Voter Partisanship in Latin America[*]

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Abstract

Partisanship strongly influences voter behavior, at least among the electorates of advanced democracies. Yet many scholars are skeptical that theories tested in advanced democracies apply to developing democracies like those in Latin America. Among their reasons are the region's political instability, the timing of democratic transitions, and the persistence of populism and clientelism. This paper tests the extent to which the distribution and effects of partisanship in Latin America conform to expectations derived from the theories of partisanship developed in advanced democracies. I also examine some institutional explanations for variations in levels of partisanship across countries in Latin America. To do so, I use cross-national surveys covering the entire region and panel surveys from Brazil and Mexico. In contrast to the skeptics, I find robust evidence of the overall applicability of theories of partisanship to Latin America. Partisanship, it seems, develops in new and old democracies following the same underlying behavioral processes, even while institutional and contextual factors condition these processes.

In advanced democracies, a voter's attachment to a party strongly influences her political behavior. Party attachments often determine not only vote choice but also how citizens evaluate their government (Bartels 2000, 2002; Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2005: e.g.,).[1] Those 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: .e.g,). Although scholars debate their nature and origins, party attachments clearly play an important political role in advanced democracies.[2]

We still know little about whether similar effects obtain in developing democracies. That's partly because many developing democracies only began holding competitive elections in the 1980s and 1990s. For many decades prior, the developing world was governed by autocratic regimes, obviating scholarly questions about electoral politics. Prominent skeptics also dismissed the possibility that party attachments would emerge in developing democracies (Kinzo 2005; Mainwaring 1999). For instance, Mainwaring and Torcal (2006) argue that, "[o]utside the advanced democracies, more voters choose candidates on the basis of their personal characteristics without regard to party, ideology, or programmatic issues" (204). That's because developing democracies emerged after the development of mass media, which allows politicians to appeal directly to voters rather than investing in party-building (Mainwaring and Zoco 2007; Mainwaring and Torcal 2006). Moreover, attachments to parties and their electoral effects seem irrelevant in contexts where fraud is rampant, party organizations are ephemeral, and voters' links to parties are primarily clientelistic (Dalton and Weldon 2007; Roberts and Wibbels 1999).

Yet this by no means characterizes all developing democracies. In fact, free and fair elections have now been held in many developing democracies for nearly three decades. In some of those cases, new political parties emerged and established themselves over time.[3] In others,

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[1] I use the terms partisanship, party attachments, and party identification interchangeably to refer to an individual's self-identification with a political party.

[2] There is even some debate about the meaningfulness of party attachments in party-centered elections in advanced democracies (Bartle and Bellucci 2009; Budge, Crewe, and Farlie 1976).

[3] Such contexts also provide opportunities for learning about the emergence of new party attachments (e.g., Barnes, McDonough, and López Pina 1985; Brader and Tucker 2001, 2008a, b; Miller and Klobucar 2000).

political parties are significantly older than the current period of competitive elections. Established parties had contested elections during prior periods of democracy, then simply remained dormant during authoritarian interludes, returning to political prominence with the convocation of new democratic elections. In many of these contexts, electoral competition remains imperfect, and patronage and clientelism continue to characterize some political linkages. But even there many millions of voters form attachments to parties without coercion or fraud. We ought to know more about how these voters form attachments to parties, and how those attachments affects their political attitudes and behavior.

There are also good reasons to expect that voter partisanship in developing democracies functions much like it does in the advanced democracies. Generally, behavioral processes in developing democracies tend to resemble those in advanced ones (van der Brug, Franklin, and Tóka 2008). It also seems unlikely that deeply-held party attachments from previous democratic periods would simply disappear when electoral competition is interrupted and not reemerge with redemocratization (Lupu and Stokes 2010). Even where new political parties emerge with democratization, political identities often form around existing social divisions that are already politically salient (e.g., Shabad and Slomczynski 1999; Valenzuela and Scully 1997; Wittenberg 2006). And if new political parties in advanced democracies manage to foster voter partisanship in the era of mass media (Ignazi 1996), why would new political parties in developing democracies be unable to do the same? After decades of electoral competition, patterns of voter partisanship in developing democracies ought to resemble those in established democracies. If, instead, the skeptics are right, then voter partisanship in new democracies should be fairly vacuous and matter little to political behavior.

Latin America's developing democracies seem particularly appropriate contexts in which to test these propositions. Most of the region's democracies had prior democratic experience upon their most recent return to democracy. In many cases, political parties that had contested elections during prior periods of democracy simply remained dormant during authoritarian interludes, returning to political prominence with the convocation of new democratic elections. Indeed, some

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of those parties – like the Colorado party of Uruguay and the Liberal party of Colombia – were among the oldest party organizations in the world still competitive for national office. Many of these established parties – like the Peronist party in Argentina and the APRA in Peru – helped mobilize major political movements in prior democratic eras, incorporating millions of citizens into politics and engendering deeply-held partisan attachments. Yet we know surprisingly little about the extent to which our theories about partisanship travel to the Latin American context.

This paper use two kinds of data to address these questions. I first examine patterns of voter partisanship and its correlation with political behavior across the region using cross-national surveys. To better identify the causal effects of voter partisanship, I turn to panel surveys from Brazil and Mexico. I find that patterns of partisanship in Latin America closely resemble those in advanced democracies. On average, older, wealthier, more politically informed individuals, as well as those who trust government, are more likely to be partisan. And partisanship is conditioned by contextual differences, including the institutionalization, fragmentation, and polarization of the party system. The effects of partisanship in Latin America are also consistent with existing theories. Partisans are more likely to turn out, to work on campaigns, and to participate in protests. And a voter's partisanship informs her vote choice, even in contexts where parties are weak or transitional systems.

