioeconomic situation (Caviedes 1979). In turn, the Christian Democrats portrayed themselves as a middle ground between those extremes in an attempt to become a programmatic centrist party (Scully 1992, 11) – at least at first.

Nevertheless, the picture is more complex, for party identification did not always follow sectarian considerations. It is true that the socioeconomic elites identified with the Nationals (Fleet 1985), that workers and peasants did so with the left (Caviedes 1978) and that the upwardly mobile (especially the small bourgeoisie) took sides with the Christian Democrats (Torcal & Mainwaring 2003), but not all members of the same social sector belonged to the same party because local party officials utilized ideology and material favors to attract a rather heterogeneous core of supporters (Goldberg 1975, 101-102). For instance, competition for the Catholic vote was manifest between Nationals and Christian Democrats, although most Catholics identified with the latter by 1964 (Scully 1992). By the same token, the left was found to be strong amongst urban and affluent enclaves, while the Christian Democrats were popular amongst the less affluent and the Nationals were appealing to the middle sectors (McDonald 1969, 467). Also, the left competed against the Christian Democrats for worker support as well (Zeitlin & Petras 1970, 16-18; Alexander 1978), giving ground to mutual distrust between workers (Fleet 1985) and diminishing cooperation between Socialists and Christian Democrats (Galván 2006, 129). Indeed, Chilean workers were not unified
behind any political position (Landsberger & McDaniel 1976, 503), although workers identified with the Christian Democrats were less sanguine against the left than the small bourgeois party leadership (Fleet 1985). Furthermore, not all of the small bourgeoisie identified with the Christian Democrats; many of them identified with the Socialists, but independent professionals identified with conservative parties (Fleet 1985, 33). The following tables restate the statements above by showing how these qualified antagonisms played out:

**Table 5.1: Occupational status of Chilean prospective voters by presidential candidate preference – August 1964 (in percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Managers and owners</th>
<th>Professionals, technicians, small businessmen</th>
<th>White-collar workers</th>
<th>Blue-collar workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allende (FRAP)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durán (FD)</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frei (CD)</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.2: Occupational status of Chilean prospective voters by presidential candidate preference – August 1970 (in percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Managers and owners</th>
<th>Professionals and technicians</th>
<th>White-collar workers</th>
<th>Blue-collar workers</th>
<th>Service workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alessandri (Nationals – RD)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomic (CD)</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allende (UP)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Fleet (1985)

In sum, **instead of qualifying the existing cleavages as class-based, a better description would be attitudinal and behavioral** (Rae & Taylor 1970) **rather than sociological** because it reflects more accurately how elements of the same socioeconomic sector identified with different parties. In other words, each segment had different attitudes about policy (reformism, social revolution, and conservatism) that translated
into particular forms of partisan identification\textsuperscript{20}. The internal fragmentation of the Christian Democrats (terceristas, rebeldes and oficia\llastile{illegible}) and the left (radicals vs. moderates) does not undermine the existence of these attitudinal and behavioral cleavages; in fact, it confirms them. The creation of MAPU is part and parcel of the larger gap between social revolution and reformism, and both Altamirano and Allende advocated for the “Chilean road to socialism” but differed in the means to the end.

The economic environment is another relevant exogenous factor. A very important aspect were the effects of economic policy set in motion by past governments (including Frei and the Christian Democrats): in general, the government subsidized the economic elite at the same time it provided benefits to lower sectors, increasing aggregate demand at a moment in which supply were low. The resulting inflation forced the government to enact occasional cuts in social spending, which occurred at the same time the Christian Democrats and the left were mobilizing the peasants and the urban poor. Moreover, economic development was based on import-substituting industries, reducing incentives for private investment and resulting in very modest increases in the GDP that coincided with the expansion of aggregate demand. The political effects of a contracting economy were that politicians were concerned with obtaining material benefits (i.e., specific policies) for their constituents, which in turn identified with parties that were the most likely to deliver them (Goldberg 1975, 103). Those rewards have been described as pork-barrel patronage (Ibid.), but it also makes sense to define them as Downs does with public policy broadly defined – as the utility voters expect to receive from parties and the condition parties must satisfy in order to maximize votes.

\textsuperscript{20} Caviedes (1979) argues that there were regional cleavages connected with those behavioral and attitudinal cleavages; for instance, UP gained a large measure of electoral support in 1970 from the mining areas.
The changing fortunes of political parties in congressional elections exemplify that finding: in 1965, the distance between the Christian Democrats and all other parties was much wider than the margin set in 1969, while the former’s vote share diminished in the intervening four-year span. Conversely, Socialists and Communists increased their share of the vote, the Radicals’ loss was relatively minor, and both Liberals and Conservatives reversed their 1965 setback as a single party (the Nationals). In general, partisan fortunes changed because political dynamics were connected to economic cycles that included interconnected aspects: 1. Government spending accelerated the economy but, without private investment, also increased financial burdens and the concomitant inflation; 2. Inflation forced cuts in social spending, resulting in voter realignment (Goldberg 1975, 103); 3. Social programs were a major mechanism for some to cope with socially-crippling structural poverty, and the spending cuts that undermined funding motivated voters to translate material demands into political demands that any other government alternative other than the party or coalition in power was expected to satisfy (Powers 1999). What all this means is that economic conditions compelled voters to identify with political parties that incorporated specific demands.

At the same time, those economic conditions were connected with the existing attitudinal and behavioral cleavages. That was apparent before the 1964 presidential election but more under Allende, when disputes in economic policymaking were bolstered by the opposition between conservatism, reformism and social revolution. It took the initial guise of constructive Christian Democratic opposition; for instance, a wealth tax imposed on any firm with a net worth 25 times the the minimum wage proposed by the UP was criticized by the Christian Democrats on the grounds of affecting
small and medium entrepreneurs instead of large firms. The Christian Democrats also supported copper nationalization, provided that debts incurred under Frei would be serviced and acquired rights such as concessions and retirement benefits would be honored. Eventually, constructive criticism gave way to open opposition after the Allende government announced its nationalization policy and the expansion of agrarian reform, which undermined the Christian Democrats’ efforts to extol the virtues of their communitarian views and to sway Allende into continuing with Frei’s agrarian policy. The fact that the UP implemented its program at an almost frenetic pace in order to expand their electoral support opened ground for an increasingly entrenched Christian Democratic opposition. For their part, the Nationals were against the UP because of redistribution and nationalization policies, but increasing Christian Democratic opposition to Allende resulted in closer ties between two political groups that were formerly at odds; indeed, the Hamilton-Fuentealba bill received key support from the Nationals at the committee stage (Fleet 1985). Christian Democrats and Nationals represented two different views about the private sector, but they equally opposed the preeminence given by the UP to the public sector.

The last relevant exogenous factor in this party system is state intervention in the forms of the electoral system in place and the composition of the government structure. The 1925 constitution (in place between 1964 and 1973) prescribed that the president had to be elected by an absolute majority, allowing for a special session of the Congress in which one of the two most voted candidates would be chosen (Article 63)\textsuperscript{21}. While the constitution did not completely suppress strong parliamentarism, the presidency had

broad policymaking powers and it was “thus an objective around which political forces could be rallied, as its capture meant access to the substantial resources and jurisdictions of the Chilean state (Fleet 1985, 34).” At the same time, the Congress retained the powers of appropriation and censure it acquired during the parliamentary years, and was composed of multimember districts subject to PR. The result was a variation of Rae’s third differential proposition: the plurality formula for presidential elections did not result in a two-party system because the multimember districts spread representation across a number of parties (McDonald 1969, 464), thus creating a multiparty system in terms of the total number of parties. This situation did not necessarily create strong minority parties as Rae concluded (the Christian Democrats won a much larger share of the Deputy vote in 1965 than all other parties), but it deprived presidents of a legislative majority and forced them to make concessions (Fleet 1985, 35).

That government structure encouraged the formation of coalitions in prior party systems, which was readily accepted as a pragmatic necessity and not as a better formula for governability (Scully 1992, 155); but in the case of this party system it promoted party identification as Campbell et. al. have argued. Moreover, changes in the electoral statutes enacted prior to 1964 (which barred coalitions) amplified that partisanship. First, the 1949 reforms greatly expanded the electorate – the percent of registered potential voters increased from 32.1% in 1940 to 41.1% in 1952, and the total number of registered voters ballooned from 612,000 to 1,105,000 in the same period. The electoral system was still rife with opportunities for illegal practices that were prohibited under the 1958 reforms, which ensured the secrecy and fairness of the vote and made party politics in the countryside more competitive. Subsequently, the reforms of 1962 – which made voter
registration mandatory and simplified that process – contributed to another enlargement of the electoral mass: the percent of potential voters who registered went from 54.3% in 1960 to 82.4% in 1970, and the total number of registered voters increased from 1,762,000 to 3,539,000 during the same period (Scully 1992).

Another relevant instance of state intervention (or perhaps inaction) had important consequences: reapportionment. Because legislative seats were determined by population, the Chilean government was instructed to reapportion congressional districts after completion of a population census, but that responsibility was deliberately ignored because of political considerations. The result was a representation imbalance between urban and rural areas: in Santiago province (where the national capital is located and which has four congressional districts), the minimum number of votes in 1970 to elect a deputy in its fast-growing and urban third district was 73,143 votes, but in the province of Ñuble (an agricultural area which had two districts) it required less than 16,000 votes to elect its deputies (Scully 1992, 152, table 4.11). Representation imbalance in favor of rural districts was a vestige of parliamentary domination (Fleet 1985, 35), but it was said to be offset by high political integration; the effects of multimember districts and the PR rule; and the lack of correlation between urbanization, income, political awareness, and voting (McDonald 1969). It also made rural voters a highly desirable prize (Scully 1992).

The main effect of these instances of state intervention or lack thereof is two-fold and much more pronounced when they interacted with attitudinal and behavioral cleavages. First, the expansion of the electorate and the prohibition of electoral irregularities promoted partisanship and created voters with strong party identifications. The following table sheds more light on that finding:
Table 5.3: Party preferences of Chilean voters (in percentages)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>+ 91.6</td>
<td>Unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>+ 5.3</td>
<td>+ 35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationals</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>- 36.2</td>
<td>+ 17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others /</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- 46.7</td>
<td>- 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP + CD +</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fleet (1985). Last row was adapted.

The second effect was that *it resulted in changes in how votes would be maximized*. The Radicals, for instance, could not adapt to the new electoral arena and eventually deteriorated; conversely, the Christian Democrats tapped into the traditional constituencies of left and right (Scully 1992, 145-147), for which their reformist positions were well suited. At the same time, the left and the Nationals also tried to shore up a diverse constituency supportive of their own ideologies and policy positions, although both parties also targeted more specific sectors. Finally, the politics of coalition building that were common before the 1964 party system were dispensed with in favor of a go-it-alone strategy because of an explosion in the electoral population caused by the 1949 and 1962 reforms (except for the concert between the Christian Democrats and the Nationals under CODE by the time of the 1973 congressional elections).

The intersection between partisan self-interest, cleavages, the economic environment, and state intervention did not just create a multiparty system in which partisanship was very intense, but also a highly polarized one ideologically and programmatically. Indeed, ideology was utilized as a weapon in the competition for office, vote maximization, and the satisfaction of partisan self-interest; hence, government parties resorted to a go-it-alone strategy that resulted in the ideological

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22 The Christian Democrats and the Nationals joined forces in CODE by the time of the 1973 congressional elections.
entrenchment of opposition parties (Scully 1992, 147) and – ironically – created parties with significant representational, affective, and organizational strength. Electoral strength seesawed between parties: the Christian Democrats were the legislative majority during the lifespan of the party system and won the municipal elections of 1967 and 1971, the left won the presidency in 1970, and the 1973 congressional election was won by the National-Christian Democratic coalition. In Mair’s assessment, alternation in government was not interrupted, access to it was not restricted, and political options were familiar.

b. Institutionalization and party system stability

An analysis of the institutionalization of the 1964 party system uncovers a contradiction. On the one hand, some analysts have characterized it as inelastic because the ideologization of the Christian Democrats prevented any compromise between the major parties and undermined governability as a consequence (Moulián 2002, 242). Similarly, the malicious opposition of the right, the Christian Democrats’ aligning from center to right, and disunity within the left (which weakened the government and left it wide open to criticism) has been said to provoke the same outcome (Oppenheim 2007, 95). What those assessments suggest, in other words, is that the breakdown of democracy in Chile was caused by polarization; it is not exactly the same argument proposed by Midlarsky (1984), Huntington (1968) and Powell Jr. (1981), but Chilean political parties did represent social forces, competition was not restrained by balance even if the political system retained some aspects of a parliamentary system, and there was visible support for an extremist party (i.e. the Communists). The facts of the case seem to provide a highly plausible case for that finding, which could also be substantiated by Sartori’s (1976)
admonition against polarized pluralism. Nevertheless, we should not conclude that the ostensibly multiparty quality of the system was the culprit for its collapse because polarization reduced fragmentation; indeed, Scully (1995) argues that this party system was a tripartite one, with the Christian Democrats, the left, and the right being its main forces. Neither is electoral volatility the cause because that polarization made for some distance between center and right, a much broader one between left and right, and much shorter distances between ideologically similar parties within left and right; thus, Roberts & Wibbels (1999) argument does not hold for this case. In any case, it is possible to propose – paraphrasing Ruiz Rodríguez (2006, 74) – that ideological and political polarization destroyed the toleration and compromise necessary for successful governability, which in turn undermined and weakened Chilean democracy.

On the other hand, what occurred to the 1964 party system is not consistent with a crisis of representation as defined by Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez (2006); to begin with, as much as 88.5% of Chileans identified with a political party (Angell 2007, 167, table 8.2) – either out of ideology or of patronage. In addition, the presidential candidate preferences by occupational status I presented in the analysis of the antecedent condition demonstrate that the party system was representative of social sectors, and the following percentages of positive and negative votes show that this party system was embedded in the polity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4: Positive vs. negative votes – Chilean presidential elections (1964 and 1970)
Table 5.5: Positive vs. negative votes – Chilean Senate elections (1965-1973)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>not available</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>not available</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6: Positive vs. negative votes – Chilean Deputy elections (1965-1973)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7: Positive vs. negative votes – Chilean municipal elections (1967 and 1971)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Adapted from Cruz-Coke (1984) and Political Database of the Americas (http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Elecdata/Chile/muni_totals.html).

Table 5.8: Positive vs. negative votes – Average for 1964 Chilean party system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate (1973)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputies</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although no information was available for the 1969 Senate election, the average of positive votes for the party system surpasses 50%, which indicates that voters were seemingly satisfied with the partisan offer and participated actively in electoral events. Curiously, the presidential election has a higher percentage of positive votes than all other elections; but it does not undermine the fact that voters were not apathetic. Another plausible proposition is that polarization incited voters to support political parties as vehicles for interest aggregation, mobilization, and participation in public affairs.
Regardless of which proposition is the most credible, it is obvious that both indicate the role played by the exogenous variables after the antecedent condition. In the case of cleavages, the existing attitudinal and behavioral divides embedded political parties in society. As I mentioned before, dimensions based on opinions and political membership underscored a period of hypermobilization that marked the presidencies of Frei and Allende; in the particular aspect of institutionalization, that emphasized citizen concerns. This does not ignore that party identification did not always follow strict sectarian lines, but it represented a step towards institutionalization as defined by Sitter (2002) and Bakke & Sitter (2005). However, cleavages also contributed to the zero-sum political game that characterized the party system, especially during the Allende years.

Whether the ideologization of the center was purposeful or unavoidable, it is true that parties became uncooperative (Galván 2006, 129); by the same token, that non-cooperation originated in different attitudes within each segment about the common good. As Karen Remmer mentions, it took the threat of a social revolution from below for the upper classes to dispense with Chile’s tradition of democratic politics, and for the military to carry out the 1973 coup (1980, 282); yet it should be remembered as well that most of the Chilean left were also willing to dispense with that tradition, as witnessed by the many episodes of contentious politics that occurred and the unwillingness of the left to negotiate with the Christian Democrats.

