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Democracy, interrupted: Regime change and partisanship in twentieth-century Argentina☆

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ABSTRACT

Electoral volatility is much higher in new than in advanced democracies. Some scholars contend that weak partisan ties among the electorate lie behind this high volatility. Political parties in new democracies do not invest in building strong linkages with voters, they claim; hence partisanship is not widespread, nor does it grow over time. Our view is that democratic processes do encourage the spread of partisanship and hence the stabilization of electoral outcomes over time in new democracies. But this dynamic can be masked by countervailing factors and cut short by regime instability. We expect that, all else being equal, volatility will decline over time as a new democracy matures but increase again when democracy is interrupted. We use disaggregated ecological data from Argentina over nearly a century to show that electoral stability grows during democratic periods and erodes during dictatorships.

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1. Introduction

In today's new democracies, electoral outcomes are much more volatile than in advanced democracies. Political parties rise and fall rapidly; today's election winners are tomorrow's also-rans; and even whole party systems are sometimes swept aside by political novices. In an influential study of electoral volatility in Latin America published two decades after democracy began to return to that region, Roberts and Wibbels (1999) were struck mainly by the instability of national party systems. They noted "growing evidence of upheaval or decay across much of Latin America in the 1990s" that could be seen "in the virtual meltdown of the Peruvian and Venezuelan party systems, the erosion of the ruling party's dominance in Mexico [and] the sudden emergence of evanescent 'flash' parties in many countries" (575).

One provocative interpretation of high and seemingly endemic volatility is that it reflects very basic differences between new and old democracies. We call this interpretation *exceptionalism*. The logic goes like this. Electoral volatility is high and has not seemed to diminish, even in the 'older' new democracies of Latin America, several decades after the return of competitive elections. Driving this volatility is a weakness of partisan attachments among voters, a weakness that is driven, in turn, by the failure of political parties in new democracies to instill these attachments.

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Mainwaring and his coauthors (Mainwaring and Torcal, 2006; Mainwaring and Zoco, 2007) are the most explicit proponents of exceptionalism, asserting that parties in new democracies lack the capacity or incentives to encourage partisanship among voters. Whereas in the old democracies political parties struggled to enfranchise their constituents and to instill in them enduring partisan identities, in the new democracies, born when suffrage was already universal, parties played no such role and therefore had little incentive to foster strong attachments. These authors also contend that because parties in new democracies were founded in a period of broadcast media, candidates could communicate directly with voters rather than through party organizational channels. Rose and Munro (2003), in turn, emphasize that parties in new democracies are prone to elite-level reshufflings and changes in party labels, rendering them incapable of building loyal constituencies. For all of these reasons, Mainwaring and Zoco (2007: 171) write, "The critical determinant of the stabilization of electoral competition is *when democracy was born, not how old it is*" (emphasis ours).

Against the exceptionalists' claims, we contend that political parties in new democracies do attempt to forge enduring partisan ties with constituents, and the democratic process does encourage the spread of partisanship as these democracies age. We are skeptical of the exceptionalists' claim that parties in new democracies are incapable of, or uninterested in, building partisan ties in the electorate. Our intuition is that parties that enjoy widespread partisan loyalties – whether they are in new democracies or old ones – perform better in elections. Therefore office-seeking parties have strong incentives to forge partisan attachments with citizens. Other factors than the disinterest of parties in new democracies explain their greater electoral volatility. Roberts and Wibbels (1999) and Coppedge (1998) identify volatile economic conditions and institutional factors, and Coppedge also notes the contribution to volatility of episodic extensions of the suffrage.

In short, it is a mistake to infer from high rates of volatility that parties do not try to turn voters into partisans. Even if parties in new democracies attempt to cultivate partisanship, economic or institutional volatility might still discourage electoral stability.

In addition to office-seeking parties' incentives to inculcate in voters a *standing decision* to support it, there is a second probable source of growing partisanship as new democracies mature: voting itself may instill partisan ties in voters. In behavioral theories of partisanship, new voters enter the electorate and cast a vote for a party; the desire to resolve cognitive dissonance leads them to see themselves as partisans of this party, which in turn makes them more likely to cast votes for it in the future (Campbell et al., 1960). The central observable implication identified by behavioral theorists is that, among individuals, partisanship increases with "the length of time that the individual has felt some generalized preference for a particular party and has repetitively voted for it" (Converse, 1976: 12–13; see also Tilley, 2003). And indeed, in advanced democracies age is generally a powerful predictor of partisanship (Cassel, 1993; Claggett, 1981; Shively, 1979).

If the experience of voting builds partisanship, then the portion of voters with partisan attachments should be a direct function of the number of years of democracy that the adult population has lived through. In the context of the advanced democracies, this is equivalent to saying that partisanship becomes more widespread as a function of time. But in new and interrupted democracies, it implies that partisanship becomes more widespread as new democracies age and elections are held but that it will fall back when democracy is interrupted.[2]

Behavioral theories of voting obviously cannot be applied mechanically to new democracies. To the extent that the kinds of elite reshufflings emphasized by Rose and Munro (2003) change the set of parties that a voter is able to vote for from one election to the next, repeated elections lose their power to forge partisanship. But when the set of parties and party labels in competition for voters' support remains the same, the behavioral effect should operate in new democracies, as it does in old ones. We predict that electoral volatility will decline as democracy ages but spike after dictatorship.

Ours and the exceptionalists' perspectives have clearly contrasting observable implications. On the exceptionalists' view, electoral volatility should not decline as a function of the age of democracy, and should not be any greater after an authoritarian interregnum than during democratic spells.

Our paper makes three distinctive contributions. The first is that we study the effect of the passage of time on the stability of electoral outcomes under both democratic and authoritarian regimes *within a single country*. This design allows us to hold constant country-specific characteristics – such as culture or institutions – and to control for election-specific shocks that might affect the stability of electoral outcomes. (As we explain below, we do the latter by including dummy variables for each election year in our data.) In cross-national research, where the unit of observation is an election, one could use country dummies or fixed effects to control for country-specific characteristics, but one cannot control for election-specific shocks that are not common to all countries.

Our second contribution is to explore the effects on stability of repeated ruptures in the regime itself – ruptures that interrupt the normal democratic practices of mobilization and voting. We are not the first to examine the dynamics of partisanship over long periods of time within single countries. Others have done so in the context of the United States (Bartels, 1998, 2000; Campbell et al., 1960; Converse, 1969, 1976; Green et al., 2005; Miller and Shanks, 1996), Britain (Butler and Stokes, 1969; Tilley, 2003), France (Converse and Pierce, 1986), Denmark (Thomsen, 1987), Weimar Germany (Shively, 1972), the Netherlands and West Germany (Barnes, 1990), and Australia and New Zealand (Leithner, 1997). Democracy in these countries has been uninterrupted for many decades if not centuries. Hence one can study the impact of crises (Inglehart and Hochstein, 1972) or realignments (Achen and Bartels, 2005;

[2] For more rationalistic interpretations, see Achen (1992) and Fiorina (1981).