Despite these congruences, rates of voter partisanship across Latin America vary tremendously. Studying mass partisanship in the region thus also allows us to test and refine theories about how contextual factors condition voter preferences. The lack of attention to voter partisanship in developing democracies means that we still know little about how to explain variation across countries and over time. Why do parties in some countries more widespread partisan attachments than those in other countries? A handful of studies have begun to address such questions, primarily across established democracies (Holmberg 1994; Huber, Kernell, and Leoni 2005; Lupu 2012; Schmitt 2009; Schmitt and Holmberg 1995), but the field remains wide open.[4] My findings suggest that the same behavioral process may determine how voters become

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[4] Earlier studies made some cross-national comparisons, but with very limited samples (e.g., Butler and Stokes 1969; Converse and Pierce 1992).

partisan, but other factors condition that process. Scholars of comparative political behavior, and particularly experts on developing democracies, should identify those factors, whether institutional or contextual, that condition voter partisanship and add to our knowledge of this important behavioral phenomenon.

1 Voter Partisanship and Political Behavior

The concept of partisanship has occupied scholars of political behavior for several decades. Its early proponents conceived it as a voter's enduring psychological attachment with a party, inherited like a religious affiliation and tending to persist over the life of an individual (Campbell et al. 1960; Miller 1976, 1991; Miller and Shanks 1996). 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 voters evaluate parties over time to form a "running tally" and choose the party most likely to benefit them (Achen 1992; Fiorina 1981; Franklin and Jackson 1983; Jackson 1975; Jennings and Markus 1984; Page and Jones 1979). From this perspective, partisanship is not an identity but rather a product of voters maximizing their expected utilities.

In general, both sets of theories yield similar implications about the correlates of partisan attachments. Indeed, Achen (1992, 2002) explicitly motivates his theory using well-established empirical relationships between voter partisanship and individual characteristics. These implications will serve as the first set of hypotheses to be tested on data from Latin America. If theories of partisanship travel to the region, then we should uncover the same empirical relationships scholars have extensively documented in advanced democracies.

Scholars of partisanship regularly note that it develops and strengthens with age. 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; Converse 1969; Fiorina 1981; Jennings and Markus 1984). In developing democracies, we

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might not expect a relationship between age and partisanship during the first years of democracy. If parties simply emerge with no prior history, then all voters, regardless of age, have little experience with them. In Latin America, though, many political parties are quite old, so older voters have much more experience with them. Moreover, after nearly three decades of elections, we would at least expect an age gap to have emerged.

Hypothesis 1: Older voters are more likely to be partisan.

Partisans in advanced democracies also tend to be more informed and more engaged than non-partisans. Although early scholars conceived of partisanship as a shortcut that would only be useful for those with limited information about politics, empirical studies have consistently found that it is the most informed who are more likely to identify with a party (citations). At least in the advanced democracies, it seems that voters need to know something about the parties in their system in order to form meaningful attachments.

Hypothesis 2: More informed voters are more likely to be partisan.

In advanced democracies, partisans also tend to be more engaged individuals. Those who engage in civil society, who are members of associations, are also more likely to seek out information about politics and, as a result, to form attachments. It is also those individuals who see their governments as legitimate, who trust political institutions, who are likely to engage in politics and to become partisan.

Hypothesis 3: Partisans tend to be more involved in civil society and more trusting of government institutions

No doubt the higher rates of clientelism in Latin America than in advanced democracies suggests that partisanship there may be tied to material exchange for some group of voters. Analysts broadly agree that direct exchanges of benefits for votes benefits only a small proportion of Latin American electorates, and parties often target their own partisans (Stokes et al. 2012).

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Still, if the partisanship-clientelism link is right, the distribution of partisanship should mirror our expectations about the distribution of clientelism. Scholars of clientelism have shown that poor voters are disproportionately targeted by parties for such handouts (Brusco, Nazareno, and Stokes 2004; Schedler 2002; Stokes 2005). After all, the affluent are likely to demand more in exchange for their votes (see also Hicken 2011). If partisanship in Latin America is in fact a function of clientelist exchange, then we should see partisanship disproportionately among the poor.

Hypothesis 4: If partisanship is a function of clientelism, then partisanship in Latin America should be concentrated among the poor

Only a small handful of studies have explored the reasons for cross-national variation in voter partisanship. They suggest that institutional characteristics may condition the probability that an individual voter will form an attachment to a party. Quite intuitively, they argue that those rules that make it more difficult for voters to know what parties stand for will make partisanship less likely. These rules include balloting that focuses on candidates rather than parties. Since competition in these settings is primarily among candidates, voters may know learn little about their party labels. This is particularly true where candidates from the same party may be competing with each other. Party fragmentation may also reduce the likelihood of voter partisanship. Where voters 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 voters to associate policies or performance outcomes with a particular party. On the other hand, voters may learn about the parties in their system over time, as the same parties compete for office again and again. The more institutionalized the party system, the more likely it may be that voters will have come to know enough about the parties to form lasting attachments (e.g., Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Rose and Mishler 1998).

Hypothesis 5: Voter partisanship is conditioned by institutions like candidate-centered voting and the fragmentation and institutionalization of the party system

In advanced democracies, these patterns of mass partisanship have important implications for political behavior. In particular, partisans are more likely to work on behalf of their party and to turn out to vote for their party (citations). They are also less likely to participate in politics through informal channels like protests (Finkel and Opp 1991).[5]

Hypothesis 6: Partisans are more likely to participate in politics through formal channels

Those theories, although derived and tested in advanced democracies, are rarely stated with explicit conditions on their scope. Implicit scope conditions surely include competitive elections and persistent party organizations across elections.[6] But both conditions are met by the latest periods of democracy in Latin America. Indeed, it seems difficult to imagine why parties in developing democracies should not have incentives to cultivate a stable base of partisans (Lupu and Stokes 2010). Either our theories about partisanship are more limited than we think or else patterns of partisanship in Latin America should be consistent with our theoretical expectations. The only way to know is to rigorously test these theories in developing democracies.

2   Voter Partisanship in Latin America

Voter partisanship has been largely overlooked by scholars of Latin American politics. Until the 1980s and 1990s, most Latin American countries did not hold competitive elections, so voter behavior was largely irrelevant to political outcomes. Later observers viewed political parties in the region primarily as personalist vehicles or patronage machines and did not take seriously the possibility that voters might form lasting attachments with these parties. Indeed, Latin Americanists often bemoan the perceived absence of partisan attachments in the region (Mainwaring 1999; Mainwaring and Scully 1995).