The role of the economic environment is also important because it connected parties to particular citizen demands. That was tantamount to organizational coherence and autonomy insofar as parties were able to aggregate interests at the local level; it also indicated that the parties had roots in society because politicians wanted to enact specific
economic policies for their sympathizers. Most importantly, those demands made certain political parties appealing to certain constituencies by inciting trust and confidence in their capacity to aggregate interests. On the other hand, since the economic environment could not be dissociated with attitudinal and behavioral cleavages, those demands became non-negotiable and their connection to existing cleavages and advancement by the parties became part and parcel of zero-sum politics. That was subjacent to why there were disagreements between the right and the Christian Democrats, and to the reaction to how Allende implemented the economic proposals that were part of the UP program (e.g., the Hamilton-Fuentealba bill). In other words, the ideological polarization represented by cleavages led to the programmatic polarization represented by economic policymaking.

Finally, state intervention (or lack thereof, in the case of reapportionment) provided structural incentives for the pattern of party interactions that characterized the party system; indeed, not only did the state legitimize political parties by extolling them in positive law (e.g., the 1925 constitution), but the policymaking powers of the presidency and the appropriation prerogatives of the national legislature were coveted political prizes that motivated political parties to organize. In addition, the representation imbalance in favor of rural districts and the expansion of the electorate contributed to the creation of coherent national organizations that could capture all voters. Ironically, as Caviedes (1979, 50) mentions, the prohibition of electoral pacts under the 1958 reforms is partly to blame for the polarization of the 1964 party system; though he does not mention the exact reasons, it is very likely that the effects of that prohibition were to preclude the electoral alliances that would have defused an otherwise unsustainable
situation. Most importantly, all those instances of state intervention compelled parties to resort to the go-it-alone strategy that stiffened disloyal opposition and contributed to make politics between 1964 and 1973 a zero-sum game.

In sum, the 1964 party system was not fully institutionalized despite the fact that there was no crisis of representation or disaffection towards political parties. To be sure, autonomy was high because no major social actor subverted the institution, complexity was also considerable because of the political incorporation of forces of all ideologies, and functional adaptability was also high because it became part of a process of reactivation of normal party politics after the anti-party presidencies of Ibáñez and Jorge Alessandri. However, the intensification of left-center-right polarization undermined coherence by encouraging disloyal opposition and diminishing interpersonal trust (as defined by Inglehart [1997]). Although there was an agreement on procedures (i.e., access to political power), the consensus on objectives or goals (Moulián 2002, 246) more characteristic of loyal opposition was absent. By the same token, there were other political actors on the left and the right who were more radical and did not agree on party politics as the best way to advance their interests, increasing political instability. Generational adaptability was perhaps at a medium level because established figures like Allende, Frei, and Alessandri shared the spotlight with previously unknown politicians such as Radomiro Tomic, but that was not as problematic as the problems caused by low coherence, which also contributed to low chronological adaptability.
2. The current party system
   
   a. The antecedent condition

   Chile is perhaps the only case in my sample in which there is an agreement between the major party coalitions – or what Tomás Moulián describes as a “basic consensus (2002, 246)” – on a common agenda. More precisely, there is a compromise on issues that were once divisive, such as the role of the state in the economy; in general, the coalitions seem to agree on diminished state intervention and their programmatic positions on the issue are very close to each other (Ruiz Rodríguez 2006). Similarly, there also seems to be an agreement on the central role of markets, private enterprise, and international trade (Moulián 2002, 246); in fact, the 2005 presidential election saw no major policy differences between the candidates and was instead characterized by consensus on free-market economics (Siavelis 2007, 72). The reasons for that compromise are found in the structural setting underlying Chilean democratization, in which capital remained strong and the political system was constrained by the “tie-up laws” enacted by Pinochet. With that, Concertación governments maintained a certain continuity with the “transformative project” of the Pinochet regime favored in turn by RN and UDI (even if the latter have sparred over how to defend that legacy and the right as a whole has had problematic relationships with the business sector) (Barrett 2000). Sartori’s (1969) argument is substantiated by this case, but only in part: no “maverick issues” are in sight, but programmatic compromise – as I will show – cannot be entirely explained by partisan agency.

   Having said that, the major coalitions can still be classified as self-interested actors because they “argue over the details of policies rather than the nature of the
policies themselves, let alone the legitimacy or not of the current government [...] (Angell 2007, 179).” Indeed, the party system still conforms to Downs’ (1957) logic of the vote-maximizing government: for the last two decades, the primary goal of the Concertación has been to remain elected and that of the Alianza has been to be elected. Nevertheless, competition seems not to be for the spoils of office and the satisfaction of party members; rather, competition is for control of the government for the purpose of satisfying voter self interest. As rational actors, the coalitions have initiated moves and countermoves with the purpose of winning elections and enact otherwise agreed-upon ideas as they see fit, but they were not made without paying attention to exogenous variables. The first of those variables are cleavages because Chileans are grouped in different blocs alongside attitudinal dimensions, which in turn stimulates party identification. There have been different interpretations of which are the pertinent cleavages, but they all agree in their political relevance.

Some research (e.g., Torcal & Mainwaring 2003, Moreno 1999, Agüero 2003, and Ruiz Rodríguez 2006) has argued that the cleavage between democracy and authoritarianism generates political passions deeper than other dimensions because it was during authoritarianism that the “transformative project” was created. In Moreno’s analysis, political parties showed clear distinctions in that dimension by 1990, with the Communists being extremely pro-democratic, the Socialists and the Christian Democrats representing a more moderate position, and both UDI and RN defending authoritarianism (1999, 139). The regime dimension also dominates the discriminant functions he has analyzed for the 1990-1993 period, with income dominating the second function (Moreno 1999, 125, table 4.3). Moreno concludes that this dimension ceases to be relevant as
democracy consolidates and Patricio Navia has speculated that with Pinochet gone there are no incentives for maintaining the Concertación together and the old three-way partisan division is likely to return (2006, 57-58), but Agüero (2003) believes that the regime dimension has created a two-way division between a pro-democratic left and a pro-authoritarian right. In fact, between 2001 and 2005, the Alianza favored authoritarianism in its program and the Concertación did not, while the related dimension of attitudes towards the armed forces generates the most programmatic polarization in comparison with other cleavages such as religiosity and is also proportional to ideology – that is, the right is pro-authoritarian and the left is anti-authoritarian. At the same time, Chilean parties have become more distinguishable ideologically (Ruiz Rodríguez 2006, 102), particularly the Alianza (Moulián 2002, 245); and there is less disagreement within the Concertación on the issue of the armed forces than on other issues (Ruiz Rodríguez 2006, 102, graph 3.3). It has been argued that the current party system has no polarity and parties are devoid of ideology (Moulián 2002), but the existence of this cleavage says otherwise.

The regime dimension is not the only relevant cleavage, and there are still differences of opinion within the Concertación; if there is a chance for a three-way party system to appear it would be by the hand of the Christian Democrats. Moreno’s discriminant functions for the 1995-1997 period and Ruiz Rodríguez’s analysis demonstrate the existence of post-materialist and liberal-fundamentalist dimensions; although the latter was not statistically significant in Moreno’s analysis, the existence of morality cleavages is not unwarranted because Chile is described in many analyses (e.g.,

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23 The exact finding is that the Chilean right does support democracy, but the difference with those who are not strongly committed to it is very narrow.
24 The Communists were not included in the analysis.
Htun 2003) as predominantly conservative and the Alianza and the Christian Democrats were more conservative than the Socialists and the PPD (Ruiz Rodriguez 2006, 94, graph 3.1). Other pertinent divisions were related to the armed forces and the legalization of political parties; in those, Alianza parties were more pro-military and less supportive of legalization than the Socialists, the Christian Democrats and the PPD (Ibid). Still, the authoritarianism / democracy dimension – and possibly the effects of the electoral system, as I will mention later – have so far precluded fragmentation within the Concertación and give Chilean party politics part of its identity.

Conversely, the role of post-materialism and class cleavages in the antecedent condition cannot be determined with precision because the evidence is ambiguous. There are clear distinctions in the post-materialist dimension (the Christian Democrats and the Alianza were programmatically less preoccupied with human rights issues than the Socialists and the PPD) and Latinobarómetro 2007 revealed that Chileans were more preoccupied by crime (a quality of life issue) than with unemployment, but there is inter-party consensus on environmental issues (Ruiz Rodriguez 2006, 94, graph 3.1). Scully (1995) argues that the class cleavage is prominent, and Latinobarómetro 2007 attests that it is still prominent:

| Table 5.9: Strength of cleavages in Chile (in percentages, “very strong” plus “strong”) |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Country                        | Rich / poor     | Owner / worker  | Racial | Gender |
| Chile                          | 75              | 74              | 50     | 49     |
| Latin America                  | 75              | 72              | 56     | 57     |

Source: Latinobarómetro 2007

Yet Torcal & Mainwaring (2003) argue that the class cleavage was absent from the reorganization of party politics by political elites during democratization partly because of the existing structural setting. In addition, the Alianza favors privatization and the
Concertación does not, but the issue of economic interventionism does not polarize them significantly (Ruiz Rodríguez 2006).

Of course, the unfettered expression of any cleavage can only happen in a democratic setting, and in that matter political culture is also pertinent because **voters and political elites underwent a critical political learning process that resulted not only in ideological changes, but also in a political culture that accepts the rules and legitimizes political parties as mechanisms for participation in public affairs**. Partisanship is intense (an average of 88% of voters have participated in all the elections held since 1989, as opposed to the 11% that abstained), but in general the experiences of the 1964 party system and Pinochet’s regime restated the critical importance of toleration and moderation, which have indeed influenced party interactions and stabilized the party system. In the case of the Chilean left, the 1973 coup initiated a renovation based on the realization that the advocacy of social issues during the prior party system had disastrous consequences. That involved not only the acceptance of the structural framework bequeathed from the regime and that Pinochet was untouchable, but also included the adoption of political consensus as an end in itself (Torcal & Mainwaring 2003, 81; Funk 2006, 113-114). The Chilean right, in turn, espouses the ideas and policies of the regime within the setting of democratic politics; in fact, political consensus has characterized the interactions between political coalitions (Funk, 2006, 114; Angell 2007, 179). Finally, there is a political subculture that incorporates an individualistic and a moralistic tone – that is, government must satisfy individual needs through limited intervention, but different details about that intervention compete for dominance in policymaking.
Indeed, state intervention is also pertinent because it provides incentives for identification with each major coalition and, more importantly, configures the current pattern of interactions. The present constitution guarantees the secret, equal, and mandatory character of the vote (Art. 15) but includes few explicit provisions elevating political parties to constitutional rank. Nevertheless, the latter is implicitly contemplated in Article 19, Section 15, which guarantees the freedom to peaceful assembly, prohibits political organizations inconsistent with the democratic system, orders political parties to adopt internal democracy mechanisms and disclose their finances, and bars them from monopolizing citizen participation and from intervening in activities alien to their normal functions. Articles 18 and 95 establish the creation of a public electoral system under the purview of the Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Calificador de Elecciones), itself constituted by four Supreme Court justices and a former president or vice-president of either the Chamber of Deputies or the Senate. The president is elected every four years by direct vote and absolute majority, with a run-off election to be held between the two most voted candidates (Art. 26) and no immediate reelection (Art. 25). Following Duverger’s ([1951] 1966) argument, this majority-based election rule creates the conditions for either a pure two-party system or two-party dynamics in a multiparty setting. In addition, all legislators are elected concurrently with the president (Art. 26) every four years by direct vote (Arts. 47 and 49), and the legislative terms for senators are of eight years (Art. 49). All Deputy seats (Art. 47) and a portion of Senate seats – odd-numbered regions first, then even-numbered regions and the Metropolitan Region\(^{25}\) (Art. 49) – are up for election. All legislators can be immediately reelected (Art. 51).

\(^{25}\) The Metropolitan Region is the official name of the district where the national capital – Santiago – is located.
It should not be forgotten that the current institutional framework originated in the years prior to Pinochet’s exit; hence, it was restrictive at first. A fascinating aspect that exemplifies that influence is the binomial formula utilized for legislative elections. The current system was created during the regime at the behest of individuals who believed that inter-party polarization was the main culprit for the instability prior to the 1973 coup (Siavelis 1997, 656), and it is the last of its institutions still standing (Oppenheim 2007, 250). Under such system, every senatorial and deputy district is composed of two seats, increasing vote thresholds significantly. In practice, that has motivated political parties to create coalitions, which can create particular lists for each contested seat. The election is then decided by majority rule and the two seats are given to the two most-voted party lists; for a single coalition to win both seats it must gather twice as many votes as its nearest competitor. The two candidates that will fill the seats are also decided by majority rule (Rubano Lapasta 2007, 370).

The effects of the electoral system are evident. The first is rather ambiguous: although Siavelis (2006) believes that the natural arrangement of the party system is a three-way division, the binomial system has led to the appearance of two large blocs – the Concertación and the Alianza – and reduced the number of legislative parties (Rubano Lapasta 2007, 370). The distance between parties and coalitions on the political regime and liberal / conservative cleavages correlate with that finding; in fact, the current electoral system is said to be the most appropriate structure for playing out those dyads (Angell 2007, 179). Although legislative multipartyism has not disappeared since the distribution of seats is still proportional (Rubano Lapasta 2007, 370; Aninat et. al. 2006, 23) and there has been as much as 5 effective parties at one point (IADB 1997, 127, table
2.1), the Concertación and the Alianza have won the majority of the vote in all elections held since 1989, as shown in the following tables:

**Table 5.10: Results of Chilean presidential elections (1989-2005) – in percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Concertación + Alianza</th>
<th>Others (combined)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 (first round)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 (first round)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gobierno de Chile, Ministerio del Interior ([2008f], [2008g], [2008h], and [2005i]). Note: Concertación / Alianza percentage for 2005 includes the combined share of Piñera (RN) and Lavín (UDI).

**Table 5.11: Results of Chilean Senate elections (1989-2005) – in percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Concertación + Alianza</th>
<th>Others (combined)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gobierno de Chile, Ministerio del Interior ([2005a], [2005c], [2005e], and [2005g]).

**Table 5.12: Results of Deputy elections (1989-2005) – in percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Concertación + Alianza</th>
<th>Others (combined)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>88</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gobierno de Chile, Ministerio del Interior ([2005b], [2005d], [2005f], and [2005h]).

**Table 5.13: Results of municipal elections – in percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Concertación + Alianza</th>
<th>Others (combined)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gobierno de Chile, Ministerio del Interior ([2008a], [2008b], and [2008c]).

**Table 5.14: Results of 2004 and 2008 mayoral elections – in percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Concertación + Alianza</th>
<th>Others (combined)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gobierno de Chile, Ministerio del Interior ([2008d] and [2008i]).
Some aspects are noteworthy. First, the two coalitions have received the most votes in presidential and legislative elections, while third parties have made inroads in local races; particularly, the Concertación / Alianza share of the mayoral and council vote shows a tendency to decrease. Second, the Concertación / Alianza share of the presidential vote is slightly larger than their separate shares of the senatorial and deputy vote. Finally, those shares display a tendency to seesaw: in those years when there were legislative elections in Santiago (1989, 1997, and 2005), the Concertación and the Alianza have lost votes to other parties, even though the variation is small. Nevertheless, the overall average for the current party system still favors the two major coalitions very significantly. Moulián refers to this situation as a type of predominance (*copamiento*) by the two coalitions (2002, 247).

The binomial system also provides opportunities for and restrictions to coalitional self-interest: national leaderships are strengthened through the creation of party lists, candidates have entrepreneurial incentives for responding to constituencies, party
platforms are driven away from the median voter\textsuperscript{26}, and intra-coalition discipline is high because of the stiff electoral penalties placed on defecting (Aninat \textit{et. al.} 2006; Angell 2007, 178). It is likely that the latter effect – in part – has prevented the Christian Democrats to resort to their prior go-it-alone strategy. Still, any polarizing effects caused by the system are tempered by the rules for presidential elections, which emphasize moderate candidacies and contributes to the internal cohesion of the coalitions\textsuperscript{27} through a negotiated nominating process (Aninat \textit{et. al.} 2006; Angell 2007, 178). At the same time, this predominance of the Concertación and the Alianza (combined with the high monetary costs of campaigning [Angell 2007, 182]) has undermined the electoral chances of parties located in the ideological extremes and deprived them of legislative representation (e.g., the Communist Party) (Moulián 2002). Finally, coalitions encourage close links between presidents and parties (Angell 2007, 178), which contributes to internal unity.

