

## 9 ✦ Partisanship in Latin America

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In advanced democracies, citizens' attachments to a party strongly influence their political behavior. Party attachments often determine not only how people vote, but also how they evaluate their government (Bartels 2000; Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2005). These attachments develop over time, passed down from parents to children and adapted or reinforced over the course of an individual's voting life (Achen 1992; Converse 1969; Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009). Although scholars debate their exact nature and origins, party attachments clearly play an important political role in advanced democracies.

We know far less about mass partisanship in developing democracies. That is partly because many developing democracies only began (or returned to) holding competitive elections in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>1</sup> For decades, the developing world had been governed by autocrats, obviating scholarly questions about electoral politics and mass political behavior. Even if scholars had wanted to study individual citizens, reliable survey data were rarely available for these contexts.

Once democracies (re-)emerged in these settings, some dismissed the possibility that citizens would develop party attachments (Kinzo 2005; Mainwaring 1999; Widner 1997). They argued that newly available mass media would allow politicians to appeal directly to citizens instead of investing in party-building (Levitsky and Cameron 2003; Hale 2006; Mainwaring and Zoco 2007; Mainwaring and Torcal 2006). Others considered party attachments irrelevant in settings characterized by rampant electoral fraud, ephemeral party organizations, and clientelism (Hagopian 1998; Roberts and Wibbels 1999). As Mainwaring and Torcal (2006, 204) argue, "outside the advanced democracies, more voters choose candidates on the

basis of their personal characteristics without regard to party, ideology, or programmatic issues.”

Yet there are reasons to expect that mass partisanship in the developing world functions much like it does in advanced democracies. When voters in developing democracies decide which party to vote for, they do so in ways that closely resemble how voters in advanced democracies choose a party (van der Brug, Franklin, and Tóka 2008). There is no clear reason to assume that other behavioral processes operate differently in developing democracies. Moreover, free and fair elections have now been held in many developing democracies for nearly three decades. In many Latin American democracies, political parties that had contested elections during prior periods of democracy returned to political prominence. It seems unlikely that deeply held party attachments from previous democratic periods would simply disappear when electoral competition is interrupted (Lupu and Stokes 2010). In some cases, new political parties have emerged and established themselves over time. But even they often built on existing political identities that were already politically salient (e.g., Shabad and Slomczynski 1999; Valenzuela and Scully 1997; Wittenberg 2006).

Electoral competition in many developing democracies is imperfect; patronage and clientelism characterize some political linkages in these settings (see Kitschelt and Altamirano this volume). But, in considering the nature of partisan attachments, clientelism alone is unlikely the sole influence. Clientelism and partisanship often complement each other in the portfolio of party strategies; they need not serve as substitutes (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007b; Stokes et al. 2013). And if new political parties in advanced democracies can foster partisanship in the era of mass media (Ignazi 1996), why would new political parties in developing democracies be unable to do the same?

This is not merely a question of comparability. Mass partisanship institutionalizes party systems, stabilizes elections, and consolidates new democracies (Converse 1969; Mainwaring and Torcal 2006; Mainwaring and Scully 1995a; Rose and Mishler 1998). As it expands, the menu of parties stabilizes, ensuring that voters are presented with a recurring set of party options. This makes it easier to hold parties accountable for bad performance and reduces the electoral prospects of unknown outsiders. Stable party competition also makes campaign promises more credible, giving voters greater confidence in predicting what each party would do if elected. These are desirable outcomes for developing democracies;

knowing where mass partisanship comes from will help us understand how to achieve these outcomes.

How do we know whether partisanship in developing democracies resembles partisanship in advanced ones? There are at least three ways to address this question. We could examine whether levels of partisanship are the same across countries, although differences in the institutional and social context mean that we should not expect identical rates of partisanship across countries. An alternative would examine whether partisanship is equally stable across countries. Most comparative studies of partisanship—indeed, much of the debate over the concept—has fixated on this metric. But institutional differences may also account for these differences. Even if partisanship functions identically everywhere, it would be more unstable in unstable party environments (Lupu 2013, forthcoming). A final approach could examine whether the correlates of partisanship are consistent across countries. If the same kinds of individuals form party attachments in developing and advanced democracies, then the origins of partisanship are likely similar across contexts. And if partisanship predicts the same kinds of political behaviors across contexts, then it would appear to function similarly.

This chapter takes the latter approach and examines patterns of mass partisanship and its relationship with political behavior across Latin America. While scholars are increasingly examining the origins and effects of mass partisanship in some Latin American democracies (Baker et al. 2010; Domínguez and McCann 1995; Echegaray 2006; Lupu 2013; McCann and Lawson 2003; Medina Vidal et al. 2010; Moreno 2003; Morgan 2007; Pérez-Liñán 2002; Samuels 2006), we still know little about how these attachments develop in general across the region, and whether they do so in ways that mirror mass partisanship in advanced democracies. I rely on cross-national surveys to see whether, on average, Latin American mass partisanship correlates with the same individual characteristics that are associated with it in advanced democracies. I also examine whether Latin American partisans are more likely to participate in politics, like their counterparts in advanced democracies. To help determine whether these relationships are causal, I analyze panel survey data from Brazil. I find consistent evidence that patterns of partisanship in Latin America closely resemble those in advanced democracies.

Despite these similarities on average, rates of mass partisanship across Latin America vary tremendously. Studying mass partisanship in the region thus also allows us to test and refine comparative theories about how contextual factors condition individual preferences. Why do parties in some countries elicit more widespread partisan attachments than those in

other countries? We still know little about how to explain variation in mass partisanship across countries and over time. By expanding our analysis to developing democracies, we will learn much more about the factors that condition mass partisanship.