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[5] Similarly, the recent rise in rates of protest in Latin America has been linked to the decline of many established political parties in the region (Machado, Scartascini, and Tommasi 2011).

[6] Even these conditions might be relaxed: partisanship can also emerge in competitive authoritarian settings (citations).

A handful of recent studies explore specific aspects of voter partisanship in Latin America (Baker et al. 2010; Domínguez and McCann 1995; McCann and Lawson 2003; Medina Vidal et al. 2010; Moreno 2003; Morgan 2007; Pérez-Liñán 2002; Samuels 2006). But they focus on individual cases and do not test whether patterns of voter partisanship in the region conform to theoretical expectations. This paper represents the first comparative inquiry into patterns of mass partisanship across Latin America.

The lack of attention to mass partisanship in the region is particularly striking given the prevalence of party attachments in some countries in the region. Three decades after the Third Wave of democratization, millions of Latin Americans identify with political parties. The 2010 Americas Barometer asked respondents in the 18 major Latin American democracies about their party attachments.[7] Figure 1 plots the proportion of respondents in each country who said they identified with a party. As a base of comparison, the figure also includes that proportion for the US, the case that has motivated decades of scholarship on voter partisanship.

[Figure 1 about here]

The figure shows that rates of voter partisanship in parts of Latin America look comparable to the US. Voters in the Dominican Republic and Uruguay seem just as likely to identify with a political party as Americans. There seems to be little reason to think that voter partisanship does not emerge in developing democracies.

Even more striking in Figure 1 is the enormous heterogeneity across countries in the region. At one extreme, only 11 percent of Chileans identify with a political party, while over 60 percent of Uruguayans do.[8] 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. Institutions, social structures, or characteristics of the party system might be explaining cross-national differences. Very few studies have examined these factors, and those

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[7] See question wording below.

[8] This distribution is also somewhat surprising: Chile is often viewed as the most developed democracy in the region even though national rates of voter partisanship seem very low by the standards of most advanced democracies. Studying attitudes like mass partisanship in Latin America will improve our assessments of the region's democracies.

that do overwhelmingly employ data from established democracies. This paper represents the first effort to explain cross-national variation in mass partisanship within Latin America.

2.1 Data and Measures

To test hypotheses about patterns of voter partisanship in Latin America, I turn to the cross-national surveys of the Americas Barometer.[9] I focus on the 18 major Latin American democracies, combining the Americas Barometer data from 2006, 2008, and 2010. I end up with a sample covering 49 surveys across these countries.[10]

The key dependent variable is a respondent's attachment to a political party. The Americas Barometer item on partisanship asked, "Do you currently identify with a political party?" (Americas Barometer translation).[11] There are well-known debates about the appropriate way to tap party attachment in surveys, and existing cross-national options are not perfect (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 certain individual characteristics correlate with partisanship. The key individual-level variables identified by prior studies as determinants of voter partisanship are age, political information, participation in civic associations, and trust in government. I construct an index of a respondent's level of political information using three factual questions asked in the Americas Barometer survey.[12] My analysis also includes a measure of education, often a

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[9] Information about all of the survey data used in this paper, along with descriptive statistics for all the variables, is reported in the appendix.

[10] The countries are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. This means that five country-years are missing from my sample: in 2006, Argentina was not surveyed; the partisanship item was not asked in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guatemala; and the Brazil survey did not ask the respondent's ethnicity.

[11] The term used in the Spanish questionnaire is *simpatiza*, not *se identifica*. But the Americas Barometer coordinators recognize that *simpatiza* in Spanish means something closer to identification than a direct translation ("sympathize") would suggest.

[12] 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 Highton (2009), my index is simply the number of questions a respondent answered correctly. Some years of the Americas Barometer asked additional factual questions, but I use only the three that are consistent across all three years of the survey.

reasonable proxy for political knowledge (e.g., Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Highton 2009). I also measure participation in civic associations using an index of four questions about the respondent's participation in different kinds of organizations.[13] Following Doyle (2011), I measure trust in government as an index constructed from three items about the respondent's trust in the justice system, the legislature, and the political parties.[14] I also control for demographic characteristics, including gender, self-identified ethnicity (whites/non-whites),[15] urban or rural residence, and household income.[16]

I also want to know whether certain characteristics of the party system and country institutions correlate with voter partisanship. My models therefore include as explanatory variables the average age of the parties, ethnic fractionalization in the society, the effective numbers of electoral (ENEP) and legislative parties (ENLP), and the degree to which voting is candidate-centered rather than party-centered. I use the average age across each party listed for a country in the Database of Political Institutions. Because these ages take on very high values for particular countries (e.g., Colombia, Uruguay), I use the natural log of this measure. I measure ethnic fractionalization within each survey using the survey item on ethnicity. Following Alesina et al. (2003), I measure ethnic fractionalization as the probability that two randomly selected

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[13] The set of items began with the preface, "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 then asked about the frequency of participation in (1) "Meetings of any religious organization," (2) "Meetings of a parents' association at school," (3) "Meetings of a community improvement committee or association," and (4) "Meetings of an association of professionals, merchants, manufacturers or farmers." I construct the index using principal-components factor analysis, with higher values indicating more frequent participation.

[14] These items were introduced with the statement, "I am going to ask you a series of questions. I am going to ask you that you use the numbers provided in the ladder to answer. Remember, you can use any number." Respondents were provided with a card containing a ladder from 1 to 7. The items I use asked respondents, (1) "To what extent do you trust the justice system?" (2) "To what extent do you trust the National Congress?" and (3) "To what extent do you trust the political parties?" I construct the index using principal-components factor analysis, with higher values indicating higher levels of trust.

[15] This question asked, "Do you consider yourself white, mestizo, indigenous, black, mulatto, or of another race?"