Bartels, 1998) on partisanship; or one can study the equilibrium dynamics of particular parties and party systems over time (Bartolini and Mair, 1990; McDonald and Best, 2006; Przeworski, 1975).

Recently, studies of partisanship in new democracies have been undertaken in Russia (Tucker and Brader, 2001) and Hungary (Wittenberg, 2006). Tucker and Brader focus exclusively on post-Soviet Russia; they therefore are able to document the rise of partisanship at the origins of a democratic regime, but not the effects of democratic interruptions. The Hungarian experience, as elucidated by Wittenberg, sheds light on the impact of a single 45-year authoritarian spell on partisan identities.

By contrast, because the country we study is one in which periods of democracy are frequently interspersed with periods of authoritarian rule, we are able to compare the effects of political regime on partisanship. Studying a frequently interrupted democracy over time also allows us to determine whether the mere passage of time or rather the passage of time under democracy – during which elections are held regularly – leads to the development of partisanship. We will show that elections are crucial events for forging and reproducing partisan ties. Even under democracy, longer gaps between elections spell a fraying of partisan ties. Yet the passage of time between elections during democratic periods, when parties can continue to mobilize and communicate with voters, erodes partisanship less sharply than does the passage of time under dictatorship, when these freedoms are curtailed.

Our third contribution is that we study the effect of the passage of time on the stability of vote shares *by party*. In contrast, studies of electoral volatility, such as Mainwaring and Zoco's or Roberts and Wibbels's, typically examine cumulative volatility – volatility summed across parties. Our design allows us to discern differences in the volatility dynamics among parties, revealing, for instance, the apparently greater stability of partisan ties among constituents of the Argentine Peronists, compared to that of the Radicals, in the wake of interruptions of democracy.

Of course, there are disadvantages in studying electoral dynamics within a single country. One cannot be sure that a similar analysis would produce the same results in other settings. Among Latin American countries, Argentina is one in which the traditional parties have persisted longer. If the kind of analysis we have undertaken were repeated in countries with a more shifting set of parties, it might turn out that stability does not spread as democracy ages, as the exceptionalist interpretation implies, even when one controls for other sources of instability. That is, it might turn out that a failure of party organizational efforts and of repeated elections to build partisanship explains the high volatility rate that one observes in these countries. But it might turn out that the passage of time indeed increases stability in these settings as well, as long as voters are given the opportunity to cast ballots for a stable set of competitors.

Our finding that interruptions of democracy cumulatively reduce electoral stability (and, behind it, presumably, partisanship) may well help to explain electoral dynamics in other countries with a history of frequent regime transitions. Certainly Argentina, with its nine transitions to democracy between 1912 and 1983, is not unique. Other places where a history of frequent interruptions of democracy include Peru (seven transitions since independence), Uruguay (five), and Chile (five). It is not atypical of Central America (Guatemala, seven; Honduras, five; Panama, five) or of the Hispanic Caribbean (Cuba, four; Dominican Republic, four). Nor is this pattern confined to Latin America, but extends to Greece (seven) and Turkey (four), and to some major African (Ghana, five; Nigeria, four; Uganda, three; Sudan, four) and Asian countries (Thailand, six; Pakistan, six). These cases would be obvious settings in which to replicate the type of analysis we present below.

The central focus of our study is the development of partisan attachments over time in an interrupted democracy. By partisanship, we mean a propensity of people to identify or feel an affinity with a particular political party, and hence to maintain a standing decision to vote for that party.[3] Partisans are capable of defecting and voting for another party; but when they do, in future elections they tend to return to their party. By contrast, non-partisans tend either to abstain or to vote stochastically or entirely retrospectively, in response to their perceptions of the incumbents' performance. Whereas the votes of non-partisans are perpetually up for grabs, those of partisans are for their party to lose.

We mentioned earlier our skepticism that political parties in new democracies do not at least try to cultivate partisan attachments in the electorate. Yet it is easy to see why casual observation has tended to support the exceptionalists' view that the elapsing of time under democracy does not stabilize partisanship and electoral outcomes. In many new democracies, party systems appear to become less, not more, stable over time. On the surface, Argentina seems to be just such a case. Since the Sáenz Peña reforms of 1912, which introduced universal male suffrage and enforced the secret ballot, two parties have dominated politics at the national level, first the Radical party (Unión Cívica Radical) and conservative oligarchic parties, then, starting in 1946, the Radicals and the Peronist party. Democracy in Argentina was frequently interrupted by coups d'état, most recently the 1976 coup that initiated eight years of repressive military rule. When democracy recommenced in 1983, the Radicals and the Peronists again dominated national elections.

But in the third decade of Argentina's current and longest period of democracy the party system has frayed. After two terms in the presidency, both of which ended in debacles, the Radical party suffered steep declines in support: its presidential candidate in 2003 garnered a mere 2% of the vote. The Peronist party, in turn, has been afflicted by internecine fights. The two-term Peronist president, Carlos Menem (1989–1999), undertook a dramatic shift in the party's economic policy stance, from protectionism to neoliberalism, and (not unrelatedly) broke the party's ties with the labor movement (see McGuire, 1997; Murillo, 2001; Stokes, 2001). It therefore began to attract higher-income voters and, among the poor, to rely more on clientelist payments and less on ideological support (see

[3] Given this definition, we use the terms partisanship and partisan attachment interchangeably.

Auyero, 2000; Brusco et al., 2004; Levitsky, 2001). The Peronists suffered a split in the mid-1990s, losing national leaders (one of whom became vice president in 1999 in a coalition under a Radical president). In 2003, three Peronist presidential candidates competed against one another. Later developments suggest some resilience of the traditional party system. In the 2007 presidential election, the Peronists fielded but one candidate and the Radical party rebounded somewhat, taking 17% of the national vote.

The findings presented below reveal that, despite these recent upheavals, partisanship does appear to grow during democratic spells in interrupted democracies. Although its presiding over an economic depression caused a deep dip in support for the Radicals, a major traditional party – a fact that easily overwhelmed any organizational or behavioral effect – this venerable party survived. Another way of explaining the *ceteris paribus* structure of the time effect is to consider that, had the Radical party's debacle happened not in the third decade of uninterrupted democracy but at its outset, the party might well have disappeared altogether.