### Mass Partisanship and Political Behavior

The concept of partisanship has occupied scholars of political behavior for decades. Early theories viewed it as a citizen's enduring psychological attachment to a party, inherited like a religious affiliation and tending to persist for a lifetime (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960). A key insight of this conceptualization was the notion that partisanship is a type of social identity (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2005). Later authors offered a more rationalistic conceptualization in which citizens evaluate parties over time to form a "running tally" and choose the party most likely to benefit them (Achen 1992; Fiorina 1981). From this perspective, partisanship is not an identity but rather a rational product of citizens' calculations.

Both sets of theories yield similar general implications about the correlates of partisan attachments. The question for scholars of developing democracies is whether similar patterns of mass partisanship exist in these settings. If partisanship of the kind theorized in the advanced democracies also exists in the developing world, then the empirical relationships we uncover in developing democracies should be similar to those extensively documented in advanced democracies.

Among the first of these relationships to be documented is that between partisanship and democratic experience. Partisan attachments solidify either as citizens repeatedly vote for a particular party, as they gain political experience and exposure, or as they update and strengthen their evaluations of parties (e.g., Achen 1992; Dinas 2014; Fiorina 1981). The general implication is that partisanship increases with age (Brader, Tucker, and Bargsted 2013; Cassel 1993; Converse 1969, 1976; Dalton and Weldon 2007). Yet we might not expect a relationship between age and partisanship during the first years of a new democracy. If parties emerge with no prior history, then citizens have no existing experience with them. In Latin America, though, many political parties existed prior to the most recent transitions to democracy. In fact, many had competed in prior periods of democracy (Lupu and Stokes 2010), so citizens may have preexisting attachments to them. Moreover, after nearly three decades of elections in the region, Latin American citizens have by now certainly had experience with their parties.

Ideological positions also influence party attachments in advanced democracies. Citizens tend to identify with the party most ideologically proximate to them (Richardson 1991). However, those on the extremes of the ideological spectrum tend to feel stronger affinities to their parties (De la Calle and Roussias 2012; Pierce 1970). While ideological proximity matters in general for generating party attachments, extremists seem to feel more strongly about their party than centrists.

Partisans in advanced democracies also tend to be more informed and more engaged than nonpartisans. Although early scholars conceived of partisanship as a shortcut that would only be useful for those with limited information about politics (e.g., Shively 1979), empirical studies have consistently found that it is the most informed who are more likely to identify with a party (e.g., Achen 1992; Albright 2009). At least in advanced democracies, it seems that citizens who know something about politics also form meaningful party attachments.<sup>2</sup>

These attachments are also more likely among citizens already engaged in civic life. Membership in voluntary organizations often develops social capital, promoting citizens' interest in politics (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995), and, thus, encourages the formation of party attachments (Norris 2002).<sup>3</sup>

Scholars of developing democracies are often skeptical that partisan attachments will spread in these settings. They argue that mass media now makes it easy for politicians to appeal directly to citizens (Hale 2006; Mainwaring and Scully 1995b; Mainwaring and Zoco 2007). As a result, politicians have little incentive to invest in party-building and parties become irrelevant to citizens. Scholars of advanced democracies offer similar arguments for the recent erosion of mass partisanship there (e.g., Ward 1993). Still others argue that reporting in mass media often denigrates parties and contributes to antiparty sentiment (e.g., Mainwaring 1999; Weyland 1998). Although these arguments are made in terms of aggregate trends, individuals within countries differ in their attention to mass media. If the skeptics are right that mass media weaken aggregate partisanship, we should see that people who pay a lot of attention to media are the least partisan (see also Pérez-Liñán 2002; Seligson 2002).

Partisanship varies not only across individuals; some comparative studies also note variation across countries and over time (e.g., Holmberg 1994; Huber, Kernell, and Leoni 2005; Lupu forthcoming; Schmitt 2009; Schmitt and Holmberg 1995).<sup>4</sup> These scholars suggest that certain social contexts and party system characteristics may affect a citizen's propensity to form an attachment to a party. Party fragmentation may reduce the likelihood of mass partisanship. Where citizens are asked to keep track of a

large number of parties, they may learn little about any one party. Party fragmentation may also mean that governments form via large coalitions, making it difficult for citizens to associate policies or performance outcomes with a particular party.<sup>5</sup> In Latin America, party fragmentation may also be a marker of recent episodes of party instability or collapse (Zechmeister and Corral 2013), episodes often associated with eroding partisanship (Lupu forthcoming).

Other system-level factors may bolster partisanship. Social heterogeneity may push citizens to form stronger attachments to parties, to the extent that membership in ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups is politically salient. Citizens also learn about the parties in their system over time, as the same parties compete for office again and again (Tavits 2007b). As party systems institutionalize, citizens come to know enough about the parties to form more lasting attachments (Dalton and Weldon 2007; Mainwaring and Scully 1995b; Rose and Mishler 1998). Finally, party polarization may clarify the differences between parties. The farther apart the political parties, the easier it is for citizens to distinguish among the options. And if citizens can more clearly distinguish parties, they may find it easier to form a party attachment (Lupu 2015; see also Berglund et al. 2006; Holmberg 1994; Schmitt 2009; Schmitt and Holmberg 1995).<sup>6</sup>

In advanced democracies, these patterns of mass partisanship have important implications for political behavior. Partisans are particularly more likely to participate in politics, whether by voting for their party or by volunteering their time and resources to its campaigns (e.g., Bartels 2000; Campbell et al. 1960; Powell 1986).

Scholars of advanced democracies have documented and explained these patterns of mass partisanship over decades. But their arguments rarely stipulate that they be limited to these contexts. After all, all parties have an interest in cultivating a stable partisan base. If our theories about how citizens in advanced democracies form partisan attachments are right, we should find evidence for them among citizens of developing democracies as well. Still, we should not expect levels of mass partisanship to be the same everywhere. But comparative scholars should seek to explain differences across countries and over time by identifying the institutional and political factors that condition mass partisanship.