[16] Non-response for the household income item is not trivial. Booth and Seligson (2009) therefore advocate constructing an index of wealth based on household goods. Using their measure does not substantively change my results.

individuals from the survey sample have the same ethnicity.[17] To measure the ENEP and ENLP, I use the standard Laakso and Taagepera (1979) calculation with electoral vote shares and lower-house seat shares, respectively, from the most recent election prior to each survey.[18] My measure of candidate-centered voting comes from the updated dataset of Wallack et al. (2003). This variable measures a candidate's incentives to cultivate a personal vote based on electoral rules, namely, district magnitude, party control over the ballot, the degree of pooling of votes across copartisans, and the number of votes that citizens can cast for parties and/or candidates (see Carey and Shugart 1995).

Cross-national survey data also allow me to examine whether voter partisanship is associated with political participation. The Americas Barometer surveys asked respondents whether they turned out to vote in the most recent presidential election, whether they have worked for a political campaign, and whether they participated in a protest in the past year.[19] In these analyses, I want to know whether respondents with partisan attachments are more or less likely to participate in these political activities. While voting and campaigning can be thought of as formal means of political participation, protesting is a kind of informal channel of participation, outside the institutional political structure. In analyzing the correlates of these activities, I include as control variables the same individual-level variables as in the prior analyses.

2.2   Who Are the Partisans?

Using Americas Barometer survey data, I estimate multilevel probit models to test simultaneously the individual and country-level relationships identified by research on advanced

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[17] Specifically, the measure is one minus the Herfindahl index, or $1 - \sum_{i=1}^{N} s_i^2$, where s_i is group i's $(i = 1, ..., N)$ share of the population.

[18] Specifically, $1/\sum_{i=1}^{N} \omega_i^2$, where ω_i is party i's $(i = 1, ..., N)$ vote/seat share.

[19] The questions were worded as follows: (1) "Did you vote in the last presidential elections of [year of last presidential elections]?" (2) "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]?" and (3) "In the last 12 months, have you participated in a demonstration or protest march?" The item on protesting was asked only in the 2010 wave of the Americas Barometer, so that analysis uses a more limited sample.

democracies. Based on these estimates, Figure 2 plots the change in predicted probabilities produced as we go from the 10th to the 90th percentile value for each explanatory variable. The values in the figure are total effects, based on separate models that include different sets of variables along the standard "funnel of causality" in public opinion research.[20]

[Figure 2 about here]

Cross-national survey data from the Americas Barometer reveals that patterns of voter partisanship in Latin America resemble those elsewhere in the world. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, older individuals are more likely to be partisan. Partisans also appear to be more educated and have higher incomes, variables that are themselves associated with higher levels of political information. And political information itself also correlates with partisanship – more informed and more educated individuals are more likely to be partisan, consistent with Hypothesis 2. Individuals who participate in civic associations, and those with higher levels of trust in government, are also more likely to identify with a party, consistent with Hypothesis 3.

The individual-level results are also not consistent with Hypothesis 4: partisans tend to be better off than non-partisans. If voter partisanship in Latin America were primarily based on clientelist exchange, we would expect the opposite to be true. This finding does not rule out the possibility that some voters identify with a political party because of the material benefits the party gives them. But it does reveal that, on average, partisanship in Latin America is more than a byproduct of clientelism.

Institutional characteristics also condition Latin American voter partisanship in predictable ways. Where voting focuses on candidates rather than parties, voters are less likely to form party attachment. Party fragmentation also makes voters less likely to be partisan. While Huber, Kernell, and Leoni (2005) find opposite effects of electoral and legislative fragmentation on partisanship, both forms of fragmentation reduce the likelihood of partisanship in Latin America. The institutionalization of the party system, measured in terms of mean party age,

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[20] The coefficient estimates from each model are reported in appendix Table A1.

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conversely increases the probability of partisanship. These effects are consistent with Hypothesis 6. Finally, ethnic fractionalization does not appear to be associated with partisanship in Latin America.

2.3   Does Voter Partisanship Matter?

Latin American partisans look similar to partisans in the US and Western Europe. Country-level contexts also condition voter partisanship in Latin America much as they do in the rest of the world. But does this voter partisanship matter for politics? Do these party attachments inform political attitudes and behaviors? Or is voter partisanship simply a restatement of vote choice or an artifact of US-trained scholars importing a meaningless category from advanced democracies?

Multilevel probit models of the Americas Barometer data reveal that voter partisanship indeed correlates with political participation of different forms.[21] The predicted probabilities in Figure 3 reveal positive relationships between identifying with a political party and both turning out to vote and working for a campaign. On the other hand, participation in protests is negatively correlated with partisanship. This suggests that partisan are more likely to participate in politics through formal channels like voting and campaigning than through informal ones like protesting. These results are thus consistent with Hypothesis 6.

[Figure 3 about here]

2.4   Partisanship and Voting: Identifying Causal Effects with Panel Surveys

Latin American partisans look like their counterparts elsewhere in the world, and their partisanship leads them to participate in politics in predictable ways. But do partisans indeed vote for their party? And if so, is it their party attachment that leads them to support their party at the

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[21] The coefficient estimates from each regression are reported in appendix Table A2.

polls, or do they bring their party attachment in line with their vote intention? As one prominent skeptic of applying the concept of party identification outside the US has noted, it might be that, "[p]arty identification is not causally prior to the vote, but simply a reflection of the vote and therefore causally posterior to the vote" (Thomassen 1976: 72).

One way to address this problem and identify the causal relationship between voter partisanship and vote intention is through repeated interviews of the same survey respondents. Indeed, part of the definition of a cause is that it occurs prior to an outcome (Finkel 1995). Panel surveys allow us to test whether perceptions of party polarization affect changes in partisanship within the same individuals over time, helping to identify the causal link (Bartels 2006). Such surveys necessarily imply focusing on a specific country and therefore limit generalizability. But we gain confidence in the causal interpretation of the correlational analysis if we can identify that causal relationship in the same context with panel survey data.