Another instance of state intervention is Law 18.603 of 1987, which regulates political parties. Despite being created and enacted during the regime, its first Article stipulates that political parties contribute to the constitutional democratic regime; although that does not necessarily extol party politics, it still establishes an important and encouraging systemic role for political parties. At the same time, the law states that the main activities of political parties are those related to the election of candidates for public office, “for which and with the objective of putting their principles and programmatic positions into practice, may participate in the electoral and plebiscitary processes in the

\textsuperscript{26} Moulián argues that party platforms actually target the median voter, making competition centripetal (2002, 248).

\textsuperscript{27} Aninat \textit{et. al.} also conclude that the informal rules for legislative workings have also strengthened intra-coalition unity (2006, 26-27).
form prescribed by the corresponding organic constitutional law (Article 2)\textsuperscript{28}. Any organization composed of at least 100 members can receive the status of a political party after being constituted in at least 8 regions or three adjacent ones (Arts. 3 and 4), and once registered it has 210 days for creating a membership of no less than 0.5\% of the voters that participated in the last Deputy election in the regions where the party is constituted (Art. 6). The sphere of action of political parties is limited to the regions where they are created (Art. 3), and all of them are required to maintain financial records (Art. 34). Finally, a party can lose its official status (among other causes) if it does not win 5\% of the Deputy vote, and if the total number of members decreases to less than 50\% of the prescribed threshold – all in at least 8 regions or three adjacent regions (Art. 42, Secs. 2 and 4).

In sum, the current Chilean party system has acquired a pattern that closely resembles a two-party system with an intense degree of partisanship. Despite the existence of many political parties and the claim that the party system is a moderate multiparty one (Rubano Lapasta 2007), most of them have joined Socialists, Christian Democrats, RN and the UDI in the Concertación and the Alianza because the binomial electoral system promotes the creation of coalitions and the authoritarianism / democracy cleavage which provides them with an identity. The Christian Democrats agree on different issues with different parties, but there is no indication that they will break this two-party tendency because of the salience of that cleavage, in which the Christian Democrats agree more with the Socialists than with RN and UDI. Social and political cleavages (both attitudinal) have given great representational and affective strength to the Concertación and the Alianza, which also have considerable organizational strength.

\textsuperscript{28} My translation.
thanks to the effects of the binomial electoral system. The Alianza has been the weakest in electoral strength for most of the party system, but its partially successful showing in the last local elections could indicate strengthening. Party interactions show a chasm between ideology and programmatic positions (Rubano Lapasta 2007), but individual parties can be placed in a left (Communists, Socialists, PPD) – center (Christian Democrats) – right (RN and UDI) continuum, especially regarding the liberal / conservative and political regime dimensions. Finally, party interactions are influenced by political culture beliefs that extol political compromise and toleration, which explains the apparent de-ideologization of parties.

b. Institutionalization and party system stability

Is this pattern of interactions institutionalized? Angell provides important and pertinent empirical facts to the effect: 80% of Chileans identified with a party in 1988, but that percentage decreased to 50% by 1996 (2007, 167, table 8.2). Whether party identification has decreased further or increased in the last 10 years or so is still an open question, but inter-coalitional consensus has resulted in a close control over the political agenda, which in turn discourages party identification (Ibid, 183). It is also true that Chileans do not trust political parties massively; Latinobarómetro 2007 found that only 20% trust political parties. What this seems to suggest is that the pattern of interactions established during democratization is only somewhat embedded in the polity because when voters do not identify with parties or do not trust them then party systems are pointless. Nevertheless, Angell also mentions that this situation occurs in the developed
world (2007, 164-168) without any negative effects on party system stability or democratic governability.

Most importantly, in terms of Sitter (2002) and Bakke & Sitter’s (2005) definition of self-interest, the Chilean party system has rooted itself in the polity as the major coalitions have displayed their rationality; indeed, the current behavior of Chilean political parties is similar to that of Eastern European parties after the fall of the Soviet bloc, as described by Bakke & Sitter (2005). It is true that political parties have had to exercise their rational capabilities within a structure created by the Pinochet regime, but it is unquestionable that they structure electoral choice and represent both government and opposition (Angell 2007). The following percentages of positive and negative votes provide more insight:

**Table 5.17: Positive vs. negative votes – Chilean presidential elections (1989-2005)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 (first round)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 (run-off)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 (first round)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 (run-off)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average 1964-1973</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.18: Positive vs. negative votes – Chilean Senate elections (1989-2005)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average 1964-1973 (Senate 1973)</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 5.19: Positive vs. negative votes – Chilean Deputy elections (1989-2005)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1964-1973</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.20: Positive vs. negative votes – Chilean municipal elections (1992-2000)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1964-1973</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.21: Positive vs. negative votes – Chilean mayoral elections (2004 and 2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.22: Positive vs. negative votes – Chilean town council elections (2004 and 2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Adapted from Nohlen (2005) and Gobierno de Chile, Ministerio del Interior ([2008k], [2008l], [2008m], [2008n], [2008o], [2008p], [2008q], [2008r], [2008s], [2008t], [2008u], [2008v], [2008w], [2008x], [2008y], [2008z], [2008aa], [2008bb], [2008cc], and [2008dd])

**Table 5.23a: Positive vs. negative votes – Average for current Chilean party system (without local elections)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Positive (valid) votes as percentage of registry</th>
<th>Negative votes (abstentions + null votes + blank votes) as percentage of registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (P + S + D + M)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 1964-1973</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.23b: Positive vs. negative votes – Average for current Chilean party system (all elections)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mayoral</th>
<th></th>
<th>Town council</th>
<th></th>
<th>Average (all elections)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Average 1964-1973</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were no positive and negative votes tabulated for some elections in the prior party system because of the unavailability of the necessary information, but the comparison with the current party system reveals important findings. One of them is that if we compare the two systems in presidential, legislative, and municipal elections, we see that the current system has a slightly larger percentage of positive votes. At the same time, Chileans are less willing to cast positive votes in the local elections celebrated since 2004, and for that reason the percentage of positive votes for the current party system decreases noticeably to just a percentage point over the prior system. But the most important conclusion is that the overall percentage of positive votes is significantly high, which leads to the following statement: despite diminished trust in political parties, **Chileans have not dispensed with political parties.** Angell is clear in that respect: shifting support and crises of public confidence cannot be confused as a shift in the basis of the party system (2007, 170).

Where can that basis be found? The answer is quite simple: the basis of the party system is the intersection between partisan self-interest, cleavages, political culture, and state intervention. Chile is perhaps the only case in Latin America where cross-cutting cleavages\(^\text{29}\) can be found, considering that differences in the religiosity and political regime dimensions coexist with compromise on economic dimensions. It could be reasonably argued that this overlapping has contributed to institutionalization by making the competition for power more flexible; in other words, **compromise in one cleavage**

---

\(^{29}\) According to Rae & Taylor (1970), cross-cutting cleavages are those that diminish the impact of other cleavages by allowing for a possibility of compromise between two previously divided groups.
**dimension has contributed to moderation in the political expression of other cleavage dimensions.** At the same time, *cleavages have contributed to the social implantation (i.e., roots in society) of political parties by representing existing attitudinal concerns.*

According to Angell (2007), one of the foundations for the stability of the party system is a continuum between left and right (or between left, center, and right) in which the share of the vote has shown remarkable consistency, caused by subcultures of party identification and traditions of commitment that have lasted longer than the actual ideologies. Latinobarómetro 2007 found that 29% of respondents did not respond to where they would place themselves ideologically, did not know or did not wish to do place themselves ideologically, but it also means that 71% of Chileans do have a position. Although that percentage is lower than the Latin American mean of 80%, it is nevertheless very significant. Likewise, the programmatic positions that generate the most politicization are the role of the military and religiosity, for which political parties and coalitions have taken visible sides. All this confirms one of Angell’s findings: Chilean political parties have structured electoral choice (2007, 177).

In the case of political culture, *the structuring of democracy by political parties resulted in the perpetuation of norms that encourage and sustain participation in public affairs, legitimizing them in the process.* Inglehart & Welzel argue that Chileans do not have self-expression values, which explains the low percentage of solid democrats between 1995 and 1998 (2003, 74, figure 4), but that finding contrasts very significantly with the levels of support for democracy found by the Latinobarómetro surveys, shown below:
The table shows that although satisfaction with democracy is low (34% on average) and support for democracy has gone below 50% in 2001 and 2005, democracy as a regime alternative remains in high regard – on average, 53% of Chileans prefer democracy to any other form of government. There was also a “generalized mistrust” amongst voters towards political parties, but by 1988 the parties managed to recover most of it; hence, “public opinion continues to recognize the role, in general, that parties play and considers it irreplaceable […] (Garretón 1990, 35-36).” That role is related to the still considerable support for democracy at the level of political culture: Latinobarómetro 2006 found that 53% of Chileans thought that democracy could not exist without parties, and that 54% believed that voting was efficacious for change.

It is nevertheless curious that Chileans equate democracy with political liberties and not with the right to vote, as revealed by Latinobarómetro 2005 and 2006; yet Chileans do equate democracy with the existence of political parties – a 1992 survey revealed that 63% agreed with the assertion that political parties are essential to democracy (Scully 1995). That support, however, may not wholesale because Chilean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democracy is preferable to any other form of government (%)</th>
<th>I am satisfied with democracy (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2007</td>
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*Table 5.24: Attitudes in Chile towards democracy*
society at the time of democratic transition neither gave unconditional allegiance nor accept the intervention of parties in non-political aspects (Garretón 1990, 35-36). More recent surveys reveal that trust in political parties did not surpass the 20% mark between 1996 and 2005 (Fuentes & Villar 2007, 19, graph), and Latinobarómetro 2007 revealed something similar; still, mistrust for political parties does not degenerate in rejection of political parties. Finally, regarding post-materialist attitudes and democracy, Inglehart & Welzel determined that only 40% were solidly committed to democracy because Chile had almost no self-expression values. It is one of the best correlations they present between support for democracy and post-materialism yet (the other being Peru), but the 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 waves of Latinobarómetro reveal that as much as three-quarters of respondents embrace the Churchillian notion of democracy (i.e., it is the worst form of government except for the alternatives).

Cross-cutting cleavages may have had an effect on party competition, but they are not the only explanation for its tendency towards moderation and compromise. In fact, the process of political learning that occurred between 1973 and 1989 contributed in the adoption by parties of two important element of democratic political culture – toleration and contingent consent. In that context, the existing cleavages have been crystallized by political parties, but their interactions along those lines are very different from the ideological polarization of the 1964 system; as mentioned before, the Concertación and the Alianza – while competing for power – have done so amicably. What occurred was that the harsh repression of opposition parties during the regime generated a network of inter-party solidarities that contributed to the rapprochement between the left and the Christian Democrats (Scully 1995, 123), while the Chilean right
was prompted by that same environment (as manifested by the arrest of Pinochet in 1998) to distance itself from the dictator and present themselves as a democratic alternative to the Concertación. With all that, one of Almond & Verba’s (1963) propositions has become a reality: partisanship should not be restricted, but at the same time has to be moderate enough to allow for responsible majorities. At the same time, there has to be noticeable differences between parties so voters can make meaningful choices, but those differences must always be kept within the limits set by governability (Coppedge 2001).

Finally, state intervention has contributed to the institutionalization of the party system by providing structural incentives for the interaction between parties, resulting in their legitimacy and creation of coherent and autonomous organizations. Although the Chilean constitution as it was enacted in 1980 did not specifically elevated political parties to constitutional rank, it did admit for their creation under the article legalizing peaceful assembly. Ironically, the regime which originally oversaw that constitutional article prohibited political parties and it was not until after 1989 that partisan activity reappeared, but that provision is still in force. Moreover, the binomial system has not only encouraged the creation of coalitions, but also contributed to the creation of internal organizations that facilitate their national presence and strengthen leadership cadres; indeed, the latter aspect confirms that Chilean political parties have also fulfilled their function of recruiting leaders and training elites (Angell 2007, 177). In addition, the binomial system discourages internal splits and reduces the possibility of internal disloyalty and factionalism through the demand for coalition politics and the close relationship between heads of state and partisan organizations, hence contributing to organizational coherence and autonomy.
In sum, the Chilean party system is institutionalized according to Huntington’s (1968) and even Mainwaring & Scully’s (1995) criteria. The latter measurement shows that the party system has partisan coalitions with legitimacy, deep roots in society, and coherent and autonomous organizations – all because of how cleavages, political culture, and the state have influenced the self-interested motivations of partisan organizations. In that sense, state permission (however grudging in writing) for partisan organizations to exist and do their functions, beliefs that sustain participation in public affairs and legitimize party politics as the best way to aggregate interests and mobilize, and societal divisions that encourage partisanship are the pillars of institutionalization after the authoritarian interlude. By the same token, in terms of Huntington’s criteria, the Chilean party system displays high values of chronological adaptability (some 20 years and counting), functional adaptability (intrinsic value), complexity (inclusion of leftist, rightist, and centrist political forces despite the relative exclusion of fringe elements like the Communists), autonomy (independence from narrower interests), and coherence (agreement on boundaries and especially on procedures). It is more difficult to ascertain if there is generational adaptability from the available information, but it is likely that the party system has seen some changes in leadership consistent with that criterion (e.g., how the leading role in the Concertación was passed from Aylwin to Frei, then to Lagos, and finally to Bachelet).
An assessment of alternative explanations

1. The number of parties

The 1964 party system was a multiparty one in terms of the number of parties, so it could be argued – as Sartori (1976) and Roberts & Wibbels (1999) would – that the events of September 11, 1973 were caused by multipartyism; in that sense, there was less distance between the competing parties, and more chances for electoral volatility. Yet in reality, the 1964 party system is not a case in point for the dangers of multipartyism. Rather, the pattern of interactions created centripetal forces that eventually became centrifugal. The centripetal forces were represented by the Christian Democrats, which were emboldened (some say forced) into governing without following the traditional custom of coalition politics. The centrifugal forces were represented by the left- and right-wing coalitions to which most of the other parties coalesced, which were unwilling to coalesce with the Christian Democrats and rejected their reformist agenda (it was only shortly before the 1973 coup that there was an alliance between Christian Democrats and the right, but only as a result of the power of centrifugal forces). Scully (1995) argues that the 1964 party system was a tripartite one, with the Christian Democrats and the two coalitions being its main forces; but it should be remembered that the same coalitional tactics transformed the party system into a two-party one by the time of the legislative election of 1973 (CODE vs. FUP). In the final analysis, multipartyism in and of itself was not the cause of collapse because fragmentation was minimal. There is still the argument advanced by Powell Jr. (1981): party systems that harbor extreme political parties are more prone to instability than those that do not. The 1964 party system had extremist political parties, and Allende’s election in 1970 emboldened the left and
aggravated the right to unprecedented levels, causing polarization. However, that statement seems to contain the very disadvantage of an analysis based solely on partisan self-interest: *it downplays the political developments that occurred before 1964* (i.e., the mobilization of workers and peasants, and the reaction of conservative forces). As I mentioned in chapter II, politics does not happen in a vacuum; partisan competition makes more sense when it is set against an existing social, political, and even economic context.

In the words of Scully, “[a]ny comparison of the pre- and post-Pinochet party systems shows unmistakable, underlying continuity, as well as important discontinuity (1995, 127).” On the one hand, the current system exhibits the same multiparty configuration, the same emphasis in coalition building, and the same ideological differentiations. However, “[w]hereas the 1973 breakdown […] had been preceded by an increasingly inflexible and polarized party system, the late 1980s saw the right seeking (albeit haltingly) political legitimacy, the left recommitted to procedural democracy, and the chastened political center searching for alliance partners (1995, 127-128).” Extremist groups and politicians remain (Communists and Pinochet admirers), but current party competition in Chile is predominantly centripetal, predominantly two-party, and much less polarized thanks to the presence of the exogenous variables of political culture, state intervention, and cleavages.