### Patterns of Mass Partisanship across Latin America

To identify patterns of mass partisanship in Latin America, I employ data from sixty-six AmericasBarometer surveys conducted in 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012 and covering the eighteen countries that are the focus of this

volume. To measure Latin Americans' attachments to political parties I make use of the following question: "Do you currently identify with a political party?" There are well-known debates about the appropriate way to capture party attachment in public opinion surveys, and existing cross-national options are all imperfect (Johnston 2006). This item is one of few defensible options and one that is used widely in the region (e.g., Baker et al. 2010; Pérez-Liñán 2002; Samuels 2006).

I want to know whether partisanship in Latin America correlates with certain individual characteristics, namely, democratic experience, ideological extremism, proximity to a party, political information, and participation in civic associations. In advanced democracies, researchers often measure an individual's democratic experience using her age because most respondents will only have lived under a democratic regime. To see how this might be problematic in the developing world, consider a country that began holding democratic elections thirty years ago and the fact that a respondent who is 30 and another who is 50 will have lived the same amount of time under democracy. Age may still make individuals more partisan because parties may be active even when they cannot compete democratically for public office. But in developing democracies, we can distinguish a person's age from the amount of experience that individual has with democratic competition (see also Brader, Tucker, and Bargsted 2013; Tilley 2003). For each respondent in the AmericasBarometer surveys, I thus calculated the number of years she lived under democracy in addition to her age.<sup>7</sup>

The AmericasBarometer asked respondents to place themselves on a 10-point left-right scale.<sup>8</sup> This allows me to identify three characteristics for each respondent. Most directly, it provides a measure of her ideological leanings (but see Zechmeister this volume). I have no specific expectations about whether left- or right-leaning Latin Americans are more likely to be partisan, but it is possible that ideology could correlate with partisanship. I can also use the respondent's ideological identification to measure her ideological extremism. The farther a respondent places herself from the midpoint of the scale (5.5), the more extreme her ideology, and the more likely she should be to identify with a party. Finally, respondents' left-right self-placements help me determine their ideological proximity to a party. Within each survey, I calculate each party's position based on the average left-right placement of the respondents who said they voted for that party.<sup>9</sup> I then use these party placements to calculate how close each respondent is to a party. In advanced democracies, we expect respondents who are ideologically close to a party to be more likely to form an attachment.



If partisanship in Latin America follows the patterns of advanced democracies, then more informed individuals will be more likely to identify with a party. To measure how informed individuals are, I construct an index using three factual political questions asked in the AmericasBarometer survey.<sup>10</sup> My analysis also includes a measure of education, often a reasonable proxy for political knowledge (e.g., Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Highton 2009).<sup>11</sup> We would also expect individuals who are more engaged in civic life to be more likely to identify with a party. To measure participation in civic associations, I construct an index of four questions about the respondent's participation in different kinds of civil society organizations.<sup>12</sup>

Observers of both advanced and developing democracies argue that mass media has made parties less important to politics and eroded citizens' attachments to parties. If this account is right, then individuals who pay more attention to media should be less likely to form party attachments. To capture attention to mass media, I make use of AmericasBarometer questions that ask respondents how frequently they watch television, listen to the radio, or read newspapers.<sup>13</sup> As additional individual-level controls, I include measures of gender, self-identified ethnicity (whites versus non-whites), urban versus rural residence, and household wealth.<sup>14</sup>

At the contextual level, I want to know whether certain characteristics of the party system and social context correlate with mass partisanship. Therefore, I include measures of party system polarization, institutionalization, and fragmentation, as well as ethnic fragmentation.

Following previous scholars (e.g., Dalton 2008), I measure polarization by summing how far each party is positioned on the left-right scale from the average party position.<sup>15</sup> In systems that are more polarized, parties should be farther away from this mean position, which we might call the system's ideological center of gravity. Where parties are instead clustered together, they will be close to this center. Party polarization thus measures how spread out the parties are in the system. I also account for each party's prominence in the system by weighting its contribution to the system's polarization by its vote share.<sup>16</sup>

Partisanship is likely more widespread when a party system is institutionalized and parties' reputations are widely known. Citizens need to observe party behavior in order to develop party attachments, which may be why older democracies tend to have more partisans (Dalton and Weldon 2007). To account for this possibility, my analysis includes the average age across the major parties for each country, a standard proxy for institutionalization (e.g., Roberts and Wibbels 1999). Because these ages take on very high values for some countries (e.g., Colombia, Uruguay), I use the natural



log of this measure. Following Huber, Kernell, and Leoni (2005), I measure how fragmented each party system is electorally by calculating the effective number of parties using electoral vote shares from the presidential election closest to 2007. Finally, I measure social heterogeneity in terms of how fractionalized each society is along ethnic lines. Following Alesina et al. (2003), I measure ethnic fractionalization as the probability that two randomly selected individuals from the survey sample have the same ethnicity, based on their responses to the item on self-identified ethnicity.

### Evidence from Cross-National Survey Data

Scholars of Latin American politics have largely ignored mass partisanship, either because they considered it irrelevant to politics or because they did not expect Latin Americans to form strong attachments to their parties. The lack of attention is particularly surprising given how widespread and varied party attachments are in some countries in the region. Figure 9.1 plots the proportion of partisans in each Latin American country at each wave of the AmericasBarometer. As a base of comparison, the figure also includes that proportion for the United States, the case that has motivated decades of scholarship on mass partisanship.

What is striking about figure 9.1 is that three decades after the third wave of democratization began, millions of Latin Americans identify with political parties. In fact, aggregate levels of partisanship in some Latin American democracies rival those of the United States. Citizens in the Dominican Republic and Uruguay seem just as likely to identify with a political party as Americans. Clearly, some form of mass partisanship had emerged in Latin America.

Still, figure 9.1 shows enormous heterogeneity in levels of partisanship across Latin American countries and over time within some of them.<sup>17</sup> At one extreme, only 11% of Chileans identified with a political party in 2010, whereas more than 60% of Uruguayans did that year. This means that even if the underlying behavioral process of partisan identification is the same across developing and developed democracies, other factors seem to condition that process. Social heterogeneity and characteristics of the party system may help to explain these differences.