Fortunately, three panel surveys conducted in Latin America have asked questions about partisanship and vote intention.[22] Two are multi-wave panels surrounding the Mexican elections of 2000 and 2006, and the third is a multi-wave panel conducted in two mid-sized Brazilian cities between 2002 and 2006.[23]

The Mexican panels include three (2006) or four (2000) waves surrounding the respective July presidential elections. Mexico's elections represent the country's first and second competitive election (Klesner 2002). In 2000, the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) had to compete for the first time with two new opposition parties, the Party of Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the National Action Party (PAN). Partisanship was therefore fairly fluid in these elections as voters began to learn about the opposition parties (McCann and Lawson 2003). The Brazilian panel, although not nationally representative, covers two cities with very different political systems over the course of two national elections. The Brazilian party system is

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[22] To my knowledge, these are the only publicly available panel surveys conducted in Latin America that contain these items.

[23] For more information on these surveys, see Baker, Ames, and Renno (2006), Domínguez and Lawson (2004), Lawson and McCann (2005), and McCann and Lawson (2003).

considered among the weakest in the region given highly candidate-centered electoral rules (e.g.,

Mainwaring 1999). These data therefore present a hard test of theories of partisanship since party

attachments should be fairly weak in these contexts.

To analyze the causal effect of voter partisanship on vote intention, I specify a

cross-lagged structural equation model frequently used by scholars of US public opinion working

with panel survey data (e.g., Highton and Kam 2011; Layman and Carsey 2002). 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: 25-6). In this

way, cross-lagged models are akin to Granger causality in time-series analysis (Hood, Kidd, and

Morris 2008). In this context, we want to know whether prior voter partisanship affect current

vote intentions while taking account of preexisting vote intentions.[24]

Three parties competed in each of the Mexican presidential elections. In the Brazilian

elections, three main parties – the PT, PMDB, and PSDB – put forward competitive candidates. I

therefore specify three models for each panel, with the intention to vote for each party treated as a

dichotomous dependent variable in each model. In addition to the key independent variables of

interest, these models also control for demographic characteristics: urban/rural residence,

education, ethnicity (whites/non-whites), age, and gender. Since the Brazilian panel covers two

cities, I include a control variable for residence in one of the two. Since there are multiple waves

in each panel, I pool observations of respondents in each two-wave dyad and cluster standard

errors by respondent.[25]

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[24] This means simultaneously estimating the equations:

$$Vote_{i,t} = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 Vote_{i,t-1} + \gamma_1 PID_{i,t-1} + \epsilon_1$$
$$PID_{i,t} = \alpha_2 + \beta_2 Vote_{i,t-1} + \gamma_2 PID_{i,t-1} + \epsilon_2$$

[25] An alternative way to analyze panel survey data of this kind is an instrumental variables approach often used in
models of economic voting. This approach would model vote choice in any given wave as a function of prior
partisanship and also prior vote choice (e.g., Lewis-Beck, Nadeau, and Elias 2008). Since current and prior vote

The results reveal a consistent causal effect of partisanship on vote intentions. Table 1 reports estimates from the cross-lagged models for Mexico. The top half of the table shows that prior partisanship always has a significant effect on current vote choice. On the other hand, vote intentions are significantly unstable in 2000 for the PAN and PRI, although vote intentions stabilize quite dramatically by 2006. This is consistent with the notion that voters spent much of the 2000 campaign learning about the newly competitive parties.

[Table 1 about here]

There is also some evidence of the reverse causation that motivated this analysis. The bottom half of Table 1 shows that prior vote intentions sometimes have a significant effect on whether or not respondents say they identify with the party. This is true across the board in 2006, but only for the PRD in 2000. These results also show that prior partisanship always has a significant effect on current partisanship. That stability in respondents' stated party attachments is consistent with the correlations reported by McCann and Lawson (2003).

The same is true in Brazil. The top half of Table 2 shows that prior partisanship has a causal effect on vote choice in the cases of the PT and PSDB, the two parties that fielded competitive candidates in the 2002 and 2006 elections. Vote intentions are also remarkably stable in Brazil, even across two elections. At the same time, there is some evidence of reverse causation – the bottom half of Table 2 shows that prior vote intentions do sometimes affect voters' party attachments, once again only for the PT and PSDB. But the much larger determinant of partisanship is prior partisanship, suggesting the partisanship is in fact quite stable even in this weak party system (c.f. Samuels 2006).

[Table 2 about here]

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partisanship are highly correlated, analysts use respondents' demographic characteristics to instrument lagged partisanship. The problem with this approach is that the exclusion restriction may not be fulfilled: demographic characteristics may have a direct effect on current partisanship, above and beyond their effect on prior partisanship. Still, applying this specification to these data yields substantively similar results.

3 Voter Partisanship and Political Behavior in Latin America: Conclusions and Challenges

In advanced democracies, voter partisanship is both widespread and influential. Yet we know little about whether partisanship in developing democracies functions similarly. Many scholars are in fact skeptical that theories of partisanship developed and tested in advanced democracies apply to the developing world. But there are also good reasons to think they do in developing regions like Latin America.

This paper set out to test whether mass partisanship in Latin America develops and functions in ways that are consistent with the theories of partisanship drawn from advanced democracies. Using both cross-national survey data from across the region and three panel surveys across two of its largest countries, my unequivocal answer is that it does. Latin American partisans look like their counterparts in the developed world, and Latin American voters' attachments to a party affect their behaviors in predictable ways. Partisanship in Latin America follows the same behavioral processes we see in advanced democracies.

Yet, there is variation in the extent of mass partisanship across Latin America. Using multilevel models, this paper has added to the very small set of papers that begin to address such cross-national variation. But there is still a great deal of room – indeed, a need – to more fully explain why partisanship is more widespread in some countries and in some years than in others. An unfortunate consequence of the inattention to partisanship in developing democracies is that scholars have so far failed to explain such enormous cross-national variation.

Some of this cross-national variation may also reflect – or may mask – differences across parties. In many multiparty countries, voter attachments are far more widespread for certain parties than for others. Why do some parties foster voter 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? Recognizing

that voter partisanship matters in developing democracies means that questions like these are neglected and important avenues for future research.