2. Political culture and the 1964 party system

The evidence pertaining to political culture as an exogenous factor relevant to the 1964 party system is ambiguous. On the one hand, it might have been reasonable to
expect the system to be a welcome change from years of anti-politics; more precisely, the assumption would be that Chilean political culture at that time was conducive to a stable party system because it was also sympathetic to democratic procedures more generally. If we remember the percentages of positive and negative votes, Almond & Verba’s (1963) characterization of democratic political culture seems validated; moreover, there was a moralistic political subculture that is consistent with an interpretation of democratic politics as sustained by public participation. Angell even points to the claim that the legitimization of political parties was not alien to Chileans because of its deep roots and longevity (2007, 177). Also, the Christian Democrats did control and dispense patronage to supporters; though it was much to the chagrin of opposition parties, it did establish links between the party and its sympathizers. The conclusion might have been that this party system – as far as political culture goes – was well on its way to institutionalization. On the other hand, what happened between 1964 and 1973 was the opposite thanks to the unwillingness of both left and right to negotiate with either the Christian Democrats or each other; that is, *a concept of loyal opposition, toleration, and moderation was absent*. Both blocks were intent on seizing power for the enactment of specific political agendas and ideologies – either the Marxist revolution or conservatism – and the rules of democracy (especially when giving opportunities to political enemies to seize power) were too cumbersome and delaying. Since Christian Democrats were not acceptable to either extreme, that created a mindset of lack of commitment to democratic procedures in both blocs. President Frei’s encouragement of grassroots political activity only served to encourage that mindset at the voter level.
In short, a situation of polarization caused by disagreements in economic policy and social cleavages undermined the norms of democratic political culture that sustained moderation and toleration, even if the electoral system in place encouraged partisanship. In that context, the legitimization of party politics in general that was expected after 1958 was actually weakened by contentious politics and disloyal opposition.

3. Cognitive mobilization

How is cognitive mobilization related to the Chilean case? A comparison between Chile and the United States – the same comparison I have made in the other cases – will provide the answer.

| Table 5.25: Enrollment in college (tertiary) education – Chile and the United States |
|----------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Chile                                | 43,608 | 78,430 | 286,962| 452,177| 661,142|
| US                                   | 5,526,325| 8,498,117| 14,359,000| 13,202,880| 17,487,475|

Note: Total for US in 1965 includes Puerto Rico, the Canal Zone, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. Total for US in 1991 is estimated.

| Table 5.26: Total population – Chile and the United States |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Chile                           | 8,600,000| 9,569,625| 13,418,921| 15,411,830| 16,465,420|
| US                              | 195,936,000| 205,052,000| 258,849,986| 284,857,068| 302,841,222|


| Table 5.27: Percentage of the total population enrolled in college education – Chile and the United States |
|------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Chile                                    | 0.005  | 0.008  | 2      | 2      | 4      |
| US                                       | 2      | 4      | 5      | 4      | 5      |
Table 5.28: Percentage of the labor force in the service sector – Chile and the United States

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<td>US</td>
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In general, the information provided by these tables do not substantiate cognitive mobilization for the 1973 party system and makes it inconclusive for the current system. The data for college enrollment shows that Chile lags consistently behind the US (more so in 1965 and 1970); that fact is very important to consider because 1970 was politically tumultuous, surpassed only by the following three years of extreme polarization. What this seems to conclude is that cognitive mobilization was absent and Chileans were hence unlikely to shed partisan allegiances. In other words, the Chilean electorate in the 1964 party system was highly mobilized and politically active despite having a very low percentage of the population enrolled in college. Two aspects explain this apparent contradiction: 1. Chile had a long tradition of partisan mobilization; and 2. Increased membership in labor unions, peasant organizations, and other similar groups in civil society during the presidencies of Frei and Allende translated into an increase in electoral participation, (3 million voters by 1973), giving Chile one of the highest levels of popular awareness and class consciousness (Remmer 1980). All that must be contrasted with the ideology of the Chilean right wing described by Caviedes (1979); when taken into consideration, it explains the high counter-mobilization that occurred at the same time the left was mobilized. In sum, *mobilization and counter-mobilization indicate the salience of external socialization rather than any aspect of cognitive mobilization.*

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30 These numbers were obtained through my own calculation of averages based on the percentages of males and females in the sector for the 1990-1992 and 2000-2005 periods.

31 See also Moreno (1999, 139).
College enrollment increased substantially from 1970, but for most of the span of the current system it did not match the total percentage for the United States (only 2% of the Chilean population was enrolled in 1991 and 2000). In that sense, Chileans neither dispensed with party politics nor did they acquire a party identification from college enrollment; more precisely, the percentages of positive votes are significant and the existence of the religiosity and authoritarianism / democracy cleavages (i.e., external socialization) have generated enough polarization for voters to shed any possible apathy. Nevertheless, 8% tries to convince acquaintances of their political views ( Corporación Latinobarómetro 2006), which seems to contradict that tendency. In sum, the case of the current Chilean party system does not sustain positive cognitive mobilization because the low percentages of college enrollment during most of the period are not consistent with the otherwise significant electoral participation. At the same time, the higher percentages for 2006 do not explain negative cognitive mobilization for the same reason. Finally, no service sector statistics pertinent to the 1964 party system could be found, but the ones collected between 1990 and 2005 show that employment – while significant – does match the US. This seems to correlate with the percentages of electoral participation registered since 1989, but not with the low percentages of interest in politics identified by the Latinobarómetro surveys.

4. Interpersonal trust

For the variable of interpersonal trust and the current party system, the Latinobarómetro surveys of 2004, 2006, and 2007 provide the following data:
Table 5.29: Interpersonal trust in Chile (in percentages)

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<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
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Note: This question was not included in the 2005 report.

Once again, the numbers do not provide a justification for interpersonal trust as a guarantor of party system stability; although they do not show a widespread tendency towards collective actions (particularly in 2007), neither do they correspond with the fact that there are political parties in existence, with constituencies sharing political views and very visible organizations. That latter statement is also inconsistent with Klesner’s (2007) finding that social capital in Chile is not very evident (its coefficient is 1.74, and it is indicated mostly by membership in labor unions, youth organizations, and cultural / educational groups).

No statistics for interpersonal trust were found for the 1964 party system, but presumably there was more reciprocity within the right than within the Christian Democrats and especially the leftist coalition; nevertheless, the division within the Christian Democrats was resolved through repeated schisms and the left remained more or less united by their opposition to both the Christian Democrats and the right. Hence, it does not seem that the lack of interpersonal trust had any effects on party identification. At the same time, the possibility of disloyal opposition as one of the main reasons for the demise of the 1964 party system is nevertheless very real: left and right were extremely disloyal to the Christian Democratic government, and RN was adamantly in opposition to the UP after 1970. In this particular case, Inglehart’s (1997) definition of the concept materializes in its entirety, since there was indeed no trust between the winners and the losers of the political race. However, that disloyalty cannot explain as much as it does without considering the social environment of preceding decades,
represented by cleavages and disagreements arising from the economic environment. After all, there had to be a reason for the lack of trust and the “sore loser” attitudes.

5. The economic environment and the current party system

The current Chilean party system has characteristics that make an economic environment explanation complicated to apply. Chile has had one of the most impressive economic performances of the democratization period –the economy grew at an average rate of 5% over a 25-year period, poverty was reduced from 40% in 1990 to 18% in 2003, and a number of socioeconomic analyses have revealed that the well-being of Chileans increased over the last decade (Neilson et. al. 2008, 251-252). Ironically, the origins of that performance go back to the neoliberal economic structure enacted during the Pinochet era; although it was shaken by external shocks such as the 1982 debt crisis, it did not create the conditions for the “political Darwinism” described by Coppedge (2001) because party (and democratic) politics were forbidden at that time. Neither did that situation force parties to adapt to new circumstances, as Burgess & Levitsky conclude more generally (2003).

On the other hand, Chilean democratization occurred in the midst of the economic structure bequeathed from Pinochet and some adaptation did occur. The patterns of interaction between parties were influenced by the economic structure (i.e., political consensus), but all sides interpreted the situation differently, presenting a set of nuances to Burgess & Levitsky’s argument. Right-wing parties (RN and UDI) did not need to adapt because they unquestionably supported neoliberalism (they still do); although differences remain in the scope and extent of neoliberal policies, a basic agreement is
nevertheless visible. The group that adapted was the left, which presumably had a reason (Pinochet’s influence made any successful challenge to the neoliberal structure impossible) and the organizational capability to adapt, and knew that the right still have sizeable electoral support. Nevertheless, the transformation of the patterns of interaction between parties at the start of democratization cannot be explained simply by a larger economic structure, but also by political culture aspects. Finally, in a rejoinder to Coppedge (2001), sustained economic growth after 1989 may have reduced stress over the party system, diminishing the need for parties to overcome their vulnerability, emphasize on certain characteristics, and adapt.

None of this means that Chile is impervious to poverty and inequality issues: other socioeconomic analyses revealed that there are concerns with labor instability, poor health insurance, lack of access to quality education, and an ineffective social security system. Regarding structural poverty, 46% of Chileans that were poor in 2001 were not in 1996, and this transit from one economic segment to the other is determined mainly by labor status and – in a lesser way – by household size, subsidies, other sources of income, and even health. In all, becoming poor is more likely if the head of the household had major health issues; if the household has a high number of children under 15 years of age; if the head of the household owns a business, is self-employed, or is an independent laborer; and where there is no technical education (Neilson et. al. 2008, 252-254).

Something that determines labor status (and, hence, the possibility of becoming poor) is the labor market flexibility intrinsic to neoliberal economics (Hershberg & Rosen 2006) because it is connected with changes in income: for instance, Neilson et. al. argue that public employees are more likely than most people with other occupations to exit poverty.
(2008, 266-267), but the downside is that those are the jobs most likely to be cut as a result of spending reductions. It is possible that the analysis of Powers (1999) has a direct relevance insofar as this situation may generate material interests that could be transformed into political interests, but that does not explain the string of consecutive wins of the Concertación. It is true that Concertación governments have steered the Chilean economy to success and that may have influenced voters, but it has also presided over the socioeconomic concerns expressed in the analyses and the entrance of new individuals into structural poverty. In that sense, the sudden lack of material needs and its intolerability has not been translated into political support for alternatives other than the Concertación. Ironically, those alternatives are limited to a different variation of neoliberal economics (i.e., RN and UDI).

**Conclusion**

The combination of the self-interested motives of parties, cleavages, the economic environment, and state intervention characterized competitive interactions in the 1964 party system and apparently set it on the course to institutionalization. Regarding causal complexity, prior electoral reforms that increased the electoral mass and enfranchised citizens with pre-existing attitudinal divides about economic policy made vote maximization competitive, and as a result parties recovered their centrality after two anti-partisan presidencies. However, given the climate of political mobilization, cleavages became so intractable and economic policy became too divisive; as a result, polarization intensified and the party and political systems collapse. Electoral rules did foster partisanship, but long-standing socioeconomic differences, a situation of
hypermobilization and lack of compromise between left and right wing groups, and their willingness to impose their ideologies and agendas by resorting to extra-constitutional methods resulted in the suspension of an extensive tradition of party politics.

For the current party system, the exogenous variables of cleavages, political culture, and state intervention are the most relevant influence over partisan self-interest. Causal complexity is also real: the natural dyadic character of the most salient cleavages and the binomial electoral system have resulted in the appearance and political predominance of the Concertación and Alianza, but they could nevertheless aggregate attitudinal and behavioral dimensions freely because the political system (notwithstanding its authoritarian origins and protracted reform) encourages democratic political culture, particularly the value of moderation. That latter aspect, in turn, originates from the experience of the Pinochet regime and the commitment made afterwards to prevent the same mistakes made during the prior system. At the same time, the predominance of both coalitions is buttressed by the idea that party politics is the most legal way to aggregate interests and effect political change, despite the fact that Chileans display the same mistrust against political parties evident in all of Latin America. The combination of self-interest and exogenous variables has led to a party system deeply embedded in society that does not show evident signs of instability.

It is true, as reflected in surveys and other studies, that Chileans are growing more skeptical of party politics, while critics of the current political system – and especially of its electoral system – express their concerns with what are perceived as structural inadequacies that place obstacles on electoral registration and create a non-representative legislature. Still, Chile has not seen the same crises that have beset other countries
because no major anti-system movement has won any significant attention for it to seize power through the existing party system. There is no visible indication that the current Chilean party system is breaking down like the 1958 Venezuelan system did. In that sense, Chile is setting an example.
Chapter VIII  
THE CASE STUDIES IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

In this chapter, I will make a comparison of all the cases as a way to determine if the main hypothesis and the model presented in chapter III hold. This comparison is divided in two parts: the first part will describe and analyze how the individual variables mentioned as part of my model played out in each of the case studies, and the second part will restate the conclusions arrived at in the individual case studies and make statements about the plausibility of my model and its applicability to the cases. Both parts are connected and underscore important statements that lead to the main conclusions of my project.

The exogenous and endogenous factors

1. The endogenous factors

In terms of the number of parties, all of the party systems that preceded the current ones in the analyzed countries (Venezuela 1958, Chile 1964, Argentina 1973, and Peru 1980) were multiparty systems in terms of the total number of parties. An intuitive statement with connection to existing theory is that these instances of multipartyism might have been the cause of the demise of all prior party systems because of increased polarization (Roberts & Wibbels 1999), the existence of extremist parties (Powell Jr. 1981), the lack of a structural stabilizing force (Midlarski 1984), and / or inherent tendencies to paralysis (Sartori 1976). That statement is particularly appealing because Venezuela and Chile did have extremist parties (the Communists), the Chilean Christian Democrats did not become an equalizing force, and sociopolitical polarization was
evident in the cases of Peru, Chile, and Argentina. At the very least, the facts presented in all cases seem to point to a correlation between multipartyism and instability.

Nevertheless, a closer look at all those cases reveals that there were influences that either minimized vote dispersion or reduced the number of competitive parties. In short, the dynamics of all those party systems were very different from multipartyism; hence, its alleged negative effects were not present. Stated differently, the number of parties by itself does not constitute a reasonable indicator of the internal dynamics of those party systems, since the dynamics among them are influenced by the exogenous variables. The four party systems can hence be classified in the following categories:

- **Multiparty systems with two-party dynamics**: Punto Fijo Venezuela had AD and COPEI as major forces, and in Argentina UCR and Peronism (FREJULI) commanded the largest electoral loyalties. In Chile, the collusion between RN and the Christian Democrats into the CODE coalition prior to the 1973 coup made the system a purely two-party one – if only briefly – since the other major force was the leftist FUP.

- **Moderate fragmentation**: The Peruvian party system of 1980 was more fragmented, but multipartyism was actually more moderate because of all the registered parties (as much as 15 in one presidential election) APRA, AP, IU, and PPC received the largest share of the votes. The 1964 Chilean system was also fragmented, but coalition politics reduced the number of electoral parties by combining ideologically compatible organizations into large blocs (RN and FRAP / UP / FUP). The only exception were the Christian Democrats: since they were
not included in any coalition until the legislative election of 1973, the party system had a moderate multiparty character.

As far as party system collapse is concerned, the argument brought by the number-of-parties variant of the endogenous explanation is that party systems with a manageable number of parties (preferably two) are inherently more stable than extreme multiparty ones. However, since those party systems were not necessarily multiparty, collapse took one of two forms:

- **Crisis of representation:** In the Venezuelan case, two-party dynamics that would normally be stabilizing became a liability because of the many flaws it condoned, and in the Peruvian case the four major parties simply alienated themselves from important public concerns. That finding from the Peruvian case is very crucial since its party system was a multiparty one in terms of the number of parties and the corresponding variant of the endogenous explanation is not sympathetic to multiparty systems. In both cases, disenchantment with mainstream party politics – regardless of how many parties were there – was evident and generalized, resulting in the appearance of figures like Hugo Chávez and Alberto Fujimori.