I turn to cross-national survey data from the AmericasBarometer to simultaneously examine the individual- and country-level correlates of mass partisanship in Latin America. Based on a series of multilevel probit analyses, figure 9.2 plots the estimated changes in the predicted probability of an individual survey respondent identifying with a party when we change the value of each variable from its 25th to its 75th percentile. In other words,

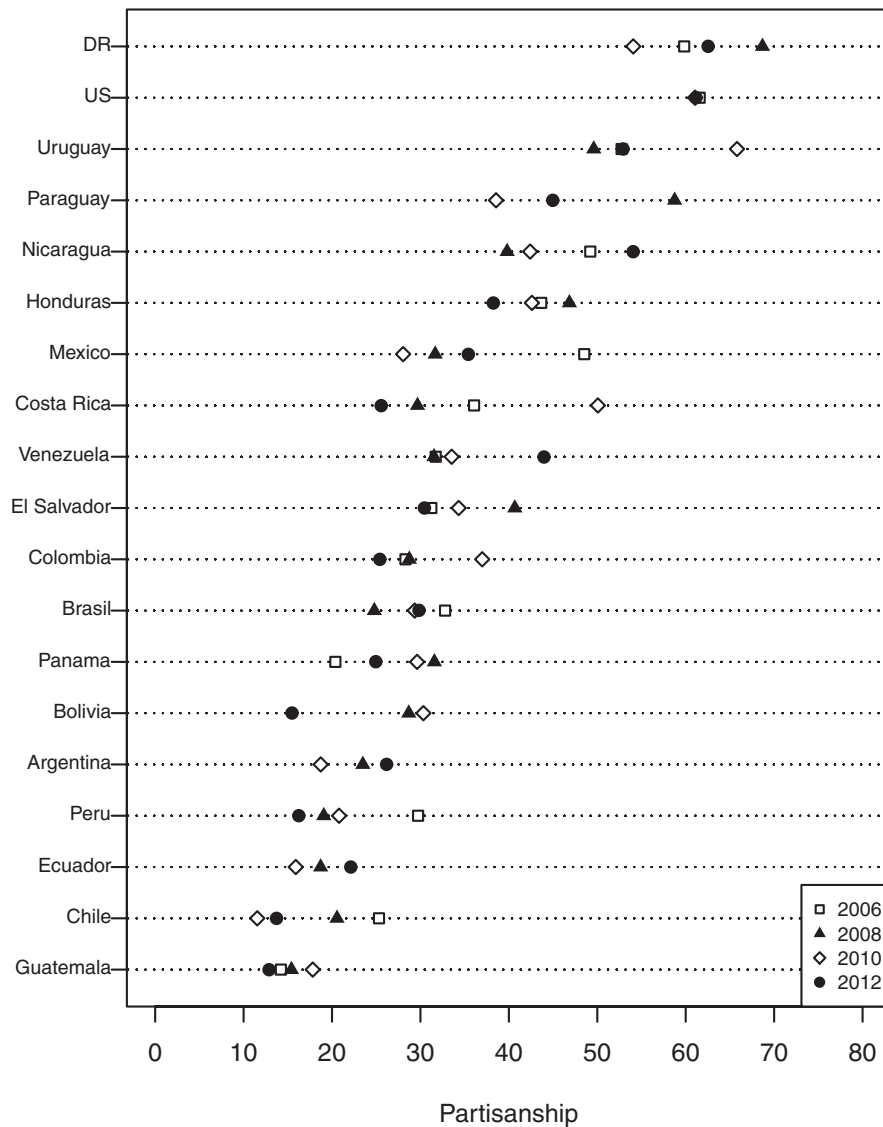


Figure 9.1 Mass partisanship in Latin America and the United States.  
*Source:* AmericasBarometer 2006–2012. *Notes:* Values represent the proportion of respondents who said they identified with a political party in each year.

the figure tells us how much of an effect the inter-quartile range of each variable has on individuals' propensities to form a partisan attachment.<sup>18</sup>

The results in figure 9.2 reveal that patterns of mass partisanship in Latin America resemble those elsewhere in the world. Not only are older individuals more likely to be partisan, but democratic experience