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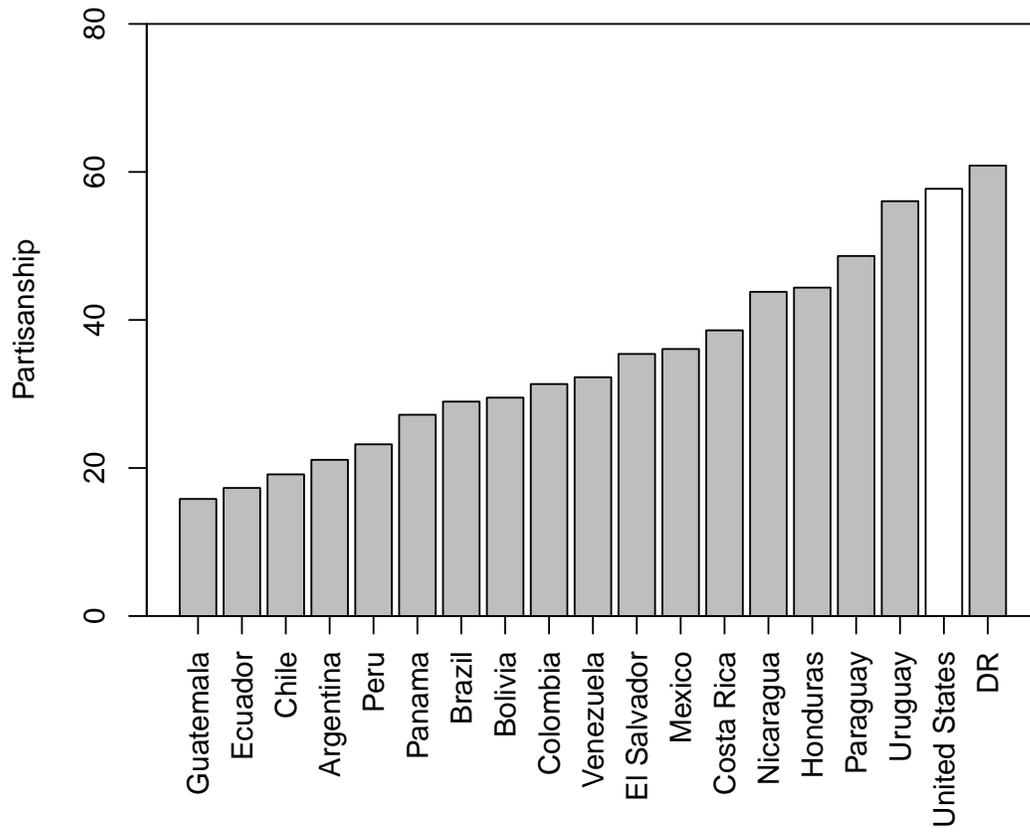
Figure 1: Partisanship in Latin America and the US. Values represent the proportion of respondents who said they identified with a political party.
Source: Americas Barometer 2010
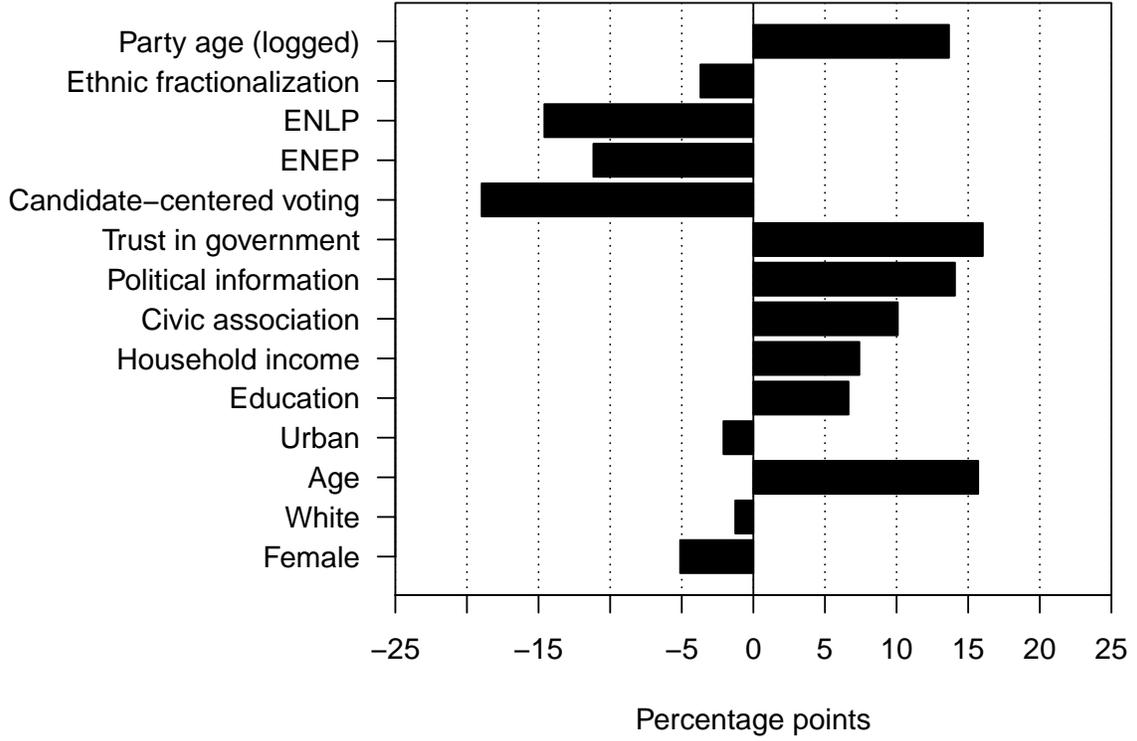
Figure 2: Correlates of voter partisanship in Latin America. Values represent total effects of explanatory variables on partisan self-identification. Each value is the change in the predicted probability of identifying with a party produced by a shift in the explanatory variable from the 10th to the 90th percentile.
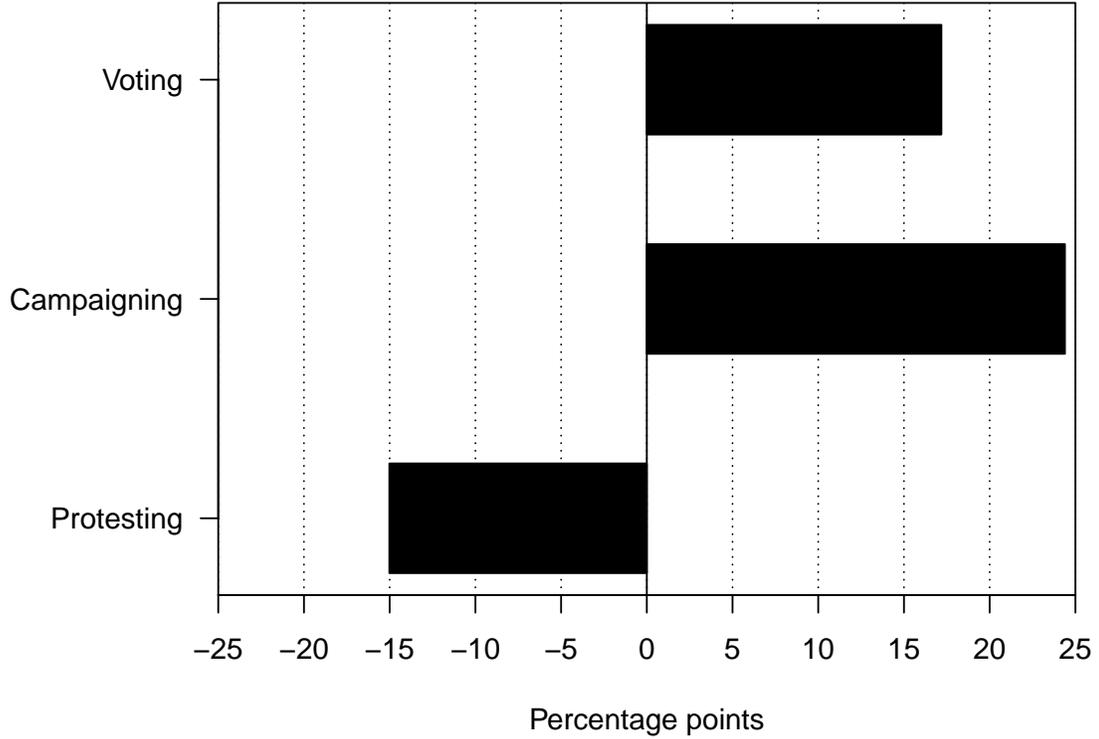
Figure 3: Voter partisanship and political participation in Latin America. Values represent effects of partisan self-identification on forms of political participation. Each value is the change in the predicted probability of participation produced by a shift from non-partisanship to partisanship. Models include controls for trust in government, civic association, political information, education, household income, urban residence, race, age, and gender.