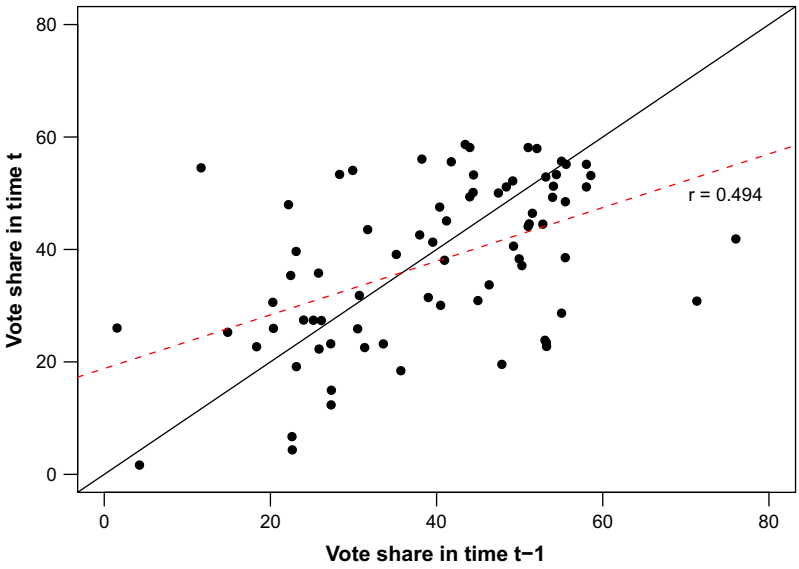
2. Cross-national evidence

Empirical studies tracking partisanship and electoral stability over time have produced mixed results. Scholars interested in partisanship often study volatility rates, and cross-national studies consistently reveal much higher volatility in new democracies than in old ones (Coppedge, 1998; Dalton, 2000; Mainwaring and Torcal, 2006; Mainwaring and Zoco, 2007). It is well documented that electoral volatility is higher in Latin America than in Europe. High volatility rates suggest a certain electoral disorderliness, if not chaos, in developing democracies.

Some studies do find increasing partisanship as democracy ages. Using panel survey data, Tucker and Brader (2001) find growing partisanship among Russian voters as time elapses under democracy (see also Miller and Klobucar, 2000; Miller et al., 1998). Dalton and Weldon (2007) compare survey results across countries and find that, in new democracies where party systems are stable, partisan ties become more widespread as democracy ages. But several ecological studies detect no decline in volatility over time. Roberts and Wibbels (1999) identify several factors that influence party-system volatility in Latin America. But in their regressions, the mere passage of time under democracy does not reduce volatility.

Turning to the effect of dictatorial interludes on electoral stability, Remmer (1985) concludes that the longer a dictatorship lasts, the greater the discontinuity between the last pre-authoritarian election and the first election marking a return to democracy. Yet Geddes (1995) is struck by the continuity of Latin American party systems (but not Eastern European ones) across authoritarian interludes, and Wittenberg (2006), as mentioned, demonstrates remarkable continuity in Hungarian elections separated by the 45-year gap during Communist rule.

A simple cross-Latin American illustration is suggestive of some stability of electoral outcomes. In Fig. 1, we plot the relationship between the share of the vote received by the largest party in each of 18 Latin American countries against that party's share of the vote in the previous election. Hence each point on the scatter-plot represents a pair of elections, with the party's vote share



Note: Data points represent pairs of sequential vote shares for a particular party. We include electoral results for one party per country (the party with the greatest average vote share across elections) for each election between 1978 and 2005.

Fig. 1. Partisan stability in Latin America, 1978–2005.

in the previous election measured on the horizontal axis, its share in the subsequent one on the vertical axis. If previous vote shares perfectly predicted current ones, all observations would fall on the 45-degree line. This is far from the case. Still, the positive slope of the regression line indicates some continuity in vote shares across pairs of elections, though the relation is weak and there are clear outliers. The figure suggests more partisan stability in the region than previously thought.

There are several potential methodological concerns about prior studies that claim to shows that volatility does not decline over time in new democracies. This research typically relies on highly aggregated data, such as national vote shares, and pays little attention to the challenge of making inferences about the choices of individual voters. Volatility rates are difficult to interpret: they do not distinguish demand-side changes in voter preferences from supply-side changes in the set of parties running for office. Studies of trends in volatility over time typically consider a small number of elections. But if party identities crystallize only gradually, increased aggregate stability might not emerge over the course of the first few election cycles. Often these studies do not control for countervailing factors that can mask an underlying stabilization of the vote. Hence, if the period under study – generally, the 1980s and 1990s – was one in which parties in power in new democracies were buffeted by powerful economic shocks, the failure to control for these shocks would mask subtler increases in partisanship.

We address these conceptual and empirical problems by studying the dynamics of electoral support for individual parties over a broad sweep of history, in Argentina from 1912 until 2003. We avoid the problem of confusing supply- and demand-driven fluctuations by studying separately shifts in support for Argentina's two major parties, the Radicals and the Peronists. We can also thus identify differences in the dynamics of partisanship among political parties within a single national context. Our use of disaggregated data – voting returns by department (roughly equivalent to the county in the U.S.) – reduces problems of ecological inference, and we use new techniques for detecting these problems. We also examine individual data which suggest that our aggregate results do not suffer from the ecological fallacy. And to discern subtle processes of stabilization of partisan identities, we control for factors that, in addition to previous voting behavior, influence a party's share of the vote in any given election.

3. Data and methods

Partisanship is difficult to observe directly. But – as mentioned earlier – researchers have explored the dynamics of partisanship by studying the stability of party vote shares from one election to the next (Achen and Shively, 1995: 166–88; Bartels, 1998; Leithner, 1997; Shively, 1972; Thomsen, 1987). They reason that when partisanship is widespread, the vote share of a given party will remain stable over pairs of elections, whereas when partisanship is rare, aggregate vote shares will tend to vary more widely from one election to the next. We follow a similar approach and focus on the relationship between past and current vote shares as a proxy for partisanship.[4] We study the relationship between vote shares in subsequent pairs of elections in departments across the country, beginning with the first democratic election, in 1912.

When – controlling for other factors – the vote share of a party in a department varies little from one election to the next, this stability reflects high levels of partisanship among the departments' electorate; when a party's vote share varies widely across pairs of elections, partisanship is not widespread. For instance, if a party's vote share in Department A was 60% in 1946, 30% in 1948, and 45% in 1951, whereas in Department B it was 55%, 53%, and 57%, we would infer – all else being equal – that partisanship was more widespread in Department B than in Department A.

We constructed a large ecological data set with election returns by department from 34 national elections taking place from the Sáenz Peña reforms to 2003.[5] We drew observations from 561 departments which, multiplied by 34 elections, yield over 17,000 observations. To include demographic controls, we matched these returns with data from seven national censuses conducted over the course of the twentieth century and in 2001. To our knowledge this is the most comprehensive database of Argentine electoral results assembled to date.[6]

Our empirical strategy is represented by the following basic model:

[4] Voters who repeatedly support a political party in Argentina, as in other new democracies in the developing world, cannot be assumed to be drawn to it on purely ideological or affective grounds. The large literature on political clientelism and vote buying shows that voters sometimes provide votes in exchange for concrete individual rewards (for a recent review, see Stokes, 2007). The evidence offered below of growing stability of the vote, which we take as a proxy for increasing partisanship, cannot, strictly speaking, distinguish growing partisan loyalties from increasingly widespread and effective clientelist networks. Yet most evidence suggests that a minority of voters supports parties in exchange for material benefits. We therefore believe that our analyses are picking up on growing partisanship, not merely on growing clientelism.