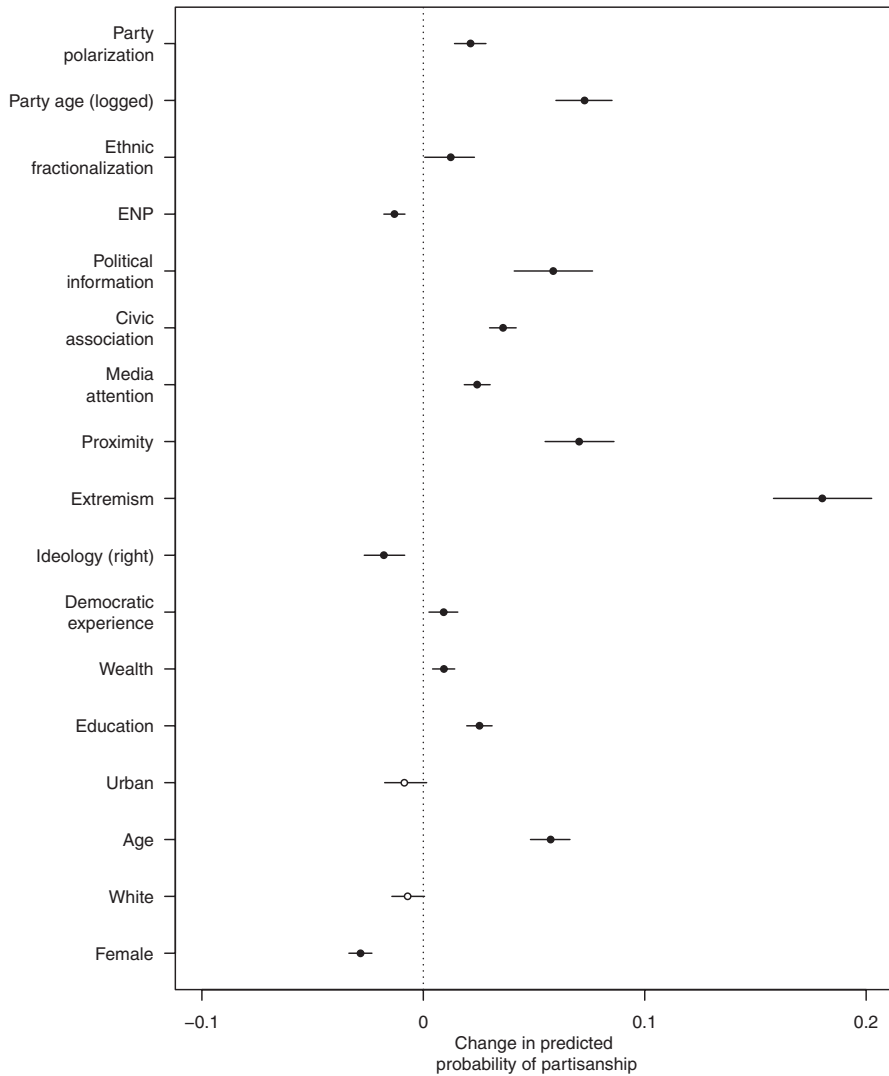


Figure 9.2 Correlates of mass partisanship in Latin America. *Source:* AmericasBarometer, 2006–2012. *Notes:* Values represent changes in the predicted probability that a respondent identifies with the party, based on shifting each variable from its sample 25<sup>th</sup> to 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, with all other continuous variables held at their sample means and ordered variables held at their sample medians. Solid lines show the simulated 95% confidence interval. Black dots represent values that are significant at 95% confidence, white dots those that fall short of that threshold. These predicted values are based on the estimates from multilevel probit models presented in the online appendix to this volume. They represent total effects, meaning the effects estimated when only causally prior variables are included.

specifically increases citizens' propensities to form party attachments, as Converse (1969) predicted. As in advanced democracies, Latin American partisans also tend to be more informed and more educated. Those who are ideologically close to a party or hold particularly extreme ideological positions are also more likely to identify with a party. Interestingly, left-leaning Latin Americans are more likely to form party attachments, though this finding may be an artifact of timing: the AmericasBarometer surveys cover the peak of the region's "left turn" (see Levitsky and Roberts 2011b).

Latin American partisans, like their counterparts in advanced democracies, also tend to be more engaged in civic life. And contrary to the suggestion that mass media erodes partisanship or obstructs its development, Latin Americans who pay more attention to media are instead more likely to identify with a party. At the individual level, mass partisanship in Latin America on average follows patterns similar to those found in advanced democracies.<sup>19</sup>

Still, figure 9.1 showed differences in levels of partisanship across countries and over time. Social context and characteristics of the party system contribute to explaining these differences. Where party systems are fragmented, Latin Americans are less likely to form party attachments. On the other hand, ethnic heterogeneity, institutionalized party systems, and party polarization all increase citizens' attachments to parties. These systemic features condition mass partisanship largely in the same ways prior comparative studies of advanced democracies predict.<sup>20</sup>

### Does Partisanship Matter?

Latin American partisans on average resemble partisans in advanced democracies. The kinds of systemic factors that condition mass partisanship in advanced democracies also appear to do so across Latin American democracies. But what about the effects of partisanship? Does identifying with a party have the effects on political behavior in Latin America that it has elsewhere?

The chapter on turnout in this volume has already shown the strong correlation between partisanship and reported turnout in the AmericasBarometer surveys (Carlin and Love this volume). I have also examined whether partisanship makes people more likely to work for a political campaign, which is an even more direct way for citizens to engage in the political process.<sup>21</sup> The online appendix for this volume (see figure OA9.1) presents a multilevel probit analysis with the same individual-level predictors as the previous analysis. The results show that Latin American

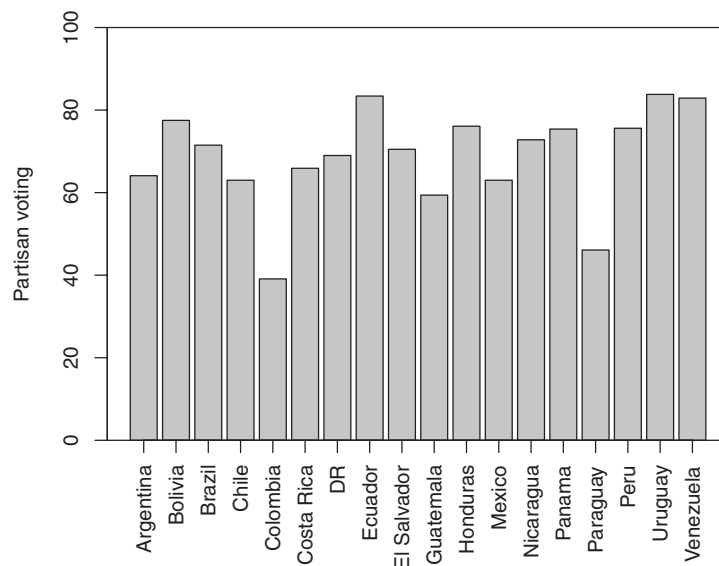


Figure 9.3 Mass partisanship and vote choice in Latin America. *Source:* AmericasBarometer 2006–2012. *Notes:* Bars represent the proportion of respondents who identified with a political party who voted for the candidate of their party in the most recent presidential election. Respondents who identified with a party that did not field a presidential candidate are omitted.

partisans, like their counterparts in advanced democracies, are much more likely to participate in campaigns than nonpartisans. Indeed, an individual's partisanship is among the strongest predictors of participation.