Table 1: Voter partisanship and vote choice in Mexico, 2002 and 2006

	2000			2006		
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)**
	PAN	**PRI**	**PRD**	**PAN**	**PRI**	**PRD**
Vote choice						
Prior partisanship	0.216**	0.296**	0.329**	0.236**	0.322**	0.350**
	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.061)	(0.036)	(0.039)	(0.044)
Prior vote choice	-0.336**	-0.350**	0.437**	0.527**	0.446**	0.450**
	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.061)	(0.037)	(0.040)	(0.044)
Partisanship						
Prior partisanship	0.596**	0.665**	0.424**	0.390**	0.501**	0.482**
	(0.027)	(0.024)	(0.062)	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.042)
Prior vote choice	0.039	0.024	0.315**	0.396**	0.276**	0.340**
	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.059)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.041)
Observations	1,353	1,353	1,353	1,716	1,716	1,716
Respondents	941	941	941	1,108	1,108	1,108
Log-likelihood	-9895.41	-10125.17	-7122.21	-11795.49	-11871.36	-11635.63

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, two tailed. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered by respondent. Values are cross-lagged coefficients from structural equation models. Not shown are coefficients for the intercept and controls for education, household income, urban residence, race, and gender.

Table 2: Voter partisanship and vote choice in two Brazilian cities, 2002-2006

	(7) PT	(8) PMDB	(9) PSDB
Vote choice			
Prior partisanship	0.158**	0.011	0.082**
	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Prior vote choice	0.393**	0.354**	0.442**
	(0.016)	(0.012)	(0.016)
Partisanship			
Prior partisanship	0.419**	0.488**	0.373**
	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.032)
Prior vote choice	0.151**	0.025	0.095**
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.015)
Observations	5,234	5,232	5,231
Respondents	2,513	2,513	2,512
Log-likelihood	-78702.82	-76466.81	-69569.71

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, two tailed. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered by respondent. Values are cross-lagged coefficients from structural equation models. Not shown are coefficients for the intercept and controls for education, household income, race, gender, and residents of Juiz de Fora.

Appendix

Americas Barometer

The Americas Barometer is a cross-national survey covering the countries of the Americas that has been conducted every two years since 2006. It uses a common design to construct a multi-staged, stratified sample (with household level quotas) of approximately 1,500 voting-age adults in each country. Surveys are conducted face-to-face using hand-held electronic systems.

Mexico Panel Surveys

The Mexico 2000 Panel Study consists of approximately 7,000 interviews in five separate surveys over the course of the 2000 election campaign, using a hybrid panel/cross-sectional design. The first was conducted in February 19-27 (just after the official beginning of the campaign) and surveyed a national cross-section of 2,400 adults. This sample was then randomly divided into two groups, the first of which was re-interviewed in the second round (April 28 to May 7). Because of attrition, this wave included approximately 950 respondents. The third round (June 3-18) re-interviewed all of the respondents in the second randomly selected subset of the first round plus approximately 400 respondents interviewed in the second round. Finally, the fourth round (July 7-16) re-interviewed as many of the participants as possible from all previous rounds. This included almost 1,200 respondents who had been interviewed in the second and third rounds, as well as just over 100 respondents who had only been previously interviewed in first. This panel sample was supplemented with a new cross-section of approximately 1,200 fresh respondents. Respondents were selected using stratified random sampling and interviewed face-to-face. Interviews were conducted by the polling staff of the Mexican daily newspaper, *Reforma*, and MORI de México. Participants in the Mexico 2000 Panel Study included (in alphabetical order): Miguel Basañez, Roderic Camp, Wayne Cornelius, Jorge Domnguez, Federico Estévez, Joseph Klesner, Chappell Lawson (Principal Investigator), Beatriz Magaloni,

James McCann, Alejandro Moreno, Pablo Parás, and Alejandro Poiré. Funding for the study was provided by the National Science Foundation (SES-9905703) and *Reforma* newspaper.