- **Crisis of democratic governability:** In the cases of Argentina and Chile, hypermobilization and hyperpolarization changed attitudes in critical political actors and made them less willing to engage in democratic politics; thus, the party systems were either misused (Chile) or made irrelevant (Argentina). Nevertheless, hypermobilization and especially hyperpolarization were a by-product of larger societal factors that made their way into party interactions.
The current party systems are multiparty; for instance, Perú had 20 political parties competing in the 2006 presidential election, and Argentina had 17 in the 2007 election. However, in most cases their internal dynamics do not tend towards instability. The following statements indicate why:

- **The electoral system:** The Venezuelan party system can be characterized as a predominant-party one because MVR / PSUV (the party in government) openly discourages political opposition, notwithstanding that the parties of puntofijismo (especially AD and COPEI) are still active. These hegemonic-party dynamics, however, are a product of the electoral system, which is biased in favor of the government party. In both stages of the Argentine party system, the reductive tendencies of PR created in part the two-party dynamics of the first stage and the moderate-to-high fragmentation of the current stage. In Chile, the binomial system has also generated reductive effects because it encourages inter-party coalitions, resulting in a two-party system.

- **Cleavages:** In Chile, cleavages such as religiosity and democracy vs. authoritarianism are naturally conducive to two-party dynamics, as it has been the case. In turn, the first stage of the Argentine party system also had divides (UCR vs. PJ, Menemism vs. anti-Menemism) that shifted attention to a reduced number of parties.

- **Political culture:** The near collapse of the system during the crisis of 2001-2002 was caused a severe decrease in popular trust and not by the numerical configuration of the system during its first stage. Although the Argentine party system is currently fragmented as a consequence of the crisis, it has been argued
that it actually demonstrates the resilience of electoral politics by providing avenues for the expression of otherwise ignored interests.

The Peruvian party system is one likely exception. Its multiparty character, with no consistent major forces in sight, has generated preoccupation because of the possibility of executives with no legislative majorities (Tanaka 2005) and electoral volatility; yet the most important issue issue is not how many parties are there, but what some new parties represent (i.e., the “politics of anti-politics”). In this particular case, multipartyism by itself will not create the conditions for the collapse of this party system.

Since I presented the assumption of partisan self-interest or rationality in chapter III as very plausible, this section will simply buttress that claim. Most importantly, some of the examples I will mention to substantiate it indicate that all political parties in the prior systems (including the Chilean party coalitions) can be classified indeed as self-interested actors in Downs’ (1957) sense (i.e., the vote-maximizing government). Just by being political parties, they aggregated interests and mobilized supporters on those lines, and had the main goal of placing people in positions of power (i.e., either access to it or a share of it). In some cases, partisan self-interest was encouraged as part of processes of democratization, before which party competition was restricted (Pérez Jiménez dictatorship in Venezuela, the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces in Peru, and the 1966 military regime in Argentina). Chile represents a partial exception because there were no interruptions of regular party competition immediately prior to the onset of the 1964 party system, but the two presidents elected before that year (Carlos Ibáñez del Campo and Jorge Alessandri) nevertheless represented a brief period of anti-party sentiment. There is, however, variation between parties in the prior systems on
their motivation for displaying their self-interest. That claim can be categorized as follows:

- **The spoils of office**: The cases of Punto Fijo Venezuela and the 1980 Peruvian system are the closest to Downs’ notions of partisan rationality. More precisely, the collusion of AD and COPEI into the “‘adecopeyano’ establishment” transformed their competition in one for control of patronage for the benefit of party members and supporters, while Peruvian parties (especially APRA and AP) and individual politicians quarreled for the spoils of office. Partially confirming Maor’s (1997) interpretation of Sartori, partisan self-interest might have provoked a “maverick issue” in both systems (i.e., the alienation of party organizations from pressing concerns at the citizen level, which undermined trust in mainstream political parties and sparked crises of representation), but there was no agreement between the major Peruvian parties on a common agenda as there was between AD and COPEI in Venezuela.

- **Control of the government for ideological or programmatic purposes**: In the other prior party systems (Argentina 1973 and Chile 1964), the composing political parties / coalitions were eager vote maximizers that nevertheless did not share a political agenda just like their Peruvian counterparts, but their competition for state power was not for the purpose of taking over the government for the purpose of enacting policies and satisfy voter self-interest, particularly at a time when political polarization (ideological and programmatic) was high. The 1973 Argentine party system is a partial exception because of the newfound political compromise between UCR and FREJULI, but that did not dampen the
competition between both parties in the two elections held that year (it did so afterwards).

Parties in the current systems are no different from the ones in the prior systems in terms of their character as rational actors, the variation in their motivations, and in the larger context where they display their self-interest:

- In the Chilean party system, the Concertación and the Alianza disagree on significant aspects such as religiosity and the legacy of Pinochet’s regime, but the need to maximize votes has not been set aside because competition is for control of the government for the materialization of different positions. There is a basic agreement between coalitions on economic policy, but they nevertheless have different variations of it competing for dominance in policymaking.

- Venezuela has an average of positive votes that is significantly lower than during puntofijismo, but the presidential contests (which have less negative votes) open the door for the maximization of votes associated with partisan self-interest. The reason is that interest is defined in this case not as the conquest of the spoils of office but as part of a tug-of-war between chavismo and its detractors.

- In the first phase of the Argentine system, UCR and PJ were competing for the control of patronage dispensation (even though PJ was the likeliest to depend on it). Even if the 2001-2002 crisis has affected the party system noticeably, the existing parties still try to outperform each other, following Downs’s logic of the vote-maximizing government (the many factions of Peronism want to remain elected, while opposition parties look forward to be elected).
• Partisan self-interest is also present in the current Peruvian party system in a number of ways: mainstream parties still seek voters, but so do the many other organizations created after Fujimori’s demise. For the latter, the objective is to legitimize their claims against the political establishment.

Regarding agreement between the parties on a specific agenda, the Peruvian and particularly the Venezuelan party system do not display that characteristic. The first phase of the Argentine party system has neither seen such agreement because of the cleavage between Peronism and anti-Peronism. Conversely, the Chilean party system and the current phase of its Argentine counterpart have parties that have found a convergence.

2. The exogenous variables

As I stated in the literature review, the exogenous variables are fundamental for explaining party system stability in two ways: they make more sense than the number of parties as a possible explanatory variable, and they fill an important gap in analyses centered on partisan self-interest. In this section, I will describe and analyze how pertinent are those exogenous variables for all cases.

First of all, the influence of cleavages can be found in most of the prior party systems, which indicates that vote maximization was based (in part) on societal divisions that encouraged voters to identify with representative parties. At the same time, cleavages embedded parties in society; at the very least, they made parties into entities familiar to citizens. The pertinent cleavages took several forms:

• Sociological (Lipset & Rokkan 1967): Although Mainwaring (1999) has argued that cleavages have very limited applicability to “third wave” democracies
because social classes are fragmented, some cases challenge that statement: in the 1980 Peruvian system (which came about early in the “third wave”), the four major political parties (APRA, AP, PPC, and IU) represented different socioeconomic sectors (the wealthy, the middle class, and the poor). Dix (1989) has concluded that only Chile and Argentina represent cases in which cleavages were crystallized by party organizations, but Peru can be included in that category. In the more specific case of the Argentine party system of 1973, FREJULI was supported by lower sectors and UCR had the backing of middle sectors.

- **Attitudinal / behavioral** (Rae & Taylor 1970): In Chile, the main cleavage was between left, center, and right (shortly before the 1973 coup, it became left vs. right). The reason why this cleavage was not sociological is that there were social sectors that supported different parties; for instance, many laborers had inclinations for Socialism, but others supported Christian Democracy.

The lone exception is Punto Fijo Venezuela, where sociological cleavages were diluted in part by economic development and party identification was based on other considerations. The effects of economic development cannot be underestimated: the distribution of oil profits led to increased urbanization and cultural changes that defused prior societal divisions (center / periphery, urban / rural, and traditional / modern culture). Cleavages were also diluted by the penetration of AD and COPEI into civil society and the resulting co-optation of otherwise independent organizations; and by the political compromise associated with the Punto Fijo agreement, which was reflected in certain instances of policymaking. As a result, any attitudinal or behavioral differentiation ceased
to become relevant and competition between the major parties was based on control of the patronage machinery of the Venezuelan state. Other parties (e.g., PCV and LCR) mobilized around socioeconomic issues that could be considered “mavericks,” but were not able to alter these dynamics. That picture would change by the late 1990s.

A closer look at how and why the prior party systems collapsed reveals that *not every system was affected by any crisis of governability that can be associated with cleavages*. Only Argentina and Chile are consistent with the crisis of governability: In the case of Argentina, even if Juan Domingo Perón agreed to participate in *La Hora del Pueblo* with long-time nemesis Ricardo Balbín, the more radical segments of Peronism (the youth, the CGT, and the *montoneros*) were widely disliked outside the movement, reinforcing an antagonistic attitude that originated after the coup that deposed Perón in 1955. The same deep dislike can be seen in Chile between 1964 and 1973 between the left, the Christian Democrats, and the right. The instability that resulted hastened the onset of authoritarianism in both countries (Chile in 1973, and Argentina in 1976). Punto Fijo Venezuela was devoid for the most part of meaningful cleavages; hence, the collapse of its party system cannot be associated with hyperpolarization. Attitudinal dimensions regarding the political and economic systems were definitely present in the years before Hugo Chávez’s election in 1998, but they did not generate enough divergence to cause instability. The case of the Peruvian party system of 1980 is similar: Tanaka (1998) mentions that despite the existence of an ideologized and polarized party system what caused its collapse was not a crisis of governability.

For the current party systems, *existing cleavages are mostly attitudinal and behavioral*, as presented in the following points:
• *Attitudinal and behavioral*: The most visible cleavage in Venezuela is between authoritarianism and democracy, with *chavismo* and its opposition representing competition for power as part of a larger political confrontation and not for its own sake. In Chile, the religiosity and democracy / authoritarianism dimensions incite party identification and draw visible lines between coalitions, although the Christian Democrats have adopted different positions in each one and there are differences between coalitions on the minutiae of the otherwise agreed-upon subject of neoliberal economics. Argentina has seen several major cleavages in one party system (Peronism vs. anti-Peronism, Menemism vs. anti-Menemism, and a dimension that combines a left / center / right continuum with a divide between middle class and lower sectors), but they are all attitudinal and behavioral.

• *Attitudinal, behavioral, and ascriptive*: In Peru, cleavages are based not just on opinions and partisanship, but on aspects such as ethnicity. Moreover, there is evidence that different parties have embraced different sectors of the electorate (the 2006 presidential election), but those cleavages also represent incentives for anti-political discourses because they point to preconditions that can lead to another crisis of representation if left unattended. At the very least, they fuel the fires of the “politics of anti-politics,” and if it has not reached critical levels it is because there is no single anti-politician that can mobilize the disaffected as Fujimori did.
Perhaps the most important conclusion from this analysis relates to how we should define cleavages—either in Lipset & Rokkan’s terms or in Rae & Taylor’s. I will revisit this statement in the conclusion of this project.

In terms of political culture, its relevance to the prior party systems can be categorized as follows:

- **Visible**: In the cases of Venezuela and Peru, citizens supported party politics as a welcome change from authoritarianism. In that sense, citizens did adopt Almond & Verba’s (1963) concept of democratic political culture—i.e., participation in public affairs—thanks to past experience and the efforts of the political class. Encouragement to participate ranged from how the solution of chronic socioeconomic problems was incorporated by ideology-based parties (Peru) to profits from the oil industry transformed into patronage (Venezuela); but citizens heeded the call. In the case of Venezuela, that type of encouragement made the major parties familiar to citizens instead of cleavages. Most importantly, political culture was embedded deeply enough in both countries to sustain a belief in party interactions as an acceptable form of political behavior. In short, their crises of representation were resolved through party politics and voters only rejected mainstream parties. That explains why Chávez (controversial as he is) and Fujimori (for all the dictatorial tendencies he had) were elected through a party system and did not seize power through non-constitutional means. By the same token, support for military coups was very minimal in both countries.

- **Contradictory**: In the cases of Argentina and Chile, political culture was not entirely favorable to party politics. On the one hand, both countries reinstated
normal party competition as part of a democratization process (Argentina) or to substitute for an anti-party period (Chile), and the percentages of positive votes were very considerable. On the other hand, conditions in both countries were not conducive to the successful implantation of a democratic political culture. In the case of Chile, disloyal opposition was rampant and the existing political parties were unwilling to compromise with each other and accept the contingent consent that defines democratic political competition (see Schmitter & Karl [1991] 2006), while most of the left was engaged in contentious politics and the right was openly advocating for a coup. The result, as I hinted elsewhere, was the misuse of party politics. In the case of Argentina, the mainstream segment of Peronism and UCR agreed on a political truce, but the most extreme elements of Peronism were still agitating and aroused open contempt from critical political actors (the elites and the military). That context pushed aside party politics as the most legitimate way to aggregate interests.

In the case of the current party systems, the relevance of political culture is very visible, although there is variation between countries in the terms to which it supports party politics. Political parties are among the least trusted political institutions in all four countries and satisfaction with democracy is low, but citizens do not hesitate in preferring democracy over other forms of government. It is such preference what facilitates the adoption of of political parties as mechanisms for interest aggregation, although the specific reasons for that belief vary in the four countries. In two cases (Argentina and Chile) democratic political culture came hand in hand with a transition from authoritarianism, although in Chile democratic consolidation took longer. In both cases,
however, the implantation of democratic political culture has been deep because past non-democracies (Pinochet in Chile and the Argentine Proceso) galvanized the need for political learning (i.e., to break with the past and practice toleration and moderation). In the specific case of Argentina, patronage politics and bossism were as effective as political learning in institutionalizing the party system to a point that has guaranteed its survival (however precarious) of the 2001-2002 crisis. In Venezuela, the public is still encouraged – either by behavioral cleavages or through clientelism – to participate in political affairs either in support of of chavismo or opposing it. Peru, on the other hand, is the most worrisome case: while party politics is still practiced, the “politics of anti-politics” has become one foundation for it.

Cognitive mobilization points to a different set of conclusions: the facts from the prior party systems contradict its main assumptions, and voter behavior in the current party systems makes its application difficult and inconclusive at this point. I will now incorporate some the percentages found for the four cases and compare them with statistics from the United States in order to provide more insight into that conclusion. As I did in the case studies, I will start with college enrollment statistics. Because the case studies include the total number of students enrolled in college and the representative percentage of the population for different years, I have averaged the latter statistic as shown below:\(^1\):

\(^1\) In the case of the US, the average was calculated from percentages for all years for which there is a comparison with the Latin American cases.
Table 6.1: Average percentage of enrollment in college education (all years, observed countries and the United States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-country average</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2: Average percentage of enrollment in college education (prior party systems and the United States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-1998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-1976</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-1973</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-country average</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3: Average percentage of enrollment in college education (current party systems and the United States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-country average</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I defined cognitive mobilization in chapter II as a theory that focuses on increased access to formal education and employment in the service sector as determinants of involvement in politics by giving society an increased capability for processing information and increasing their overall interest. In addition, I remarked that the effects of this increased capability can be seen differently – either as a discouragement for party politics because voters will rely less on party cues (Inglehart 1997) or as an encouragement for it because it creates the condition of cognitive partisanship, in which interest in politics is higher (Dalton 1984) For college education, the prior party systems show that citizens in each
individual country and in the sample as a whole were not cognitively mobilized – positively or negatively – because they had very few citizens enrolled in college education, and yet interest in politics was very significant judging from the percentages of positive votes obtained. The causes for it vary with each country, as I mention in the following points:

- **Ritualistic attachment** (Dalton 1984) plus external socialization (Cassel & Lo 1997): In Venezuela and Chile, the likeliest causes are external socialization and a ritualistic attachment to political parties; the former relates to particular reasons for acquiring a party identification, and the latter indicates regularized behavior. In Venezuela, AD and COPEI were the major contributors to both: external socialization relates to how both parties reproduced the principles of democratic political culture in citizens as part of puntofijismo, while ritualistic mobilization is associated to how both parties co-opted civil society and dispensed oil-based patronage to their sympathizers. A strong democratic political culture was absent in Chile, but citizens were socialized through cleavages that intensified at a critical conjuncture. At the same time, a past tradition of partisan identification (Angell 2007) was also present.

- **External socialization only**: In Peru and Argentina, external socialization is connected to the economic environment and cleavages (i.e., how the ideological positions of the major parties were associated with attitudinal and behavioral dimensions and with economic issues), although a tandem with a strong democratic political culture was more visible in Peru than in Argentina. In the latter case, the political divide manifested as an attitudinal dimension (Peronism
vs. elites and military), and its intensification precluded any notion of democratic political culture.