In advanced democracies, which party a citizen identifies with has a substantial effect on her vote choice (e.g., Berglund et al. 2006; Campbell et al. 1960; Richardson 1991). Is the same true in Latin America? For each country in the region, figure 9.3 reports the proportion of respondents identifying with a party who also said they voted for that party's candidate<sup>22</sup> in the AmericasBarometer survey closest to each presidential election.<sup>23</sup> Despite significant variation across the countries, the overall picture is clear: partisans tend to vote for their party. Across the countries and surveys, an average of 69% of partisans voted for their party when it competed. Since these are presidential systems, we would not expect the correspondence between partisanship and vote choice to be as high as in some European parliamentary systems. Even so, rates of partisan voting are remarkably high in Latin America. Like partisans in advanced democracies, Latin American partisans typically vote for their party.

### Partisanship and Vote Choice in Brazil

But is this relationship causal? Is it their party attachment that leads partisans to support their party at the polls, or do they bring their party attachment in line with their vote choice? Studies of advanced democracies have found evidence of both effects (e.g., Bartels 2002; Carsey and Layman 2006; Groenendyk 2013). One way to address this problem and identify the causal relationship between partisanship and vote choice is through repeated interviews of the same survey respondents (Bartels 2006). Indeed, part of the definition of a cause is that it occurs prior to an outcome (Finkel 1995). Panel surveys necessarily imply focusing on a specific country and therefore limit generalizability. But we gain confidence in the causal interpretation of correlational analysis if we can better identify that causal relationship with panel survey data.

Fortunately, a team of scholars conducted a four-wave panel survey in two mid-sized Brazilian cities between 2002 and 2006 (see Baker, Ames, and Rennó 2006). The Brazilian party system is considered among the weakest in the region given highly candidate-centered electoral rules (e.g., Mainwaring 1999). Since party attachments are thought to be fairly weak in this context, my analysis presents a hard test of whether partisanship influences how Latin Americans behave.<sup>24</sup>

To analyze the causal effect of mass partisanship on vote intention, I specify a cross-lagged structural equation model frequently used by scholars of U.S. public opinion working with panel survey data (e.g., Highton and Kam 2011; Layman and Carsey 2002; Lupu ). This approach uses simultaneous equations to model current partisanship and current vote intention as functions of prior partisanship and prior vote intention. The logic behind cross-lagged causality is that a variable *X* is said to cause another variable *Y* if prior observations of *X* are associated with current observations of *Y*, holding constant prior observations of *Y* (Finkel 1995, 25–26). In this context, we want to know whether prior mass partisanship affects current vote intentions while taking account of preexisting vote intentions.<sup>25</sup>

In the Brazilian presidential elections of 2002 and 2006, two main parties—the Workers' Party (PT) and the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB)—put forward competitive candidates. I therefore analyze two models: one examines intention to vote for the PT and PT partisanship and a second focuses on intention to vote for the PSDB and PSDB partisanship. The models control for several demographic characteristics: household income, education, ethnicity (whites versus nonwhites), age,

and gender.<sup>26</sup> I also include a control variable for residence in cities covered by the survey with a dummy variable for one of the two, Juiz de Fora (by “dummy,” we mean the variable is coded 1 if the respondent resides in Juiz de Fora and zero otherwise).<sup>27</sup>

The results reveal a consistent causal effect of partisanship on vote intentions. Figure 9.4 plots the predicted probability of a respondent

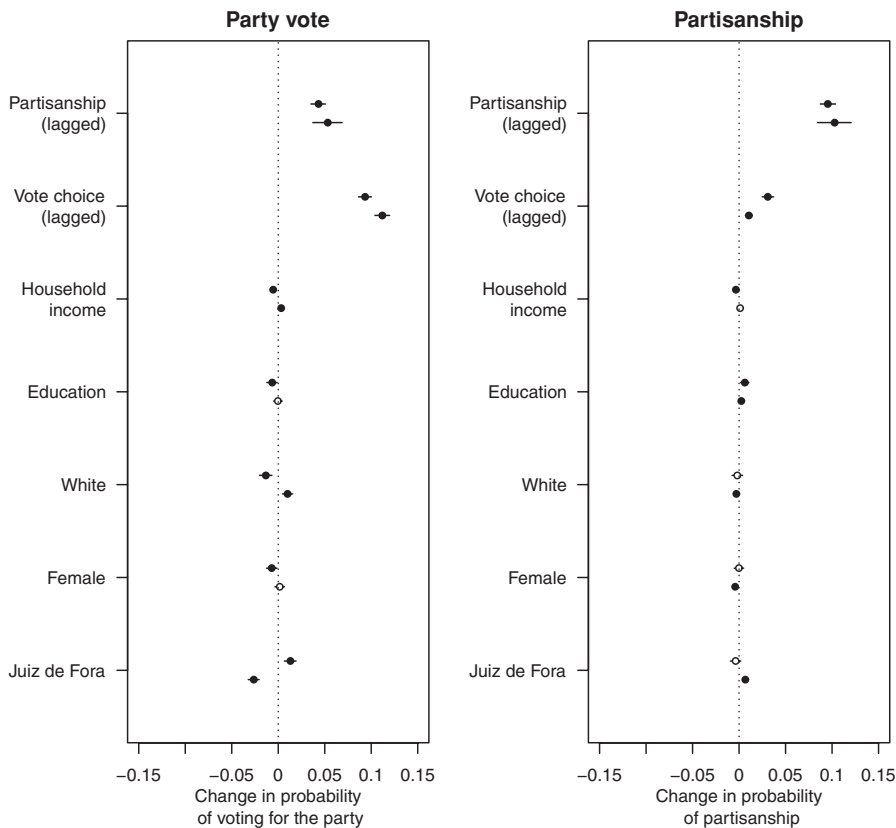


Figure 9.4 Mass partisanship and vote choice in Brazil. *Source:* Brazil Two-City Panel Study, 2002–2006. *Notes:* Values represent changes in the predicted probability that a respondent identifies with the party or intended to vote for a party, based on shifting each variable from its sample 25th to 75th percentile, with all other continuous variables held at their sample means and ordered variables held at their sample medians. Solid lines show the simulated 95% confidence interval. Black dots represent values that are significant at 95% confidence, white dots those that fall short of that threshold. For each variable, the top result refers to the PT and the bottom to the PSDB. These predicted values are based on the estimates from cross-lagged structural equation estimates presented in the online appendix to this volume.