[5] Given Argentina's highly fragmented federal system, party labels and inter-party alliances vary between provinces and over time. Still, there is considerable continuity in the presence of the two major parties and the ability of voters to identify them across provinces and election years. In a number of elections multiple candidates from the same party ran against each other. Most recently, as mentioned, in 2003 three Peronist candidates competed for the presidency. Our aggregation of these party labels under the general Radical and Peronist headings nevertheless is justified. These were fleeting party divisions that generally disappeared by the following election. The single exception is that of the Intransigent Radicals and the People's Radicals, two Radical factions that competed continuously during the 1957–1965 period. But our combining of their votes biases us against finding a stabilizing effect; when we rerun our analyses excluding one of the two party labels, our results are stronger in the directions we hypothesize.

[6] Further explanation of our data, sources, and calculations is available in the online appendix (see also Lupu and Stokes, 2009). Since voting is compulsory in Argentina and voter turnout is consistently in the 70–90% range, we do not expect significant discrepancies between census data covering entire district populations and electoral results covering only those who turn out to vote.

$$\begin{aligned} vote_{it} = {} & \alpha + \beta_1 vote_{it-1} + \beta_2 time_t + \beta_3 (time_t \times vote_{it-1}) \\ & + \beta_4 partyage_t + \beta_5 (partyage_t \times vote_{it-1}) \\ & + \beta_6 ENP_{it-1} + \beta_7 pre1946_t + \beta_8 literacy_{it} \\ & + \beta_9 (literacy_{it} \times pre1946_t) + \beta_{10} urbanization_{it} \\ & + \beta_{11} population_{it} + \gamma_t + \delta_i + \varepsilon_{it}. \end{aligned}$$

Our dependent variable is the vote share (*vote*) for party t in department i (one party per model).[7] Our key explanatory variables are interactions between time and the party's vote share in the same department in the previous election. It is these interactions that allow us to study the effect of age on partisanship. We focus on these lagged-vote share/time interactions because we are interested in whether the passage of time under democracy increases, decreases, or leaves unchanged the correlation in a party's departmental vote share between pairs of elections. Hence the larger the partial coefficient β_3, the greater the effect of the passage of time under democracy on stabilizing electoral outcomes. Were β_3 to turn out not to be significantly different from zero, one could not reject the null hypothesis that the passage of time under democracy has no effect on partisanship. A negative β_3 would imply that partisanship actually declined under democracy.

We measure time in three distinct ways. Our first measure, *age of democracy*, counts the number of years that have elapsed since redemocratization. If indeed partisanship spreads as democracy matures, then the amount of variation in current vote shares explained by lagged-vote shares should grow over (democratic) time. That is, controlling for any shifts in the social structure, for secular shifts in the popularity of particular parties, and for the idiosyncrasies of particular elections (see below), a party's vote share in a given department in the second election after redemocratization will be more highly predictive of that vote share in the third election than the first was of the second, the third more predictive of the fourth than the second was of the third, and so forth.

The second measure of time that we interact with lagged-vote shares is *first election*, a dummy variable for the first election in each period of democracy. This measure allows us to examine the impact of authoritarian interludes on vote dynamics. If district vote shares in two elections are more highly correlated when the period between them was democratic than when it was authoritarian, this result would be evidence in favor of a growing stabilization of the vote under democracy. In essence, this measure allows us to treat democratization as a shock to vote dynamics.[8]

Our third measure of time, *years since election*, is the number of years that elapsed since the previous election in which the party in question was able to compete. This measure acknowledges that some elections were non-competitive: voters' choices were limited either because parties were proscribed (as were the Peronists in 1957–1960 and 1963), because parties abstained from participating (as did the Radicals in the 1930s), or because electoral fraud was anticipated and widespread (as in the 1930s, early 1940s, 1951, and 1954). When citizens vote in elections in which the party they identify with is not allowed to run, their attachments may shift to one of the parties for which they are able to vote; hence partisanship may weaken. Our expectation is that the more years that have elapsed since the previous competitive election, the less variation explained by the lagged-vote share.

Our models also include additional controls, covariates rarely included in studies of vote dynamics. To account for the possibility that changes in the social structure, not democracy or regime change, lie behind any observed changes in partisanship, we control for a district's class structure, using literacy rates as a proxy.[9] Most political historians of Argentina hold that, before the appearance of the Peronists in 1946, lower-class voters supported the Radical and Socialist parties against older, more oligarchic options. With the rise of Peronism and the emergence of the Radical versus Peronist two-party system, lower-class support shifted to the Peronists (Lupu and Stokes, 2009). We therefore expect that, before 1946, districts with lower literacy rates would elicit greater support for the Radicals, after 1946, for the Peronists. We study these period effects by introducing an interaction term between literacy rates and elections that occurred before 1946 (*pre1946*). Hence in the model above, when the dependent variable is the Radical vote share, we expect β_8 to be negative and β_9 to be positive; when the dependent variable is the Peronist vote share, we expect β_8 to be negative.

Our expectation is that partisanship will grow both as a function of the age of democracy and as a function of the age of parties. We measure the age of democracy as a count variable that restarts every time that a new democracy is initiated; the age of each party (*partyage*) is a time trend that begins at zero in 1912 for the Radicals and in 1946 for the Peronists. We include an interaction between the lagged dependent variables (vote shares) and the age of the party to compare with the effect of the age of democracy. The un-interacted age of party time trend controls for secular nationwide shifts in a party's fortune, as when a particular party grows or declines in popularity over an extended period of time.

[7] Given that most Peronist and Radical party vote shares are centered around the mean party vote shares and close to 50% both in cross-sections and over time (see Table 1 below), and for ease of interpretation, we do not use logged vote shares as our dependent variable. Performing this transformation does not change our results.

[8] Note that, unlike Eastern European cases, neither of the major parties was associated with the authoritarian regimes, so we have little reason to be concerned that first elections favor one particular party over the other.

[9] Literacy is a good proxy for class in Argentina. Using data from the partial census of 1927 (Canton and Moreno, 1971), we calculated the correlation between literacy and the proportion of "Employees," a category that includes skilled or white-collar workers such as inspectors, pilots, and bankers. The correlation coefficient was 0.88. The correlation between literacy and the proportion of "Workers, Assistants and Day Laborers," a category that includes unskilled or blue-collar workers such as factory workers, merchants, and sweepers, was −0.72. Unfortunately, the other censuses either do not report data on occupations or collapse these two categories. But note that in general proxies need not even be this closely correlated to be useful (Wooldridge, 2003).

In all models, we include the un-interacted lagged-vote share going to the party. In this way, we are able to control for department- and election-specific shocks to a party's popularity.[10] To control for demographic factors that may affect both vote shares and the effect of time on partisanship – our substantive focus – we also include the log of the department's population and the urbanization rate. The vote share of each party may be influenced by the number of alternative choices available to a district's voters. Therefore we also include the lagged effective number of political parties in the department.