The current party systems have caught up with the United States in college enrollment, although the latter has had a better record and some countries in the sample are still behind. Ostensibly, cognitive mobilization through college enrollment (either positive or negative) is a real possibility, but an application of this aspect in all cases is very difficult because of contradictory indications of voter behavior. **On the one hand, most citizens in both countries are not particularly interested in politics in general** (particularly in Argentina and Venezuela, where the increases in college enrollment have been more substantial). **On the other, the still considerable percentage of positive votes in most elections, the appearance of new political parties in Argentina (as well as Klesner’s [2007] finding that Argentines with college education tend to be politically active), and external socialization in all cases contradict that lack of interest in politics.**

Regarding employment in the service sector, the four cases combined cannot surpass the US in the percentage of the labor force working in that sector even if the individual percentages are anything but negligible. Nevertheless, the same situation I have found when applying the other part of cognitive mobilization (college enrollment) repeats itself. The table below puts all percentages in perspective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-country average</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Needless to say, these conclusions are probabilistic because no statistics for service sector employment could be found for any year before 1990 and because a replication of Dalton’s (1984) study is still pending for the countries under study. However, the available data tentatively suggests that cognitive mobilization is inadequate for explaining party system stability in Latin America because much of the former’s enabling conditions are not present.

No statistics pertinent to interpersonal trust were found for any of the prior party systems, but the facts of the cases provide some useful qualitative data. In general, none of the prior party systems broke down because of lack of interpersonal trust as defined by Putnam (1993) because it did not undermine partisanship. Argentina and Chile had parties undergoing internal factionalism (FREJULI in Argentina, and both the left and the Christian Democrats in Chile), but none of them disintegrated as a result and, most importantly, they all retained a core of sympathizers. In the case of the Chilean Christian Democrats, there were new parties created as a result of their internal feud, composed by trusting members. If anything, external socialization compensated for any diminution in interpersonal trust, especially in the case of the Chilean left. In Venezuela and Peru, a moralistic political subculture adopted by the major parties (and patronage in the case of Venezuela) encouraged interpersonal trust for a time. Both systems collapsed as a result of massive citizen dissatisfaction with the political class and its parties, which in a way signals lack of interpersonal trust; however, that dissatisfaction was caused by larger factors, and new parties (Cambio 90 in Peru, and MVR in Venezuela) not only established connections between the organization and its sympathizers, but included individuals willing to cooperate for the achievement of political objectives. Findings
regarding the other aspect of interpersonal trust – disloyal opposition – can be summarized in the following points:

- **Rampant**: The 1964 Chilean party system and the 1973 Argentine party system are the most consistent with disloyal opposition defined as a mutual lack of trust between the victors and the defeated in an election, especially because of a larger context of hypermobilization and hyperpolarization. The case of Chile is the most representative.

- **No disloyal opposition**: In the cases of Venezuela and Peru, the political class respected the rules of the constitutional game and there were no showdowns between winners and losers (in Venezuela, for instance, no such thing happened after AD and COPEI lost the 1993 presidential election to Rafael Caldera and CN).

For the current party systems, I will now combine the percentages of interpersonal trust collected by the Latinobarómetro surveys for the four countries in the sample.

### Table 6.5: Interpersonal trust in the observed countries (in percentages)

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-country average</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This question was not included in the 2005 survey. Some years were omitted because they were years when prior party systems were in place.

What the percentages reveal is that Latin Americans have very little interpersonal trust. Klesner (2007) makes a similar conclusion in his analysis of social capital, to which interpersonal trust is related: the coefficients for Peru, Argentina, and Chile show that
there are very few instances of social networking that could result in concerted political action (Venezuela was not included in his analysis). Moreover, the Latinobarómetro surveys have consistently found that very few Latin Americans would work for political parties or politicians. If Putnam’s (1993) argument holds, then societies with low levels of interpersonal trust – like Latin America – should not see the creation of organized political organizations where individuals engage in collective political pursuits. However, political parties are still active in all cases and there are instances where new parties have appeared. Some parties (like MVR / PSUV in Venezuela and many organizations in Peru) have adopted an anti-political stance, but others (e.g., FG / FREPASO, APR, ARI, CC, UNA, and PRO in Argentina) have not.

The ancillary concept of disloyal opposition is less of a problem in countries that had authoritarian regimes: in Argentina and Chile, the renewal of interpersonal trust has been instrumental in the stability of their party systems; and in Perú there was not evident vindictiveness on the part of UN and UPP after APRA’s electoral victory, and so far there is not any such feeling after the celebration of more recent elections (especially those in which minor parties defeated more established parties like APRA). Only the current Venezuelan party system seems to lack a sense of loyal opposition: considering past grievances and present animosities, there is the possibility that something similar to what happened in the 1964 Chilean party system will occur if Chávez’s opposition manages to win the presidency.

*State intervention represented an important element in shaping patterns of party interactions in all cases,* confirming Müller’s (1993) argument. The most visible instance of state intervention in the party system was the electoral system; here, the prior
party systems adopted variations of the same two rules: majority rule for presidential elections, and PR for legislative elections. The combination of both rules provokes contradictory tendencies: the systems were multiparty in terms of the total number of parties (Rae’s [1967] sixth differential proposition), but also had reductive tendencies (Rae’s third differential and fourth similarity propositions) with direct effects on their dynamics. If we return to the finding that there were influences that either minimized vote dispersion or reduced the number of competitive parties, we see that the electoral systems in place played a role; those influences resulted either in multiparty systems with two party dynamics or in moderate multiparty systems, but both point to those contradictory tendencies indicated by Rae’s propositions. Ironically, these cases disprove Rae’s sixth similarity proposition (i.e., electoral rules have a minimal effect over the competitive position of legislative parties) by influencing an important aspect of party interactions – strength.

Regardless of which variation was implemented or the effects of electoral rules on the number of competitive parties, electoral systems in the prior party systems performed the role described by Campbell et. al. (1960): the promotion and encouragement of party identification. In consequence, political parties were legitimized. The cases also feature details worth mentioning:

- In Punto Fijo Venezuela, the electoral system became a vehicle for the transmission of political culture values, particularly those pertaining to partisanship and consensus-seeking. At the same time, electoral rules created and strengthened the two-party dynamics that characterized the party system, by
which the main goal set by the political class (i.e., the control of polarization) was achieved.

- The Peruvian electoral system, which included a run-off round for presidential elections, was far from perfect in terms of the management and oversight of electoral events. Still, the electoral rules in place were designed to make competition between ideologized parties more fair by preventing the appearance of hegemonic parties and disloyal opponents.

- In Argentina, the PR rule in place had both an aggregative and a reductive dimension; on the one hand, the number of parties that competed for legislative seats in 1973 was significantly high, but on the other hand major parties like FREJULI and UCR had the most advantage and the effective number of legislative parties was minimal. Presidential elections also incorporated the run-off round.

- Chilean presidential elections also had provisions for deciding the final outcome in situations when no candidate won the absolute majority, but no run-off round was incorporated. Instead, the legislature convened in a special session and decided between the two most voted candidates.

But electoral systems were not the only instance of state intervention with influence over vote maximization. Constitutions and political parties statues in all cases extolled party politics, giving it a mantle of legality and an aura of transcendental importance for the political system (particularly in democratized countries like Peru and Venezuela). In Peru, the lifting of media restrictions enacted by the government during its democratic transition is correlated with a significant increase in voter participation between the 1980
and 1985 general elections. In Chile, unwillingness to enact congressional reapportionment created a representation imbalance between rural and urban areas, but also made rural voters a highly coveted constituency. In addition, the electoral reforms of 1958 and 1962 – which increased the number of eligible voters and broke the monopoly of certain parties in rural areas – also made the peasants electorally attractive. Finally, a characteristic of the Chilean state (presidents with strong policymaking powers and a legislature with significant prerogatives) equally raised the stakes for vote maximization.

As far as party system collapse goes, the cases of Venezuela and Peru indicate that their crises of representation were channeled through their electoral systems even if the latter exhibited flaws that contributed to extant discontent. In the case of Venezuela, the system as a whole was biased in favor of AD and COPEI, which were widely seen as corrupt and blamed for the economic crises that preceded the 1998 election. In turn, the Peruvian electoral system included a provision for the creation of legislative slates that opened the door for unbridled rent-seeking, underscoring the opinion that mainstream parties divorced themselves from voter self-interest. It may be reasonable to expect that Venezuelans and Peruvians would have the same opinion Argentine elites had before the 1930 coup (electoral politics being a bad idea as it was, thus justifying military intervention), but in both cases democratic political culture – including the intrinsic value given to party politics – was so deeply ingrained that the electoral system became a weapon against the political establishment. Mainstream parties lost favor with voters, but the latter never relinquished their acceptance of electoral politics as a way to chastise them. That is why organizations like Cambio 90 and MVR were able to reap the fruits of discontent and score important electoral victories. Mainstream politicians were perhaps
too aware of procedural democracy to do any irregular move against the new parties, but they were too weak anyway to stop them.

In the cases of Chile and Argentina, state intervention was not a critical factor in comparison with other exogenous variables. As I hinted elsewhere in this chapter, the electoral system was misused in Chile and ignored in Argentina; in both cases, the legitimization of party politics through state intervention was undermined by disloyal opposition and polarization in both ideological and programmatic terms. It was misused in Chile because electoral politics became an ideological battleground, and it was ignored in Argentina because the political differences between Peronism and socioeconomic elites were not resolved through periodic elections. The consequences of electoral reform in Chile are important, but that should not be considered the only cause of party system collapse. Indeed, the go-it-alone strategy that resulted from the reforms is not in and of itself a cause of instability (there were no coalition politics in Venezuela, Peru and Argentina and their party systems did not collapse because of it); it became so only when outstanding cleavages and ideological disagreements made their way into the programmatic positions of the parties.

Regarding the current party systems, the influence of state intervention over the creation of a pattern of party interactions is also palpable. In terms of electoral systems, all countries have adopted majority rules for presidential elections and PR is in place in Venezuela, Peru, and Argentina (the exception is Chile, where legislative seats are still contested under the binomial system). As it occurred under the prior party systems, this combination of electoral rules creates multiparty systems in terms of the total number of parties but transforms their dynamics noticeably by means of a reductive
counter tendency. Two cases also stand out as indicative of ulterior motives through electoral engineering:

- In Chile, the binominal system was a creation of Pinochet’s regime and had the purpose of minimizing the power of political parties, but it also encourages aspects such as coalition building and internal cohesion.

- In Venezuela, Chávez’s election resulted in the creation of an electoral system that was used as a tool for the consolidation of MVR / PSUV (not different from what occurred under puntofijismo).

The cases of Peru and Argentina do not demonstrate deliberate electoral engineering, but their electoral systems provide incentives for vote maximization. Only in the case of Peru does the electoral system have an ambiguous outlook: it promotes a sense of partisanship shared by mainstream parties and those that exploit the “politics of anti-politics.”

Other instances of state intervention are relevant. Some examples indicate that the state can help create a political culture friendly to party politics: constitutional charters in all four countries stipulate that political parties are necessary for democratic governance, although in the cases of Venezuela and Chile that recognition is less categorical. In Venezuela, party laws regulating their creation and finances and the close control by the government of the electoral board has had the effect of creating rules that consolidate the predominance of MVR / PSUV. In the cases of Peru and Argentina, political party laws have elevated political parties to a status of legality at the same time they regulate their internal structures. In Argentina, the brand laws create a different effect on party competition by allowing for one provincial party to present different candidacies under different tickets, thus reducing fragmentation; while electoral reforms in provincial
electoral systems have benefited parties by facilitating their financing. Finally, Argentina presents another example that confirms Müller’s argument: its federal system. As mentioned in the case study, monetary disbursements from the national government to the provinces present a golden opportunity for parties to maximize votes, for they represent important resources with which to build and maintain large political machineries.

Finally, considering the economic environment, its influence over the prior party systems can be classified as follows:

- **Interrelated with cleavages**: The Peruvian and Chilean cases demonstrate that the economic environment was connected to attitudinal, behavioral, and (in the case of Peru) ascriptive and sociological cleavages. The implications were nevertheless different in both cases; in Peru, this combination underscored the “restricted protagonism” of 1980 parties (particularly the major ones) by placing specific expectations for vote maximization; indeed, chronic economic downturns and the lack of success of Belaúnde and García in economic policymaking – coupled with the belief that the political class in itself was corrupt and rent-seeking rather than truly concerned about the well-being of regular Peruvians – what undermined the party system. In Chile, where the cleavages were attitudinal and behavioral, their connection with this variable accentuated a winner-takes-all ideological competition between left, center, and right (later between left and right). In both cases, citizens translated material demands into political demands, as Powers (1999) argues more generally.
• **Absent**: *In the cases of Venezuela and Argentina, other exogenous factors play a role in the collapse of their party systems.* The effects of economic crisis in Venezuela should not be underestimated because they unraveled the ties between the major parties and their sympathizers, but at the same time they were not the only cause for the collapse of the system; in reality, the crisis amplified the flaws of *puntofijismo*, encouraged a moral outrage, and set the stage for dealignment. In the case of Argentina, the confrontation between economic elites and Peronism did not find its way into party politics in the terms specified by Powers, especially since the elites had no viable representative parties.

This same categorization is applicable to the current party systems, but some of the party systems can be found under different categories, as shown below:

• **Interrelated with cleavages**: *The Peruvian party system continues to be influenced in part by the economic environment and its connection with existing cleavages*, confirming that the same “restricted protagonism” of the 1980s still exists. The positive side of this situation is that it translates into popular desire for effective democratic governments, giving party politics continued chances for activity, but the negative side is that it also provides a venue for the “politics of anti-politics” and raises the stakes for successful party system institutionalization. *In Argentina, the economic environment is linked to attitudinal and particularly behavioral cleavages in both stages of the party system*; regardless of whether that cleavage separated UCR and PJ, Menemists and anti-Menemists, the middle class and popular sectors, and traditional ideologies, the existing parties (particularly the major ones) have placed
themselves on different sides on economic issues. The transformation of material demands into political demands described by Powers is still relevant.

- **Absent:** In the cases of Chile and Venezuela, the economic environment is minimized by other circumstances. Venezuelans are concerned about current economic performance, but that does not seem to have been translated into political demands as much as the political confrontation between chavismo and its opponents. In Chile, the agreement between the Concertación and the Alianza on neoliberal economic policies and sustained economic growth have not generated the same concern as the democracy/authoritarianism and religiosity dimensions, which have generated the most partisan intensity.

Finally, the cases provide only partial confirmation of Coppedge (2001) and Burgess & Levitsky’s (2003) arguments. It is true that AD and APRA were not quick or perhaps willing to adapt to the new conditions imposed by the 1982 debt crisis, but that is not the whole story. In Venezuela, COPEI also took part of the same policies of AD and nevertheless collapsed as well; hence, in the final analysis, the economy was not the only relevant cause for the demise of the party system. It may have been so in the case of Peru, but that generated rejection of parties other than APRA, including the friendliest to those with more economic wherewithal (AP and PPC) and traditional leftist parties like IU. A more successful case of adaptation involves Peronism but that case—as well as Venezuela and Peru—show that “political Darwinism” transformed the electoral and political landscapes by prompting citizens to transform material demands into political demands. In that sense, Peronism was more successful than mainstream political parties in Venezuela and Peru. UCR was able to aggregate economic demands for a time, but its
relationship with the doomed De la Rúa presidency proved fatal. Chile represents a much different case of adaptation: neoliberalism was implemented by a non-democratic regime and was passed over to the Concertaciòn governments that came afterwards. Only the left had to adapt to the new circumstances, but the duress was not an economic crisis; rather, it was that Pinochet’s influence made any opposition to the neoliberal structure a political suicide.

As a way to conclude this part of the comparison, possibly the most important finding is that the variables mentioned in my model (and especially the exogenous ones) have different effects on all the analyzed party systems; in other words, some party systems have been influenced by variables that were not present or relevant in others. This seems to indicate that context plays a crucial role in explaining party system stability in the individual cases; paraphrasing Coppedge (1998), party system stability displays a “dynamic diversity” that should not be ignored.