intending to vote for or identifying with the PT or PSDB as we shift each variable over its inter-quartile range.<sup>28</sup> The left panel in figure 9.4 shows that prior partisanship has a substantial causal effect on a respondent's intention to vote for both the PT and PSDB. There is also stability in vote intentions over time.

There is also some evidence of the reverse causation that motivated this analysis. The right panel in figure 9.4 shows that prior vote intentions do affect citizens' party attachments with the PT and PSDB. Prior partisanship, nevertheless, has the strongest effect on current partisanship, suggesting that there is stability in partisan attachments even in this weak party system (cf. Samuels 2006). These results suggest that the relationship between partisanship and vote choice that we observe across Latin America is not entirely endogenous. That is, there is reason to think that partisanship in the region has a causal effect on how citizens vote.

### Mass Partisanship in Latin America

In advanced democracies, mass partisanship is both widespread and influential. Yet we know little about whether partisanship in developing democracies functions similarly. In fact, many scholars are skeptical that mass partisanship in the developing world functions like partisanship in advanced democracies. After all, parties come and go regularly in many developing democracies, and clientelism and electoral fraud seem to matter more for individual behavior than partisan identities.

Still, there are good reasons to expect that patterns of mass partisanship in developing democracies generally ought to resemble those in the advanced democracies. The analysis of Latin American partisanship presented in this chapter indeed found much resemblance. Like their counterparts in advanced democracies, Latin American partisans tend to be more experienced, more informed, more attentive, and more engaged. They also tend to participate more in politics, and their partisan attachments significantly influence their vote choices. These findings add to an emerging body of research on mass partisanship in other developing democracies (e.g., Brader and Tucker 2001, 2008; Ishiyama and Fox 2006).

Skeptics suggest that partisanship in developing contexts is merely a product of clientelism. But if clientelism were the main source of partisanship in Latin America, we would see different patterns. There is little reason for clientelistic parties to target citizens who are more informed or those who pay more attention to media. If mass partisanship in Latin America followed the logic of clientelist distribution, we would see very different patterns than those we observe in advanced democracies, where

clientelism is rare. The results presented in this chapter do not rule out the possibility that some Latin American partisans are motivated by clientelism, but they do reveal that *most* partisan attachments in the region resemble the ones scholars have studied for decades in the United States and Western Europe.

Still, there are differences across countries that scholars ought to consider. My analysis found that institutional contexts condition citizens' propensities to form partisan attachments. I focused on average effects across the region. But contextual factors may also condition the relationships between individual characteristics and partisanship. An unfortunate consequence of the inattention to mass partisanship in developing democracies is that we have only just begun to understand why levels of partisanship vary dramatically across countries.

Some of these cross-national differences may also reflect differences across parties. In many multiparty countries, partisan attachments are far more widespread for certain parties than for others. Why do some parties foster such attachments more successfully? Are there certain characteristics that make some parties more adept at doing so than others? Or do these differences depend on the competitive environment in which parties operate?

We could ask similar questions about the dynamics of mass partisanship over time. Theories of party identification from advanced democracies offer little guidance for explaining why partisanship might grow or decline. In these contexts, the same parties tend to persist and citizens' attachments to them change slowly (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2005). Yet Latin American democracies have seen massive changes in rates of mass partisanship in recent decades, changes that far outpaced the social transformations typically associated with partisan shifts in Western Europe (e.g., Dalton 2000). In Latin America, citizens' attachments to parties declined precipitously in some countries (Lupu forthcoming; Morgan 2007; Sánchez 2002) even as they spread for some parties in others (Samuels 2006). Explaining these trends is vital to understanding the recent development of the region's party systems and the behavior of its citizens. Recognizing that mass partisanship matters in developing democracies poses challenges like these and highlights important avenues for further research.

## NOTES

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1. One exception is India, a democracy since 1947, where mass partisanship received early attention (e.g., Eldersveld 1973).

2. Similar patterns appear in the former Soviet region (e.g., Brader and Tucker 2001, 2008).

3. Note that whether these associations are causal (and in which direction) is not my concern here. I simply want to examine whether the characteristics associated with partisanship in advanced democracies are also associated with partisanship in Latin America.

4. Earlier studies made some cross-national comparisons, but with very limited samples (e.g., Butler and Stokes 1969; Converse and Pierce 1992). All of these comparative studies focus largely on variation within the advanced democracies.

5. Huber, Kernell, and Leoni (2005) test these two effects separately by including the effective numbers of both electoral and legislative parties. I opt against this because the two variables are highly correlated.

6. This is only the case if our analysis controls for an individual's proximity to a party. Parties in more polarized systems may be farther away from a majority of centrist voters. They may readily be able to distinguish the parties, but not find any one party particularly appealing.

7. I identify democratic years as those with a Polity score greater than 5.

8. The item was worded as follows: "On this card there is a 1–10 scale that goes from left to right. One means left and 10 means right. Nowadays, when we speak of political leanings, we talk of those on the left and those on the right. In other words, some people sympathize more with the left and others with the right. According to the meaning that the terms 'left' and 'right' have for you, and thinking of your own political leanings, where would you place yourself on this scale?"