To discern any independent effect of political regime on partisanship (measured, again, as the correspondence between vote shares in the last and the current election, by department), our regressions include a number of fixed effects. A party may enjoy structurally high (or low) levels of support in a given department; to capture such time-invariant departmental partisan leanings, all of our models employ department fixed effects, denoted by δ_i in the equation above.[11] To control for performance-related shifts in electoral support that result from economic volatility, scandals, and other shocks, we include dummy variables for each election year (denoted by γ_t in the equation). Such passing shocks were sometimes substantial and come through in our analyses. For instance, the coefficients on a dummy for the September 1973 election, the first one in which Perón participated after his dramatic (and violent) return from exile, show an 11-percentage-point jump in Peronist votes on average across the departments; the Radical votes dipped in that same election on average by 18 percentage points.[12]

Note that our interest is not in explaining *levels* of support for the parties, per se. It is instead in the correspondence between current and lagged levels of support and – crucially – how this election-to-election correspondence varies as a function of the time spent under democracy and under dictatorship. We are therefore indifferent about which kinds of national shocks – episodes of inflation, war, scandal, and the like – have an effect on the level of support for a party. Instead we use year dummies (γ_t) to capture the full set of such national effects so as to separate out temporary shocks to a party's support (and hence a temporary reduction in election-to-election correspondence) from the trend in this correspondence over time. Note also that a shock that helps (hurts) the incumbent party tends to hurt (help) the opposition; therefore it is unnecessary to distinguish whether the year in question found the party in or out of power.

In sum, our specification allows us to control for a number of important factors in vote dynamics. We are able to isolate, in the presence of a wide range of controls, the average effect of the maturing of democracy on partisanship in Argentina's departments. We do this by using time/lagged-vote share interactions to explore how election-to-election correspondences in the departmental vote share of a party change with the passage of time and under dictatorship and democracy. By using a fixed-effects framework, we control for each party's long-term equilibrium vote level in a department – that is, the time-invariant propensity of that department's voters to vote for each party. And by including dummy variables for each election year, we further account for nationwide election-specific shifts, such as ones resulting from economic crises or from corruption scandals.

Table 1 gives summary statistics for all the variables.

Before turning to our results, it is worth underscoring the methodological continuities and differences between our approach and the literature on vote dynamics (or the "normal vote") in advanced democracies (e.g. McDonald and Best, 2006). The latter typically uses aggregate election returns to identify equilibrium levels of support for political parties in the electorate, as well as shocks that augment or depress these equilibrium levels in given elections, the speed with which equilibrium levels reemerge after shocks, and moments of realignment – permanent changes in equilibrium levels of support.

This tradition began with studies of partisanship in the electorate and treated aggregate equilibrium vote shares as reflecting this underlying partisanship (e.g. Fiorina, 1981; Green and Palmquist, 1990; Stokes and Iversen, 1962). Although recent work on vote dynamics no longer explicitly discusses partisanship, the notion of an equilibrium vote clearly presupposed existing partisan attachments in the electorate. In contrast to the vote dynamics literature's concern with identifying shocks to existing equilibrium levels of support, our concern is to explore the *emergence* of such equilibria (and underlying partisanship) in the first place. Moreover, we are interested in testing whether election-on-election volatility increases or decreases over time, rather than measuring how quickly voting returns to equilibrium levels following shocks.

4. Regime and partisanship: aggregate evidence

For each of our measures of time, we report results using both reduced-form models without controls and models that include the full set of control variables. We begin with the results for the Radicals. In all the models reported in Table 2, coefficients on the time/lagged-vote share interactions are significant and have the expected signs. In models 1 and 2, the older the democracy, the closer the correspondence between the Radical-party department vote share in the last election and in the current one (age of democracy × lagged-vote share, $\beta_3 > 0$). In models 3 and 4, elections initiating new democratic periods were less well predicted by the previous election than later elections were by their lags (first election × lagged-vote share, $\beta_3 < 0$). In models 5 and 6, the longer the time that elapsed between

[10] Monte Carlo analyses (Kristensen and Wawro, 2007) have shown that in the presence of dynamics and fixed effects with a large cross-sectional dimension to the sample, the best estimator is OLS with Arellano robust standard errors (see also Hsiao, 2005; Achen, 2000; Beck and Katz, 2004). We therefore use these in our analyses.

[11] There does not seem to be collinearity between our lagged dependent variable and these department fixed effects: our results show correlations between the independent variables and the fixed effects turn out to be 0.05 for the Radicals and less than 0.11 for the Peronists.

[12] These coefficients (not shown) compare the vote shares against those of the base year: 1912 for the Radicals and 1946 for the Peronists.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Radical vote share[a]	16,973	38.25	19.64	0	100
Peronist vote share[a]	14,371	41.51	18.32	0	99.11
Age of democracy	16,895	7.632	6.538	0	20
Years since election (Radicals)	16,819	2.928	2.671	0	10
Years since election (Peronists)	11,887	3.499	3.490	0	14
Age of party (Radicals)	17,395	59.09	26.016	0	91
Age of party (Peronists)	14,711	33.75	17.496	0	57
Effective number of parties	17,069	3.015	1.099	0.942	11.80
Literacy rate	17,015	0.853	0.134	0.255	1
Urbanization rate	16,599	0.493	0.352	0	1
Population	16,301	49,587	99,268	159	1,305,885

[a] A listing of party labels we coded as Radical and Peronist is available in Lupu and Stokes (2009).

elections, the greater the erosion of stability (years since election × lagged-vote share, $\beta_3 < 0$).[13]

Turning to the Peronists (Table 3), the results are substantively the same. In models 1 and 2, the longer democracy was in existence, the more predictive the lagged on the current departmental vote share (age of democracy × lagged-vote share, $\beta_3 > 0$). In models 3 and 4, transitional elections were less well predicted by the last departmental vote in the previous democratic period than were later elections by their lags (first election × lagged-vote share, $\beta_3 < 0$). And in models 5 and 6, the longer the gap between elections, the less predictive was the lagged Peronist vote share on the current vote share (years since election × lagged-vote share, $\beta_3 < 0$). For both the Radicals and Peronists, the coefficient on the age of democracy/lagged-vote share interaction (β_3 in model 1) is much larger than the coefficient on the age of party/lagged-vote share interaction (β_5). This suggests that partisanship grew more quickly during periods of democracy than over the entire sample period, including both democratic and authoritarian spells.

Table 4 simulates the marginal effect of lagged departmental vote shares on current vote shares under the assumption that zero, ten, and twenty years have elapsed. In model 2, holding other variables constant, twenty additional years of democracy increase the predictiveness of the Radical party's last departmental vote share on the current one by 30% (from 23% to 30%). Twenty additional years of democracy increase the predictiveness of past on current Peronist vote shares by nearly 160%. In model 4, if the last election and the current one were separated by a period of authoritarianism, then the predictive power of the lagged departmental vote share for both parties was nearly 100% less than when no authoritarian interlude occurred. In model 6, considering all the elections in our data set, if zero years elapsed since the last election – as happened twice during the twentieth century – the party's departmental vote share in that earlier election explains 38% of the variation in the Radical vote share in the current election, 19% of the variation in the Peronist vote share.[14] If 20 years elapsed, the lagged and current vote shares were actually negatively related. A shift from zero to twenty years between consecutive elections predicts a loss of stability of the Radical vote of more than 200%, of the Peronist vote of more than 170%.