The model

How does the aforementioned statement relate to the strength and explanatory power of my proposed model? A look at the main conclusions of each case study buttresses important statements in that regard. I will start with how the prior party systems collapsed:

- In Venezuela, the predominance of AD and COPEI caused by the intersection of certain political culture values (i.e., consensus-seeking) and state intervention over partisan self-interest undermined the system from within. Party identification was preferably with those parties and consensus-seeking under puntofijismo –
reproduced by the state and embedded in voters – permitted unsavory practices (e.g., corruption) that underscored the crisis of representation that paved the way for the election of Hugo Chávez in 1998 (ironically, the acceptance of party politics as normal behavior that implanted under *puntofijismo* became the tool for voters to chastise the “‘*adecopeyano*’ establishment.”).

- In Peru, the combination of self-interest and certain provisions of the electoral system had a downside in the encouragement of rent-seeking behavior by the political class; while cleavages persisted and the economy needed a critical adjustment, the party system just ignored those demands. That situation was amplified by political culture values: Peruvians did not dispense with party politics altogether because it was the vehicle for expressing the crisis of representation and electing Alberto Fujimori.

- In Argentina, the intensification of the cleavage between Peronism and anti-Peronism (but not of that between FREJULI and UCR) did not just weaken democratic political culture, but the party system and democratic governability. Any positive effects of state intervention in the form of electoral rules were neutralized by the clash between radical Peronists and the socioeconomic elites, which considered military intervention (i.e., the *Proceso*) as a way to decide the issue in their favor.

- In Chile, the collapse of the system was connected to the intractability of existing cleavages and programmatic polarization (particularly in the economy), resulting in Pinochet’s regime. Existing electoral rules encouraged party identification, but
did not reverse the spill-over of the governability crisis of the Allende years into party politics.

The table below simplifies those four conclusions:

Table 6.6: Factors present in party system collapses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party system</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>PSI</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>PC</th>
<th>CM</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>EE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela 1958</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru 1980</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina 1973</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile 1964</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:

NP – Number of parties  
PSI – Partisan self-interest / rationality  
C – Cleavages  
PC – Political culture  
CM – Cognitive mobilization  
IT – Interpersonal trust  
S – The state  
EE – Economic environment

As expected, the number of parties did not play a role in the collapses of the prior party systems. While all of the prior party systems were multiparty, the total number of parties in the system was not indicative of other aspects that were the actual causes of collapse, such as the intractability of political cleavages in the cases of Argentina and Chile, and the negative effects of state intervention in the cases of Venezuela and Peru. At the same time, those exogenous factors may not have the same repercussions had it not for the fact that they involved political parties competing for office out of one motivation or another.

The table also shows that there are two possible paths to systemic collapse: one involves the presence of deep societal divisions in a climate of low interpersonal trust and shallow democratic political culture; and the other features a stronger democratic political culture and more social cohesion as well as a more problematic government structure. The first combination, applicable to Chile and Argentina, would indicative of a crisis of
governability in which the self-interest of either the parties or of the social groups that support them materializes as a zero-sum game with very little or no possibility of compromise. The second combination would exemplify a crisis of representation for Venezuela and Peru – the same concept defined by Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez (2006) as a gap between agents and principals. That is, in fact, how the authors characterize what happened in both countries, but I differ with them in the description of the elements involved; in this type of crisis, both the make-up of state institutions and policymaking mistakes (such as in the economy) contribute to alienate the political class from party constituencies, which reserve the right to chastise the former by voting for anti-systemic or anti-party platforms.

Have party systems in the chosen countries made efforts to institutionalize after the prior cases of party system collapse? To answer that question, I will first restate the conclusions I arrived at in the case studies:

- The current Venezuelan party system has a pattern of interactions that includes partisan self-interest, political culture, state intervention, and cleavages. Venezuelans have cast more negative votes than positive, but the presidential elections represent an exception. In terms of causal complexity, the divide between chavismo and its opposition encourages party identification, influences state intervention (particularly electoral rules) in favor of the party in government, and can be explained by a continued rejection by many voters of AD and COPEI – the same rejection that underscored the transit from puntofijismo to chavismo at the level of political culture.
• In Peru, partisan self-interest, political culture, cleavages, the economic environment, and state intervention remain as relevant for party identification and vote maximization as they were for the 1980 party system, but in a different way. An explanation based on causal complexity reveals that democratic political culture is not absent, but also disloyalty to the political system is evident because of unresolved economic problems and lingering exclusion based on sociological cleavages. State intervention in the form of a comprehensive political parties law has contributed to a resumption of party politics, but at the same time has provided structural incentives for non-traditional parties mobilized around economic environment and existing cleavage dimensions, exploiting the “politics of anti-politics” inherited from Fujimori.

• Because the Argentine crisis of 2001-2002 has had a great effect on the current party system, it is reasonable to talk about two phases; still, the exogenous factors that influence over partisan self-interest are political culture, the Argentine state, cleavages, and the economic environment. In both stages, a visible support for democracy has encouraged voters to adopt party politics as an acceptable political behavior, resulting in the crystallization of cleavages and the political articulation of economic demands. Patronage – as a consequence of the state – has contributed in no small measure to party identification defined in those terms, but so have the structural incentives provided by the current electoral system. That combination of variables indicates causal complexity.

• In Chile, the self-interest of parties is influenced by cleavages, political culture, and the state; and causal complexity brings them together in a whole. Societal
divides based on religiosity and the legacies of Pinochet’s regime can be articulated and crystallized thanks to a political culture that values democracy and party politics, but the expression of those cleavages is more restrained than before because that same culture also gives a high regard to moderation, toleration, and compromise. At the same time, the relevant divides are naturally dyadic and the binominal electoral system encourages the creation of coalitions, resulting in the political predominance of the Concertación and the Alianza.

Those conclusions can be summarized in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party system</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>PSI</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>PC</th>
<th>CM</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>EE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See table 6.6 for legend.

Judging from the data presented, the answer to the question of whether the current party systems have institutionalized is two-fold. On the one hand, the Venezuelan and Peruvian party systems appear not to do so entirely. The Venezuelan democracy retains a procedural character despite its other illiberal foundations and continues to have political parties willing to maximize their interest. Nevertheless, the party system – despite having cleavage dimensions that link differentiated parties with voters and a political culture somewhat sympathetic to party politics – is influenced by biased state intervention in favor of the party in power. There is no apparent crisis of representation as of this day, but the playing field (though visible) is unfair even in those electoral events in which the percentage of negative votes is considerable. Similarly, the Peruvian democracy is more liberal and democratic political culture – paraphrasing Catalina
Romero (2007) – refuses to be blindsided, but the link between parties and supporters is fragile in part because cleavages and the economic environment shift the burden to the latter, and in part because political rent-seeking continues in the midst of socioeconomic exclusion against popular sectors. Electoral rules and the Law of Political Parties of 2003 may structure vote maximization and extol party politics, but give opportunities for the “politics of anti-politics.”

On the other hand, the Chilean and Argentine party systems have made greater strides towards institutionalization, although not exactly in the way I described earlier. Both party systems are based in part on differentiations in key issues (socioeconomic in the case of Argentina, religious and political in the case of Chile) that are adopted by differentiated political parties, but most importantly their experiences under authoritarianism have not only galvanized democratic political culture and sustained vote maximization in both countries, but even changed the dynamics of party politics in Chile (where cross-cutting cleavages have also contributed). In all, competitive interactions in both countries unfurl under more concrete principles of moderation and toleration – or what we could describe as loyal opposition (Inglehart 1997). Argentina may be the least perfect – so to speak – of these example because its state still has avenues for patronage politics and excessive partisan self-interest, but its electoral system is more fair than in Venezuela.

Nevertheless, in closing, it seems evident that the model and hypothesis I presented largely holds for all the cases I studied. While there is a number of paths towards party system stability or collapse, they all show a causally complex process
operating within a process of an incomplete or largely complete institutionalization, depending on the case.
Chapter IX
CONCLUSION

This dissertation project reviewed the existing literature on party systems, focusing on two explanatory variables: *endogenous* (factors within the party system such as self-interest alone and the number of parties) and *exogenous* (factors outside the party system such as cleavages, political culture, state intervention, etc.). The review provided the foundation for what was my main hypothesis – that *party system stability was the result of the institutionalization of a specific pattern of interactions between parties created at a prior moment from the combination of partisan self-interest and exogenous factors*. With that causal relationship in mind, I developed a research design that combined variable- and case-oriented approaches for the in-depth study of the party systems of Venezuela, Perú, Argentina, and Chile. The four countries were similar in three aspects: the reactivation of party systems after non-democratic interlude, economic crises resulting in the adoption of neoliberal policies, and ambiguous citizen attitudes towards party politics. The project also queried whether there was causal complexity in all cases.

After studying the chosen party systems separately and in comparative perspective, I can state that *a refinement is necessary to make my model more accurate and applicable*. I mentioned in chapter III that my model was considerably specific in that it described a particular causal process underlying a probabilistic statement, and although that description was never intended to mean that the model was deterministic the case studies reveal context-specific details that must be taken to account. Having said that, I do not believe that my hypothesis and model were infirmed, and that the idea of a
refinement does not mean that both must be discarded. That latter possibility is unwarranted because the cases still show that party system stability depends on how a pattern of interactions between parties institutionalizes in complex causal processes involving the assumption of partisan self-interest and exogenous variables. Since I also argued in chapter III that a model as specific as mine was justified by the need to explain how and why the variables in it are connected, the case studies simply show different ways for the model to materialize. The difference – if any – between what I originally expected for my model and the actual results of the analysis is very small.

The refinement I speak of is based on two admissions I will make. One of them is that different contexts can result in different combinations of exogenous factors and the assumption of partisan self-interest. The prior and current party systems indeed indicate that the assumption of partisan self-interest is plausible, but also that it is influenced by exogenous factors that vary from country to country and justified by different motivations on the part of the parties themselves. Those differences between the cases make my chosen methodology a good one because their emphasis on description has uncovered causal mechanisms that quantitative methods would ignore, but most importantly they confirm the argument that Latin American party systems exhibit cross-country variation (Coppegde 1998).

The other admission I will make, stemming from my analysis of how the prior party systems collapsed, is two-fold. First, some of those combinations of exogenous variables and partisan self-interest are conducive to institutionalization, while others are not. Restating some of the statements I made in the prior chapter, those combinations can cause party system collapse through either a crisis of representation or a crisis of
governability: in Venezuela and Peru, state institutions that encouraged unrestrained self-interest within the parties resulted in crises of representation that were channeled through existing political culture beliefs (i.e., the electoral victories of Chávez and Fujimori). In Argentina and Chile, any idea of democratic political culture and the partisanship-generating effects of state institutions were offset by the intersection of cleavages, self-interest, and (in the case of Chile) economic demands. Second, a prevention of both crises (that is, the institutionalization process by which the patterns of interaction between parties acquire value and stability) depends on a combination between self-interest and exogenous variables under the right conditions.

- A causally-complex explanatory model for a crisis of representation would certainly include a political culture sympathetic to party politics and synchronized with the basic tenets of procedural democracy, and the existence of an economic environment and cleavage dimensions that will differentiate between political options and make them meaningful to voters. It would also have to include electoral rules and other forms of state intervention (e.g., campaign finance laws) that level the playing field for all parties; reproduce critical political culture values; and create a hospitable environment for the crystallization of cleavages, the aggregation of economic demands, and party identification as a whole. Indeed, if we are to think of party politics as a market, this type of state intervention regulates it, guarantees fairness, and helps establish trust between producers (the parties) and consumers (the voters) – just like state intervention in a neoliberal economy. It would also include political parties more mindful of pressing concerns at the voter level (i.e., less rent-seeking); in that regard, the Argentine
and Chilean political parties of their respective prior party systems represent an example of the type of closeness between parties and their supporters. In a word, a party system configured in this way will prevent the appearance of political outsiders – just what Taylor (2007) argues a party system should do.

- To prevent collapse from a crisis of governability, the model would include cleavages and the economic environment for the same reason mentioned above (the promotion of partisanship), but the reproduction of political culture values by the state must be decisive. In that sense, some aspects of the Peruvian and Venezuelan electoral systems in place during the respective prior party systems – those that prevented disloyal opposition – are fundamental in reproducing the values of political toleration and moderation that are absent in these situations. The result would precisely what Almond & Verba (1963) concluded: the expression of partisan loyalties must be unfettered, but also moderate. At the same time, the characteristics of the state itself (especially regarding executive and legislative relations) can be equally determinant in reducing the stakes of the political game.

What have we learned from this project regarding the literature on party system stability? The answer is given in the following points:

1. The criticism levied by Mair (2006a) and Mainwaring & Torcal (1999) against the number of parties as an explanatory variable for party system stability is not only reasonable and forceful, but substantiated by the cases. Two party systems like the American party system have demonstrated to be strong, but two party systems like the Venezuelan party system of puntofijismo and the Argentine party system
between 1983 and 2001 were not as strong; by the same token, the Peruvian system of 1980 did not collapse because of any polarization and fragmentation associated with multipartyism, as scholars like Sartori and Roberts & Wibbels have argued. The larger theoretical and normative lesson from all cases is that the number of parties does not indicate how party systems actually work or their levels of institutionalization.

2. The idea of political parties as strategic rational actors presented by Downs and Maor is also substantiated by the cases, but they diverge in one important aspect that also arises from the case studies: parties do not create their agenda without a reference to the external environment. The idea of the vote-maximizing government is confirmed, but the terms of partisan and voter self-interest do not always follow the Downsian logic; in other words, political parties do not always define their interest in material terms, and voters do not always pay attention to policymaking as the utility to be expected from government. Indeed, the opposite is more likely in some of the cases. Material gain (e.g., patronage) has been a lynchpin of the Venezuelan party system of puntofijismo and of the current Argentine party system, but it was not so in ideologized party systems like the Chilean system of 1964, in which the major parties maximized votes not only as a vehicle for access to government and control over policymaking, but to deprive both to ideological rivals in a zero-sum game. The Argentine system of 1973 did not have political parties unwilling to compromise, but the country had social sectors playing a similar game.
3. The cases point to a number of conclusions regarding cleavages. First, they can *thaw and be substituted for new ones depending on larger sociopolitical and socioeconomic conditions*. The Western European critiques of Lipset & Rokkan’s “freezing hypothesis” are not without merit, as far as this conclusion is concerned. Also, cleavages can cross-cut and offset each other; as I mentioned in the corresponding case study, such cleavages crystallized in the current Chilean party system. Yet contrary to what was stated by Mainwaring (1999) and Dix, most of the cases show that *cleavages still matter in the formation and institutionalization of patterns of interaction between parties, especially when related to the economic environment* (in fact, that was Rogowski’s [1987] subjacent idea in his analysis). That importance could be visualized as a continuum, in which the 1973 Chilean system represents a polarized extreme and Punto Fijo Venezuela represents a situation where cleavages were almost non-existent, with the Peruvian system of 1980 and the Argentine system of 1973 occupying spaces in between (but closer to Chile than Venezuela). Also, *cleavages also need not to be always sociologically based*, which may indicate that Rae & Taylor’s definition of cleavages is applicable to more cases and contexts than the seminal definition of Lipset & Rokkan; for instance, the main cleavage in Peru is socioeconomic (which includes an ethnic dimension), but in Venezuela the main cleavage is strictly political. In any case, regardless of how we define cleavages, *their creation and transformation over time is not always led by party elites*. If we understand cleavage either as sociological (as Lipset & Rokkan do) or as ascriptive, attitudinal and behavioral (as Rae & Taylor do), then
we can notice that certain characteristics of the larger social milieu such as pre-existing class differentiations, economic issues, and even race and / or ethnicity can generate different opinions that will find their way into party organizations.

4. Most of the cases also point to a confirmation of Müller’s argument: state intervention matters because it provides an opportunity or incentive structure for parties to behave strategically and rationally. If political parties wish to maximize votes for whatever reason, they have to count on the effects of electoral systems, political party legislation, persuasion or manipulation that can be direct or indirect, and the characteristics of the state itself. We should also consider that a structural setting (i.e., the political system) is important for the crystallization of cleavages and economic demands into political and partisan demands. Political parties can only thrive in a democratic political regime, where the expression of ideas and of dissent with the government in place are not curtailed; in fact, the current Argentine party system points to how the elevation of values intrinsic to democratic political culture (e.g., moderation, bounded uncertainty, and contingent consent) can help in institutionalizing a party system, provided that other conditions are also present.