9. Kitschelt (1996) uses a similar approach.

10. The three questions were (1) "What is the name of the current president of the United States?"; (2) "How many [provinces/departments/states] does [country] have?"; and (3) "How long is the presidential term of office in [country]?" Like in Highton (2009), the index is a count of the number of correct responses.

11. Education is based on responses to the question, "How many years of schooling have you completed?" Responses are coded as (1) No schooling; (2) Primary only (6 years or less); (3) Secondary only (12 years or less); (4) Post-secondary, not university (17 years or less); (5) University (18 years).

12. The set began "I am going to read a list of groups and organizations. Please tell me if you attend their meetings at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year, or never." Respondents were asked about frequency of participation in meetings of (1) "any religious organization," (2) "a parents' association at school," (3) "a community improvement committee or association," and (4) "an association of professionals, merchants, manufacturers or farmers." I construct the index using principal-components factor analysis with orthogonal varimax rotation (eigenvalue = 1.56). The factor loadings are religious organization = 0.48, parents'

association = 0.64, community improvement association = 0.73, professional association = 0.62. Higher values indicate more frequent participation.

13. Beginning in 2010, the surveys asked one item: “About how often do you pay attention to the news, whether on TV, the radio, newspapers or the Internet?” Prior to that, the surveys asked four separate items: (1) “How frequently do you listen to the news on the radio?”; (2) “How frequently do you watch the news on TV?”; (3) “How frequently do you read the news in newspapers?”; and (4) “How frequently do you read the news on the Internet?” The response options were “every day,” “once or twice a week,” “rarely,” and “never.” For the surveys prior to 2010, I generate a combined variable that identifies whether a respondent said she uses any media with each level of frequency.

14. Female is coded by the interviewer: (0) male; (1) female. White is based on responses to the question, “Do you consider yourself white, mestizo, indigenous, black, mulatto, or of another race?” The variable codes responses as (1) white; (0) all other responses. Urban is from interview/sample-defined codings based on the country’s definition: (0) rural; (1) urban. Wealth is measured according to respondents’ place in quintile groupings based on an index of household goods constructed following Córdova (2009).

15. Recall that I calculate a party’s ideological position using the average self-placement of the respondents who said they voted for it. My measure of polarization thus differs from that used in other chapters in this volume. My measure offers more variation over time, though it focuses on polarization in presidential politics. I opt for this measure for the sake of consistency with my individual-level measure of proximity.

16. Vote shares may not fully reflect the prominence of each party, but they serve as a useful proxy. Moreover, an unweighted measure of polarization risks generating high values as an artifact of small, fringe parties.

17. Note, however, that the rank ordering of countries is quite consistent over time.

18. These predicted probabilities are based on multilevel probit estimates, which are reported in the online appendix (table OA9.1). These are two-level models that nest respondents within surveys. Note that the figure includes only the estimates considered to represent the total effect of each variable. That is, I assume the standard “funnel of causality” of public opinion research in which variables are added sequentially based on their expected stability. The figure, therefore, reports the predicted probability from the model in which each variable is first introduced.

19. In Latin America, rural voters are somewhat more likely to identify with a party, perhaps because rural citizens in the region often participate more in politics (cf. Seligson 1980).

20. The one exception is that Huber, Kernell, and Leoni (2005) predict (and find, in advanced democracies) that electoral fragmentation increases, rather than diminishes, partisanship. Their logic is that more parties provide voters with more nuanced choices. It seems equally plausible to think that more choices mean voters know little about the parties, particularly when those choices are new or change frequently. This may be one instance in which a system-level factor has different implications in developing democracies than it does in advanced ones.

21. The item asked, “There are people who work for parties or candidates during electoral campaigns. Did you work for any candidate or party in the last presidential elections of [year of last presidential elections]?”

22. Vote choice is based on responses to the question, “Who did you vote for in the last presidential elections of [year]?”

23. These proportions omit respondents who identified with a party when that party did not field a presidential candidate. Where the surveys covered more than one election, I calculated the proportion for each election using the closest survey and averaged across elections.

24. I have conducted similar analyses with shorter panel studies from Mexico—a more stable party system—with similar results.

25. This means simultaneously estimating the equations:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Vote}_{i,t} &= \alpha_1 + \beta_1 \text{Vote}_{i,t-1} + \gamma_1 \text{PID}_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_1 \\ \text{PID}_{i,t} &= \alpha_2 + \beta_2 \text{Vote}_{i,t-1} + \gamma_2 \text{PID}_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_2 \end{aligned}$$

26. The dependent variable, vote choice, is based on responses to the question, “If the presidential election were held today, for which of the following candidates would you vote? *Ciro Gomes, Lula, Roseana Sarney, José Serra, Anthony Garotinho, Itamar Franco, or some other candidate?*” PT vote is coded as (1) Lula, (0) all other choices. PSDB vote is coded as (1) Serra; (0) all other candidates. Partisanship is based on responses to the question, “Do you identify with a political party? Yes or no?” and the open-ended follow-up question, “With which one?” PT partisanship is coded as (1) PT; (0) all other party identities or no party identity. PSDB partisanship is coded as (1) PSDB; (0) all other party identities or no party identity. Household income is based on responses to the question, “More or less, what is the total monthly income of your family, including the incomes of everyone who works or has some source of income?” Total income is divided by the square root of the size of the household. The size of the household is based on responses to two follow-up questions: “How many people over 18 live on that income?” and “And how many under 18?” Education is based on responses to the question, “How many years of schooling have you completed?” Coded 0 to 15. White is a coding based on interviewer coding as white, brown, black, yellow, or Indian; the variable codes responses as (1) white; (0) all other responses. Female (1, versus male 0) is also coded by the interviewer.

27. I pool observations of respondents in each two-wave dyad and cluster standard errors by respondent. Controlling for a survey wave dummy variable (dichotomous measure coded 1 for that survey year and zero otherwise) does not substantively change my results.

28. These predicted probabilities are based on the cross-lagged structural equation estimates reported in the online appendix (table OA9.2).