Fig. 2 illustrates these simulations using the March 1973 election as an example. The simulated effect of the age of democracy on each party is traced by the unbroken (Radical) and dotted (Peronist) lines. The passage of democratic time increases partisanship for both Radicals and for Peronists, but the Peronists seem to make better use of democratic interludes to build partisanship – the slope of the dotted line is greater than that of the unbroken line. The simulated level of partisanship was actually greater for the Radicals when we assumed a democracy that was eight years old or younger in 1973, but if democracy persisted beyond eight years, Peronist partisanship became more widespread. Similarly, in simulations, long gaps between elections take a greater toll on Radical (broken line) than on Peronist partisanship (broken line with dots).

Ecological analyses, then, strongly suggest that when democracy took hold, partisanship grew in this interrupted democracy, just as it does over time in stable democracies. Equally important as this national finding are the differences between the two major parties. The Peronists seem to have managed the partisanship of their constituents more successfully than did the Radicals. They better exploited democratic openings to build partisanship, were less subject to the erosion of partisanship between elections, and were better at maintaining continuity during authoritarian spells. At the end of the paper we discuss how organizational and ideological factors may explain these differences between the two parties.

Recalling our theoretical concerns, we would like to compare the effect on partisanship of the passage of time under democracy and under dictatorship. If behavioral theories have relevance for interrupted democracies, we would expect stability to increase in Argentina under democratic time, erode under authoritarian time ($\beta_3 > 0$). The exceptionalist claim, by contrast, implies that stability will erode, or at least fail to grow, during democratic time ($\beta_3 \leq 0$). To make these comparisons, we split our sample

[13] To reduce the possibility that population movements among districts were driving our results, we reran our analysis on a subset of departments in which annual population change was below the mean of 1.4%. We found that our substantive results were unchanged and that, if anything, the effects in this population-stable subset were slightly larger (and in the hypothesized direction).

[14] The two twentieth-century instances when two national elections were held the same year were in 1948 and 1973.

Table 2
Determinants of Radical vote share.

Independent variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Vote share ($t-1$)	0.303***	0.202***	0.603***	0.289***	0.834***	0.346***
	(0.011)	(0.031)	(0.013)	(0.035)	(0.019)	(0.038)
Age of democracy	−1.353***	−1.952***				
	(0.053)	(0.102)				
Age of democracy × vote share ($t-1$)	0.025***	0.003*				
	(0.001)	(0.002)				
First election			24.67***	40.996***		
			(0.822)	(4.695)		
First election × vote share ($t-1$)			−0.569***	−0.295***		
			(0.019)	(0.026)		
Years since election					4.667***	3.175***
					(0.162)	(0.134)
Years since election × vote share ($t-1$)					−0.135***	−0.039***
					(0.005)	(0.004)
Age of party		−0.149		−0.250***		−0.150***
		(0.093)		(0.079)		(0.027)
Age of party × vote share ($t-1$)		0.001		0.001 (0.001)		0.001
		(0.001)				(0.001)
Effective number of parties ($t-1$)		0.056		0.254 (0.185)		0.196
		(0.190)				(0.183)
Elections prior to 1946		0.000		34.542***		57.493***
		(0.000)		(5.384)		(4.871)
Literacy		17.574***		14.483***		18.112***
		(5.744)		(5.474)		(5.630)
Literacy × Elections prior to 1946		−41.351***		−38.530***		−43.257***
		(5.766)		(5.417)		(5.689)
Urbanization		0.002		0.319 (1.304)		−0.049
		(1.367)				(1.330)
Population (ln)		−3.200***		−3.163***		−3.250***
		(0.533)		(0.527)		(0.531)
Constant	29.75***	63.74***	14.47***	34.87***	6.95***	37.90***
	(0.466)	(6.757)	(0.542)	(10.030)	(0.717)	(6.648)
R^2	0.250	0.656	0.261	0.665	0.283	0.663
Observations	11,800	11,249	11,800	11,249	11,727	11,176
Groups	558	504	558	504	558	504

Models are panel regressions with fixed effects. Year dummy variables are included (not shown). Arellano robust (clustered) standard errors reported in parentheses. Two-tailed tests.
***Significant at 1% level, **significant at 5% level, *significant at 10% level.

between democratic and authoritarian gaps between elections. Note, however, that authoritarian periods always increased the gap between elections in Argentina. As a result, authoritarianism is highly correlated in our data with longer gaps than those under democracy (which, under democracy, were almost always two years). Hence regression specifications on the split sample suffer from the inflated standard errors associated with such multicollinearity.

Still, our coefficient estimates are instructive. In the bottom panel of Table 4 we simulate the marginal effect of lagged departmental vote shares on current vote shares under democratic versus authoritarian gaps of time (regression results not shown). Although the values themselves represent implausible scenarios – authoritarian rulers who took power and then quickly turned things over to civilians who held elections, or democratic governments that lengthened significantly the intervals between elections – they nevertheless serve to illustrate the regime effects. Indeed, they help us to refine our understanding of time, partisanship, and political regime. For both Radicals and Peronists, the passage of time without elections erodes partisanship, whether the regime is authoritarian or democratic. Hence the crucial tool that parties wield to build partisan links is democratic elections.

The findings presented thus far are good news for democrats in interrupted democracies. They show that, in line with behavioral theory's predictions and against the exceptionalists, partisanship grows during democratic interludes. They also show that elections are the primary mechanism through which partisan attachments strengthen. But our findings, viewed differently, also underscore the cost imposed on partisanship and, presumably, on electoral stability, by interruptions of democracy.

To get a sense of how big a cost, consider a comparison of electoral stability between the 2001 and 2003 elections in the real Argentina, a heavily interrupted democracy, and a hypothetical Argentina, one in which democracy had never been interrupted. In the real Argentina, the election of 2003 occurred when democracy was 20 years old. As mentioned in the introduction, this was also a relatively chaotic election. The average change of the Radical-party departmental vote share in 2003 versus 2001 was 85%, as against 30% between 1999 and 2001. In the real Argentina in which democracy was 20 years old, knowing the vote share in 2001 would improve one's prediction of the 2003 vote share by 6% for the Radicals and 28% for the Peronists. In the hypothetical Argentina, in which democracy would have been 91 years old, the improvement of predictions would have

Table 3
Determinants of Peronist vote share.