Brazil Panel Survey

The Brazil Panel Survey consists of six interviews of eligible voters in two mid-sized Brazilian cities between 2002 and 2006. The two cities are Caxias do Sul, in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, and Juiz de Fora, in Brazils second largest state, Minas Gerais. The first survey was conducted in March-April 2002, the second in August 2002, the third in October 2002, the fourth in May-June 2004, the fifth in July-August 2006, and the sixth in October 2006. The initial sample size was 2,500 respondents per city. In each wave, a new cross-section of roughly 1,000 respondents was added.

Table A1: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Observations
Americas Barometer					
Party age (logged)	3.51	0.83	2.3	5.25	89821
Ethnic fractionalization	0.49	0.18	0.02	0.81	105147
Effective number of electoral parties	3.07	1.1	1.99	5.57	85311
Effective number of legislative parties	4.12	2.08	1.26	9.32	85311
Candidate-centered voting	4.17	3.48	1	12	89821
Voting	0.74	0.44	0	1	110319
Campaigning	0.11	0.31	0	1	104884
Protesting	0.92	0.27	0	1	43678
Partisanship	0.35	0.48	0	1	105614
Trust in government	0.01	0.82	-1.4	1.97	108237
Political information	1.89	1.05	0	3	116244
Civic association	-0.03	0.99	-1.08	4.63	111878
Household income	4.18	2.46	0	13	100300
Education	3.11	0.84	1	5	111068
Urban	0.61	0.49	0	1	116244
Age	39.26	15.87	0	105	114414
White	0.23	0.42	0	1	116244
Female	0.51	0.5	0	1	116244
Mexico Panel Survey, 2000					
PAN identifier	0.24	0.43	0	1	5404
PRI identifier	0.37	0.48	0	1	5404
PRD identifier	0.1	0.29	0	1	5404
PAN voter	0.42	0.49	0	1	4751
PRI voter	0.42	0.49	0	1	4751
PRD voter	0.13	0.34	0	1	4751
Urban	0.71	0.45	0	1	9600
Household income	2.79	1.7	1	9	7416
Education	2.98	1.2	1	5	9444
White	0.18	0.39	0	1	9540
Female	0.52	0.5	0	1	9600
Mexico Panel Survey, 2006					
PAN identifier	0.34	0.47	0	1	4482
PRI identifier	0.32	0.47	0	1	4482
PRD identifier	0.34	0.47	0	1	4482
PAN voter	0.29	0.45	0	1	5916
PRI voter	0.24	0.42	0	1	5916
PRD voter	0.37	0.48	0	1	5916
Urban	0.68	0.47	0	1	9315
Household income	5.12	3.28	1	11	5313

Table A1: Descriptive statistics (continued)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Observations
Education	7.82	1.05	2	9	7200
White	0.15	0.36	0	1	9306
Female	0.4	0.49	0	1	9315
Brazil Panel Survey					
PT identifier	0.24	0.43	0	1	17469
PMDB identifier	0.13	0.34	0	1	17467
PSDB identifier	0.03	0.16	0	1	17467
PT voter	0.4	0.49	0	1	19314
PMDB voter	0.23	0.42	0	1	19314
PSDB voter	0.22	0.41	0	1	19314
Household income	753.46	943.58	0	31754.27	31206
Education	8.33	3.92	0	15	37398
White	0.70	0.46	0	1	40158
Female	0.28	0.45	0	1	41820

Table A2. *Correlates of voter partisanship in Latin America*

	(A1)	(A2)	(A3)	(A4)
Party age (logged)				0.183**
				(0.009)
Ethnic fractionalization				-0.289**
				(0.105)
Effective number of electoral parties				-0.121**
				(0.014)
Effective number of legislative parties				-0.049**
				(0.006)
Candidate-centered voting				-0.056**
				(0.004)
Trust in government			0.180**	0.164**
			(0.019)	(0.017)
Political information		0.120**	0.116**	0.112**
		(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Civic association		0.102**	0.098**	0.101**
		(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Household income	0.031**	0.028**	0.027**	0.030**
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Education	0.086**	0.035**	0.040**	0.045**
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.011)
Urban	-0.052*	-0.032	-0.021	-0.032
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Age	0.010**	0.010**	0.010**	0.010**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
White	-0.032	0.018	0.003	-0.027
	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.016)
Female	-0.128**	-0.110**	-0.107**	-0.107**
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Observations	72,592	71,091	66,772	63,479
Surveys	49	49	49	46
Log-likelihood	-38950.69	-37829.44	-35373.05	-33318.26

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, two tailed. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Values are multilevel probit coefficients. Coefficient for the intercept not shown.

Table A3. *Voter partisanship and political participation in Latin America*

	(A5) Voting	(A6) Campaigning	(A7) Protesting
Partisanship	0.445**	0.655**	-0.386**
	(0.034)	(0.024)	(0.038)
Trust in government	0.022	0.045**	0.012
	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.028)
Civic association	0.148**	0.198**	-0.211**
	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.018)
Political information	0.084**	0.044**	-0.011
	(0.011)	(0.015)	(0.017)
Household income	0.009*	-0.010**	-0.022*
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.010)
Education	0.150**	0.108**	-0.067**
	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.024)
Urban	-0.044*	0.047	-0.096
	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.060)
Age	0.028**	0.000	0.005**
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
White	0.026	-0.037	0.065*
	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.031)
Female	0.025	-0.177**	0.154**
	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.029)
Observations	64,324	65,988	26,011
Surveys	48	49	18
Log-likelihood	-27146.70	-18943.10	-5918.92

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, two tailed. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Values are multilevel probit coefficients relating partisan self-identification to forms of political participation. Coefficient for the intercept not shown.