5. As hinted by the point above, political culture is also important for the creation and stability of a particular pattern of interactions because it is there where individual and collective attitudes in favor of or against political parties and party systems can be found. The values of democratic political culture can be reproduced by the political class and by the state, and they can also temper the expression of cleavages to a reasonable middle point. Reprising Coppedge (2001)
and Almond & Verba (1963), *the expression of cleavages should generate differentiations between political options, but at the same time that expression should always be moderate*. Democratic political culture establishes those limits.

6. Whether cognitive mobilization is applicable to this sample of countries and Latin America as a whole can only be performed more accurately with access to the same data Dalton (1984) utilized in his study, especially given that in the four chosen countries interest in politics is low but electoral participation is high.

7. *Putnam’s (1993) concept of interpersonal trust does not manifest as expected*, since the four countries register very low levels of that variable but their citizens still coalesce in political parties. My assumption is that low levels of interpersonal trust should discourage people from creating political parties in the first place, but the cases indicate that the opposite is more likely. Utilizing Klesner’s (2007) idea that context is important for social capital and interpersonal trust, a likely condition for concerted activity in political parties despite low interpersonal trust is a favorable political culture where party activity is a part of everyday political life, and the existence of visible attitudinal and behavioral cleavages that incite party identification. Nevertheless, Inglehart’s (1997) definition of interpersonal trust – which can be equated to contingent consent – is substantiated by the cases.

Finally, there is a different set of theoretical and normative implications arising from my main conclusions. In chapter III, I mentioned that the “third wave” of democratization in Latin America coincided with the foreign debt crisis of 1982, and that the neoliberal economic policies that substituted for the prior import-substitution industrialization model had large political repercussions that, in a word, were tantamount
to the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of the Mainwaring, Bejarano & Pizarro Leongómez’s concept of crisis of representation. On the one hand, the inclusion of the economic environment as an exogenous factor operating over the self-interest of parties intended to account for that aspect, especially because it connects Coppedge (2001) and Burgess & Levitsky’s idea of how and why political parties adapt to economic circumstances and Powers’ description of how material interests are translated into political interests. On the other, some cases show that the externalities of neoliberalism (not the least of which is the void between promised benefits and actual results) are not the only cause of the break-up of the ties between principal and agent that characterizes the crisis of representation.

The cases of the prior Peruvian and Venezuelan party systems are the most indicative of that latter statement. In Venezuela, the most visible externality of the neoliberal policies that were implemented since 1978 was mismanagement, as demonstrated by the protracted economic crisis that preceded the pivotal 1998 presidential election. The ineffective response of adecopeyano governments to economic trouble did generate a divorce between principals and agents in a country where economic growth was apparent and citizens reaped the benefits (including patronage), but nevertheless the economic crisis also served to magnify flaws such as corruption, the excessive predominance of the two major parties in civil society, and the unwillingness of those parties to reform themselves and the political system they created when circumstances mandated it. Economic mismanagement was also visible in Peru, but it was connected to more heterodox economic policies implemented by AP and APRA (it was not until after the election of Fujimori that truly neoliberal policies were set in place).
Still, there was a divorce between principal and agent in 1990 caused in part by how economic policymaking did not seem to bridge socioeconomic gaps. In that sense, mismanagement alone does not explain the crisis of representation in Peru as much as its connection with existing sociological cleavages. At the same time, the crisis is also explained by how rent-seeking on the part of the political class undermined the ties between principal and agent just as thoroughly as the combination of cleavages and the economic environment. This does not mean that the externalities of neoliberalism may play a role in a possible crisis of representation affecting the current Peruvian party system, but that would still come about as a partial by-product of other exogenous factors.

The case of the current Argentine party system shows that the crisis of 2001-2002 – while connected to neoliberal economics and also constituting a great blow to party politics – did not create a crisis of representation in the same scale as Venezuela and Peru. The larger lesson from this case is that the meltdown did not completely sever the ties between principal and agent, but only redefined them. It is true that FREPASO and UCR became political casualties, but UCR has not disappeared as AP did after Fujimori’s win in 1990. Moreover, Peronism was divided prior to the crisis, but the meltdown did not deprive its factions of a number of sympathizers that could be mobilized (through patronage and clientelistic relationships) for electoral purposes. By the same token, new parties (UNA, CC, PRO, and others) are partaking of the current partisan environment. The reason why Argentina did not suffer a party system collapse even if enabling conditions were present has to do with the pervasiveness of a political culture that supports democracy (although satisfaction with it leaves much to be desired) and with
political parties that attempt to be representative of popular demands, even if Peronism is still associated with patronage and clientelism.

What's next?

Are there any avenues for new research related to the model I proposed and the conclusions I present? Necessarily, a project that only studies a small sample of cases will point to some possibilities, but I consider it a welcome development. I did not intend to give definitive answers to the questions posed on the subject party system in Latin America, but I believe I have made a step forward with this project. The development of Latin American party systems is still a work in progress, for new developments, issues, personalities, and groups can appear in the horizon, and in some instances have appeared already. Will Venezuela see a post-chavista party system now that MVR / PSUV dominance is starting to show strains? Will a second Fujimori make an appearance in Peru? Will the Argentine party complete its recovery from the 2001-2002 crisis? Will a large electoral victory for right-wing parties confirm the stability of the Chilean party system and reverse the skepticism identified by some observers? Only time has the answer to those questions and countless others, and that answer may or may not change the model I proposed; however, I stand by its relevance and coherence at present.

One such avenue for further research relates to feedback theory. It was not within the stated objectives of this project to discuss the possibility of feedback loops, so anything I will say in this part is rather exploratory. However, my overlook of feedback theory (despite following Richardson’s logic when creating the categories of endogenous and exogenous explanations) should not be understood as a rejection of it. On the
contrary, my main conclusions do not exclude any feedback loops that could connect party system stability with the antecedent condition. Nicolas Sauger (2003) also mentions that possibility when arguing that there is a circular relationship between political parties and party systems that helps bridge the systematic study of both, although his connection between party system stability and number of parties is not defensible for reasons that should be obvious by now.

Furthermore, George Richardson (1991) provides interesting insights to the study of party system stability with his analysis of the former’s two constitutive threads: cybernetics and servomechanisms. The cybernetics thread is compatible with the endogenous explanation because the input-output process represented by its feedback loops reinforce a sense of homeostasis or control in the face of external circumstances, and if we remember how the endogenous explanation was described we will see how the sense of agency it gives to political parties (particularly in Sartori’s [1969] view of partisan self-interest) creates that sense of homeostasis. In turn, the servomechanisms thread is compatible with the exogenous explanation because it describes situations where a system adapts to external conditions in order to survive over time. This sense of adaptation can be seen more clearly in the variable of the economic environment presented by Coppedge (2001) and Burgess & Levitsky (2003) because both stress the idea of adaptation, but the hypotheses proposed by the other exogenous variables also hint to a connection between political parties / party systems and their surroundings.

Since we are talking about party systems as systems, we can intuitively go to David Easton’s definition of the concept (which Richardson classifies as servomechanic). In that sense, my model could be rearranged as an Eastonian systems model complete
with environment, inputs, conversion, and outputs. More precisely, the exogenous factors could be located in the larger environment and defined as inputs to the “black box” of political parties, where they are combined with their self-interest in the conversion process and generate the pattern of interactions that will characterize the party system (i.e., the output). Party system stability could follow a similar logic, with the difference that the pattern itself is the “black box.” and the conversion process is institutionalization. In this case, the party system adapts to external conditions and the exogenous factors still influence partisan self-interest.

The discussion made above suggests that the possibility of a feedback loop explaining party system stability – in Latin America and elsewhere – is conceivable. Indeed, two future avenues for research are whether there are feedback loops in my model and if a causal relationship explaining party system stability based on systems theory is empirically feasible. The intuitive guess (subject to be falsified systematically) is that it is indeed feasible. In more intuitive terms, if we think of state intervention in party systems as similar to its own input on the economy (i.e., the guarantee of minimal conditions for the successful functioning of the market), then the veneer of trust laid out will embed the system deeply enough for iterated combinations between partisan self-interest and exogenous variables, reinforcing the feedback loop. Yet my project took an important first step towards the discussion of party system stability through feedback theory, for _it does not clearly identify at present where does the self-reinforcing process originate_. The following should not be seen as an outright rejection of feedback thought, but traditional models of causation have an advantage because they identify that point of origin; after all, rotating gun turrets (an example Richardson gives to describe the
servomechanisms thread) must be activated by an on / off switch. My model could combine a feedback process with traditional causation and, most importantly, indicate the starting point of the self-reinforcing loop of a system, which is the institutionalization of a pattern of interactions created at a prior moment from the causally-complex combination of partisan self-interest and exogenous factors. By the same token, my model also identifies the on / off switch that, when pressed, will activate the loop.

But feedback and systems theories are not the indicators of future avenues for research; analyses of other party systems through my proposed theory is also warranted. For instance, it remains to be determined whether Mexico has a different party system from the one-party type that characterized it for seven decades or if single-party hegemony continues under a different party. That will not take necessarily the study of how many parties are there in the Mexican party system, but how do they interact with each other and under what conditions. It also remains to be seen whether there were flaws in the Brazilian party system when Fernando Collor de Mello was elected president in the 1990s, and if the system recovered after his demise. At the same time, updated assessments are needed for the character of the Brazilian party system as a whole; that is, whether Jose Inacio Lula da Silva’s Workers’ Party is a hegemonic one (having won the last two presidential elections), or whether there are other significant partisan forces. Also, given Brazil’s notorious income disparities, another good research question is if Powers’ analysis is applicable to the case. Regions like Eastern Europe and Africa not only warrant an assessment of their democratic consolidation, but whether institutionalized party systems play a role.
Other possibilities my project brings for future research are related to important concepts. Anti-party candidacies present a series of interrelated research questions; first, *what really constitutes an anti-party platform?* As I mentioned in the respective case studies, Hugo Chávez, and Alberto Fujimori have utilized the same tool employed by the traditional parties they all charged against – party politics. Put another way, the question is whether there is a contradiction in terms within discourses against politics as usual and, if there is not, what is the logic connecting the rhetoric of anti-partyism with the tools of traditional party politics, especially the logic of vote maximization. At the same time, a connection between anti-partyism and traditional party politics that involves political culture is worth investigating. In any case, an answer to this question will shed more light on the intricacies of the crisis of representation in Latin America.

Second, *does voting for anti-party candidates reflect a weakening of democratic political culture or its resiliency?* Once again, the cases of Venezuela and Peru set the stage: on the one hand, Hugo Chávez and Alberto Fujimori have not been judged as politicians with an impeccable record of allegiance to democracy, which may indicate tendencies uncovered in opinion surveys like Latinobarómetro that citizens are ambivalent towards democratic or non-democratic governments. On the other, as I have also concluded, Venezuelans and Peruvians did not relinquish democratic political culture as readily as their ties with traditional parties. It must be remembered that Cambio 90 and MVR competed against (and defeated) more traditional parties in what is considered a hallmark of public participation in political affairs – open and free elections.

Finally, *does voting for anti-party candidates legitimize or undermine party systems?* The contradiction between anti-party rhetoric and the tools of party politics is
relevant here as well; on the one hand, anti-party politicians express a conscious rejection against a particular political institution, but on the other they play by the rules of the system they despise. An answer to this question would determine whether or not this mentality on the part of anti-party candidates is perfectly logical, especially since participating in a party system they do not agree with may be seen as legitimization (to be sure, what anti-party candidates advocate for is for the opposite).

A different set of research questions relate to an important aspect of research design: measuring variation. First, is electoral abstention an accurate indicator of support for a party system? Abstention statistics have been utilized in analyses of party system collapse (e.g., Venezuela [Coppedge 2003, Kornblith & Levine 1995, Crisp & Levine 1998]), but the point set forth by Marcelo Leiras is not only well taken, but very persuasive. Even in the case of the collapse of the Punto Fijo party system in Venezuela, the percentage of positive votes was considerable in comparison with the percentage of negative votes (in which abstention is included in the official reports). The current Venezuelan party system does have higher percentages of negative votes in most elections, but if abstention was that rampant it would have had an effect in presidential elections as well. As it happens, positive votes in the latter are still higher than negative votes. By the same token, recent analyses of Chilean electoral behavior (e.g., Fuentes & Villar 2007) have indicated that there is visible skepticism translated in decreasing percentages of electoral participation, but positive votes still outnumber negative votes. Also, is organizational coherence a good indicator of party system stability? Mainwaring & Scully (1995) are perhaps the foremost proponents of that aspect, arguing that institutionalized party systems have political parties with strong and coherent
organizations that incorporate standardized rules and procedures; nevertheless, Peronism was never known for being organizationally coherent or even rational, and yet Abal Medina & Suárez Cao (2002) conclude that the party system is the most consolidated political institution in Argentina.

Empirical facts from the case studies generate another set of research questions: First, what are the real effects of proportional representation (PR) rules on party system stability? No party system that had parties competing under PR rules collapsed because of fragmentation, but PR has two contradictory effects: on the one hand, it encourages fragmentation because there will be many self-interested parties competing for a scarce good (i.e., representation in government), but on the other its basic rules weed out irrelevant parties from the rest. In any case, it is obvious that electoral rules – as an instance of state intervention – play a role in the configuration of party systems, confirming my hypothesi.

Second, does fragmentation by itself undermine party systems or does it have no effects whatsoever? Martin Tanaka (2005) and Javier Tejerizo (2008) represent the opposing sides in this particular debate: on the one hand, Tanaka’s assessment of the Peruvian party system is not positive in part because of its tendency to fragmentation, but Tejerizo (in an argument similar to Kuenzi & Lambright [2005]) believes that the existence of more political parties in the current Argentine party system provides more outlets for citizens to articulate, aggregate, and express their interests at a moment when representation is not particularly strong. In general, the question points to one foundation of the endogenous explanation for party system stability – if in fact fragmentation has no effects on party system stability, then polarization (Huntington 1968), the existence of
extremist parties (Powell Jr. 1981) and electoral volatility (Roberts & Wibbels 1999) are non-issues, and there would not be any necessity to the restoration and restraint of party competition (Midlarsky 1984).

Finally, there is also the international context: as mentioned in the case studies, the United States intervened in the Chilean presidential election of 1970 and has been active against Hugo Chávez since at least 1998. The fact that I did not examine more closely the international context in my analysis does not indicate that I do not consider it relevant; rather, it was because there is a question that must be answered first: what role in general does it play in influencing partisan self-interest and party identification? That role could be construed as a variable in its own right, but it could also permeate through exogenous variables such as state intervention, the economic environment, and political culture. Future research can shed more light on this aspect.

In the end, regardless of the research agenda yet to be fulfilled (whether listed here or not), the case studies as I have analyzed them may have the key to a vexing puzzle: why Latin Americans do not trust political parties but still vote for them? The theory I propose (refined to accommodate for the context of each Latin American country) may point to many possible answers for that question, but all those answers indicate something that might be the most fundamental lesson from my project – links between political parties and voters are fundamental to make party systems viable. While political parties are vote-maximizing actors, the low regard Latin Americans have for political parties can be connected to the impression of party politics and politicians being too concerned with electoral motivations (which is what Morgan [2007] found in the case of Venezuela) and not too concerned with the resolution of structural issues,
particularly economic ones. At the same time, any link between parties and constituents based on patronage and clientelism (while effective in securing electoral support, as the cases of Venezuela and Argentina demonstrate) is likely to generate volatility and crises of representation when the dispensation ceases, although the precipitant for that situation could likely be the reduction of monetary sources due to economic shocks. Those two aspects make the refinement of my model and its replication to other cases worth undertaking. The prescriptive implication of this project and similar ones is that many aspects have to be secured, strengthened, or reformed for any Latin American party system to remain stable in the longer term, such as the accountability of political leaders, a decently-run economy that can renew the faith in the political class, coherent electoral systems, and civility in political competition. The list can and should be different for individual countries, but addressing such issues will result in a better democracy, especially in a region like Latin America. To be sure, party systems are but one aspect out of many other crucial ones necessary for democratic consolidation, but party system stability in the region is a step in the right direction.
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