Independent variables	(1)[a]	(2)[a]	(3)	(4)[a]	(5)[a]	(6)
Vote share ($t-1$)	0.250***	0.230***	0.567***	0.291***	0.409***	0.052
	(0.011)	(0.031)	(0.014)	(0.034)	(0.022)	(0.039)
Age of democracy	−0.185***	1.418***				
	(0.093)	(0.139)				
Age of democracy × vote share ($t-1$)	0.014***	0.014***				
	(0.002)	(0.003)				
First election			35.60***	12.573***		
			(1.127)	(1.565)		
First election × vote share ($t-1$)			−0.905***	−0.295***		
			(0.023)	(0.039)		
Years since election					1.590***	−1.893***
					(0.153)	(0.208)
Years since election × vote share ($t-1$)					−0.053***	−0.017***
					(0.003)	(0.003)
Age of party		−0.589***		−0.068		−0.138***
		(0.076)		(0.056)		(0.051)
Age of party × vote share ($t-1$)		−0.002		0.001		0.004***
		(0.001)		(0.001)		(0.001)
Effective number of parties ($t-1$)		−0.385*		−0.451**		−0.385*
		(0.207)		(0.207)		(0.222)
Literacy		5.302		3.435		−4.433
		(6.731)		(6.753)		(7.134)
Urbanization		2.723*		2.935**		3.177**
		(1.398)		(1.407)		(1.409)
Population (ln)		−3.116***		−3.001***		−2.705***
		(0.879)		(0.882)		(0.818)
Constant	29.07***	78.861***	20.52***	80.981***	30.07***	97.309***
	(0.489)	(11.135)	(0.554)	(11.086)	(1.006)	(11.528)
R^2	0.129	0.623	0.270	0.627	0.146	0.545
Observations	9202	8681	9202	8681	7885	7386
Groups	557	504	557	504	557	504

Models are panel regressions with fixed effects. Year dummy variables are included (not shown). Arellano robust (clustered) standard errors reported in parentheses. Two-tailed tests.
***Significant at 1% level, **significant at 5% level, *significant at 10% level.
[a] These models do not include the presidential election of 1958 since Peronist votes, most of which were cast for the Intransigent Radical candidate, could not be isolated for that election.

been much greater: 27% for the Radicals (versus 6%) and 80% for the Peronists (versus 28%). One interpretation of 2003, then, is that, as chaotic as it was, it would have been more so had it occurred at the outset of the current period of democracy, instead of when that democracy was 20 years old.

To summarize thus far, when democracy was able to run its course, the stability of partisan vote shares across pairs of elections at the departmental level grew. During interruptions of democracy, this stability eroded. Peronists were better than Radicals at augmenting partisanship during democratic spells and at slowing its erosion during authoritarian spells.

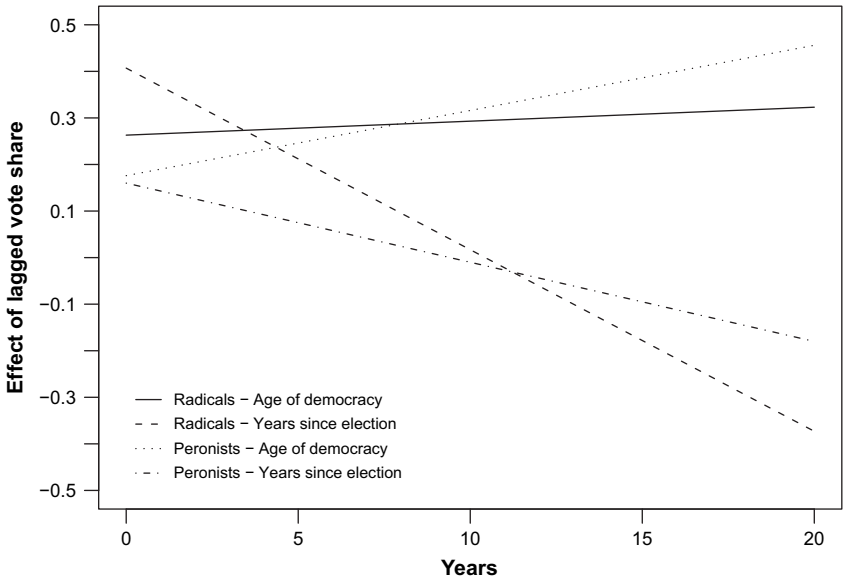
5. Testing for the ecological fallacy

Our premise in analyzing these departmental data is that continuity in vote shares in any given *department* is a measure

Table 4
Compared effects of time measures on stability.

Years	Age of democracy (model 2)				First election (model 4)	
	Radical	Peronist			Radical	Peronist
0	0.234 (0.017)	0.165 (0.020)		Was not a first election	0.322 (0.015)	0.316 (0.020)
10	0.267 (0.014)	0.304 (0.021)		Was a first election	0.027 (0.022)	0.021 (0.031)
20	0.300 (0.027)	0.442 (0.044)				
Years	Years since election (model 6)					
	Radical			Peronist		
	All	Democracy	Non-democracy	All	Democracy	Non-democracy
0	0.378 (0.020)	0.339 (0.037)	0.378 (0.020)	0.189 (0.026)	0.268 (0.025)	−0.007 (0.039)
10	−0.008 (0.030)	0.217 (0.153)	−0.007 (0.030)	0.024 (0.024)	0.176 (0.038)	−0.206 (0.027)
20	−0.394 (0.073)	0.096 (0.337)	−0.393 (0.073)	−0.141 (0.052)	0.085 (0.078)	−0.405 (0.034)

Values indicate the marginal effect of the lagged-vote share at different values of time measures and at constant mean party age, using panel fixed-effects estimates reported in Tables 2 and 3 (regression results for model 6 under only democratic or non-democratic gaps are not reported). Standard errors (in parentheses) are calculated following Brambor et al. (2005).



Note: Values represent simulations of the effect of lagged-vote shares in the March 1973 election calculated from models 2 and 6 in Tables 2 and 3.

Fig. 2. Simulated effect of lagged party vote shares on current vote shares in March 1973.

of the stability of the votes of *individuals* in that department. Yet, as a logical proposition, moving from departmental returns to individual partisanship is perilous. The problem that aggregate data present is that we know the marginals – in this case, the percentage of voters in a district who voted for the Radicals and Peronists in elections t and $t-1$ – but not the interior cells: the proportion of those who voted for the same party in both elections. And it is these interior cells that we want to know. The basic approach to ecological inference, furthered by King (1997), was, first, to determine the range of possible interior-cell values and then to use the variation in these ranges across departments to generate estimations of the interior values. Observations of the range of possible interior values from a large number of departments can then be used to generate estimations of the interior cells for each district and for the population as a whole.

We employ recently developed techniques of ecological inference that gather additional estimation strength and make less stringent assumptions by using hierarchical modeling and Monte Carlo estimations.[15] The resulting inferences allow us to calculate the proportions of voters across the 561 departments who changed their votes and those who did not change.[16]

Table 5 reports the results of these calculations. Note that the on-diagonal cells are much more populous than the off-diagonal cells. During the period of Argentina's first mass party system (1912–1940), which basically pitted the Radical party against conservative parties, we estimate that, on average, 79% of those who voted Radical in one election voted Radical again in the next one. The level of continuity was only slightly lower during the second, Radical versus Peronist, party system (1946–2003): on average 70% of those casting votes for the Radicals, and 72% of those casting votes for the Peronists had also done so in the previous election. These findings are in line with Canton and Jorrat's (2001) estimates

Table 5
Voter preferences by previous vote.

		Current vote		
		Radical		Other parties
1912–1940:				
Previous vote	Radical	79%		21%
	Other parties	39		61
$N = 1860$				
1946–2003:				
		Current vote		
		Radical	Peronist	Other parties
Previous vote	Radical	70%	15%	15%
	Peronist	18	72	10
	Other parties	10	30	60
$N = 9646$				

Note: Cell entries are hierarchical multinomial-Dirichlet estimates of the percentage of voters in all departments who cast votes for Radical, Peronist, or other parties in subsequent pairs of elections, averaged across the period indicated (see Rosen et al., 2001). Estimates were implemented using Wittenberg and Bhaskar's (2005) R code.

[15] We estimate the hierarchical multinomial-Dirichlet model developed by King et al. (1999) and extended by Rosen et al. (2001). Unlike some prior models of ecological inference that impose a 2×2 structure, this model can be applied to multiparty settings.

[16] The calculations assume that populations are stable over time, which is clearly not the case. This assumption is less troubling given that the time lags we are interested in are generally short: two years between elections in the majority of cases.

of the high degree of stability in voting behavior between elections in Argentina.

We also turned to survey data to reassure ourselves that our aggregate findings are not undermined by problems of cross-level inference. They show that, at least in the most recent democratic period, despite substantial movements from party to party across elections, on the whole voters were prone to choosing the same party over time. For instance, in probit estimates derived from surveys conducted in 2001 and 2003, the probability of a person's supporting a candidate from a given party rose monotonically with each prior vote that the person had cast for that party (analyses not shown).

We noted earlier two testable implications of behavioral theories: partisanship grows in the electorate over (democratic) time and it appears with increasing frequency in individuals as they age. In advanced democracies, the older a person is, the more likely she is to identify with a party and the more intense that identification will be. Were it the case, as the exceptionalists suggest, that political parties in new democracies are uninterested in or incapable of building partisanship among voters, we would not expect any effect of an Argentine voters's age on her likelihood of identifying with a party. But just as we saw that the passage of time under democracy increased the electorate's partisanship in the aggregate, so we expect to find that older cohorts of Argentine voters are more likely to identify with one party or another.

This is exactly what we find. Stokes, in collaboration with Valeria Brusco and Marcelo Nazareno, conducted surveys in Argentina in 2003 (see Brusco et al., 2004). They asked, "with which party do you feel most closely identified?" One thousand one hundred thirty seven respondents (59% of the sample) named some party; 806 (41%) identified with no party. We estimated the effect of age, as well as other factors, on the probability that a respondent was among the 1137 who identified with some party, and indeed found a significant positive effect (analyses not shown). In a simulation, an eighteen-year-old, otherwise typical of the sample, had a probability of identifying with some party of just better than a half (54%). For the oldest person in our sample (age 88), that probability rose to 71%.[17]

To summarize, the basic message from our aggregate analyses hold up well under the scrutiny of ecological inference and against comparison with individual data. This message is that the processes of democracy engender partisan ties in new democracies, as in old ones. Voting for a given party in the past increases the likelihood of emitting the same vote in the future. In line with behavioral theories, over time, as people have repeated opportunities to vote for parties and are exposed to their mobilizing efforts, they acquire partisan attachments; hence the probability of partisanship increases with age.

[17] These are *Clarify* simulations, with 95% confidence intervals of 50–58% for 18-year-olds, 64–78% for 88-year-olds (Tomz et al. 2001).

6. Discussion

Our study casts doubt on the assertion that what matters for the stabilization of electoral outcomes is "not how old [a democracy] is" but "when [it] was born" (Mainwaring and Zoco, 2007: 171). If political parties in Argentina lacked incentives to build partisanship, and if voting failed to foster partisan affinities, we would be unlikely to observe a growth of stability over democratic time, its retreat after dictatorship. The dynamics of stability under alternating regimes that our study revealed were robust to the kinds of data we considered and the analytical techniques deployed: regression analysis of aggregate local returns from a century's worth of elections; ecological inference of these same data; the analysis of survey data. All point toward the interpretation that, other things being equal, stability builds as democracy ages, erodes when it is interrupted.

If one believes that democracy works better when parties forge stable links with large numbers of voters, then our findings contain some good news. Most theorists believe that democracy works better when parties and voters maintain enduring ties, though, at high levels, partisanship can become toxic (see e.g., Manin, 1997). Partisanship eases the informational burdens on voters, allows parties in government to make predictions about the future electoral effects of current policies and actions, and enhances accountability. Our findings, though limited to a single country, suggest that, short of major shocks in the performance and popularity of parties, partisanship will grow as time wears on. To repeat: this observation is quite different from predicting that partisanship will always grow over time in new democracies; rather, if it does not grow, the reason is not that parties are incapable of promoting it or voters of internalizing it.

6.1. New democracies and interrupted democracies

The news is good for new democracies, as long as they are young but stable. The story is different for young democracies that can anticipate repeated interruptions in the future. In such places, each interruption of democracy can be expected to ratchet stability downward. Drawing on the Argentine case, one would expect that frequently interrupted democracies will feature smaller numbers of voters with partisan attachments than do the advanced democracies. Our findings may help to explain higher electoral volatility in the Argentinas, Greeces, and Pakistans of the world – places where democracy has been frequently interrupted – than in the Britains, U.S.s, or Indias.

6.2. Party organization and the spread of partisan ties

Among our most striking and least anticipated results were differences in the effect of regime on Argentina's two most important parties. Our findings thus show that parties within a single country may vary in their ability to build constituent loyalty under democracy and retain it under dictatorship. The Peronists were relatively effective at accomplishing this, the Radicals less effective. Organizational differences may help explain this gap. Future research should explore the reasons for this difference. It

may reflect the fact that the Peronists invested heavily in grassroots networks of supporters. Though some linkages were more transactional, involving clientelism and sometimes shear vote buying, organizers also proselytized. Peronist party stability may have been reinforced, especially in the party's early decades, by charismatic leadership.

6.3. Volatility and path dependency

Our study suggests that historically removed events, not just contemporaneous factors, play an important part in shaping current electoral volatility. In explaining higher volatility rates in developing than in advanced democracies, the scholars mentioned earlier have tended to point toward factors *contemporary* with the election in question: economic volatility just before an election, existing political institutions, recent extensions of the suffrage. Our study points toward an *historical* factor: a history of interruptions of democracy. Cumulatively over time, repeated interruptions can severely erode partisan attachments. The persistent, though opaque, weight of historical events tends to be less salient to political analysts than are current conditions, leaving historical factors in danger of being overlooked.

Comparativists interested in historical analysis and path dependency usually focus on alternative tracks that countries are switched onto and the qualitatively different destinations that they therefore reach. Our study suggests an additional, quantitative interpretation of path dependency. A coup interrupts elections and suppresses party activities, thus reducing the level of partisanship; even if democracy is restored and the earlier level of partisanship is achieved or surpassed, still it remains always lower than it would have been had the interruption not occurred. Unless some catch-up process is at work – unless, say, parties work harder to instill partisan links after a period of interrupted democracy – the level of stability is lower, even after democracy is restored.

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