INTRODUCTION

THE DIVERGENT FATES OF LATIN AMERICA'S NEW LEFT CONTENDERS

As this book goes to press, political parties across the world are reeling. Hundreds of millions of voters have rejected established parties (or party establishments) in recent years and either elected or shown significant support for new or formerly marginal electoral alternatives: Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the US, Brexit in the UK, Alternative for Germany, France's National Front, Italy's Five-Star Movement and Northern League, Spain's Podemos, Greece's Syriza, the Philippines' Rodrigo Duterte, Mexico's Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro. These parties, candidates, and causes span the left and right, but all reject the political establishment in their countries, and many of the relevant leaders have a populist bent. As these players and movements have surged, concerns about democratic stability and the protection of civil liberties have multiplied, even in the world's developed democracies.[1]

In recent decades, trends of party erosion, populist ascendancy, and democratic breakdown have plagued the developing world in particular. In much of Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the former Soviet Union, party systems have collapsed or largely decomposed since the early 1990s.[2] In most of these countries, durable new parties and party systems have not filled—or in some countries even partially filled—the resulting vacuums.[3] The outcome, in more than a few cases, has been the election of political outsiders and the whittling away of democracy through executive degradation.[4]

Take contemporary Latin America. Since 1990, institutionalized party systems have collapsed in Venezuela and partially collapsed in Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Honduras.[5] Of the four party systems that Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully labeled "inchoate" in 1995,[6] two (Bolivia, Ecuador) have continued to deteriorate, and one, Brazil, is now experiencing partial party system erosion after more than two decades of progress toward institutionalization.[7] Most recently, the

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established parties of Mexico and El Salvador suffered resounding, historic defeats in mid-2018 and early 2019, respectively.

Over roughly the same period, the vast majority of attempts to build new parties in Latin America have failed. More than 95 percent of Latin American parties born in the 1980s and 1990s never took off electorally, and most of those that did take off collapsed shortly afterward.[8] Due to these developments, Latin American party systems have become more fragmented and volatile in recent decades, leading to problems of governability and constitutional crises; to the election of various party system outsiders (e.g., Alberto Fujimori in Peru; Hugo Chávez in Venezuela; Rafael Correa in Ecuador; Evo Morales in Bolivia; Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil; Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico; and Nayib Bukele in El Salvador); and in a few cases to democratic erosion at the hands of such figures (e.g., Peru in the 1990s; Venezuela in the 2000s; and El Salvador recently).[9]

But these trends should not be overstated.[10] In many developing countries, new political parties have taken root, and institutionalized party systems have emerged or persisted.[11] In such cases, democracy, typically, has become consolidated.[12] Again, take Latin America. After the onset of the third wave of democratization in the region in 1978, over a dozen new parties rose to prominence and established themselves as perennial contenders: Bolivia's MAS; Brazil's PT and PSDB; Chile's UDI and PPD; Costa Rica's PAC; El Salvador's FMLN and ARENA; Mexico's PRD; Nicaragua's FSLN; Panama's PRD; Peru's Fujimorista parties; and Venezuela's PSUV.[13] Some Latin American countries maintained stable party systems due to the persistence of old parties and the establishment of new parties alongside them (e.g., Chile, Uruguay, and Mexico). Others developed wholly new institutionalized (e.g., El Salvador) or semi-institutionalized (e.g., Brazil) party systems. In most of these countries, democracy has taken root (e.g., Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, Brazil, and El Salvador until recently). The fact that successful party building has occurred in parts of Latin America—and in parts of Africa, Asia, and the former Soviet Union as well[14]—suggests that the era of party building is not over. In the contemporary developing world, successful party building is challenging and rare but not impossible.

What factors have made party building difficult in the past few decades? Under what conditions does successful party building occur? The recent failure of party building in much of the developing world upended analysts' early predictions. As dictatorships fell across the former Third World in the 1980s and 1990s,[15] the policy and media communities initially reacted with optimism. Many predicted that once electoral competition commenced in these countries, and once elites designed the right

electoral institutions, stable parties and party systems would quickly emerge. Their argument, or implicit premise, was that parties naturally form and take root under democracy—that is, that democracy facilitates party building.

A large body of academic literature supported this optimism. Some scholars, most notably John Aldrich, argued that under democracy, political elites have incentives to "turn" to parties.[16] On Aldrich's account, parties help politicians to win elections and reelection by supplying partisan votes along with campaign resources (e.g., financing, physical infrastructure, and professional operatives and activists). The Jacksonian Democratic Party in the United States, he argued, was created so that its founders (e.g., Martin Van Buren) could mobilize sufficient electoral support to win national office. Aldrich also argued that parties facilitate legislative organization and executive/legislative relations, thus helping politicians to implement their preferred policies. The United States' Federalist and Republican parties, he held, were established so that competing elites such as Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson could more effectively advance their programmatic agendas concerning the proper scope of federal government activities.[17]

Other proponents of the "democracy facilitates party building" thesis focused on the voter (rather than elite) side of the equation. In his seminal article, "Of Time and Partisan Stability," Philip Converse argued that under democracy, voters develop partisan attachments through repeated exposure to the same set of partisan options.[18] Various scholars, accepting Converse's argument, identified possible mechanisms by which this process of partisan attachment occurs. Some argued that over time, voters gain a better understanding of what different parties stand for, making their partisan preferences more robust to new information and competing appeals.[19] Others argued that the act of supporting a party, especially through voting, makes one more likely to see oneself as a partisan.[20] Numerous empirical studies found that partisan attachments grow stronger, more consistent, and more stable as a function of the length of time voters support and vote for a particular party. For example, scholars widely reported an association between age and partisanship in the US,[21] the UK,[22] and other European countries.[23]

As the foregoing paragraphs indicate, the most influential versions of the "democracy facilitates party building" thesis arose from studies of advanced Western countries, especially the United States.[24] Still, after the third wave, researchers applied the thesis to new democracies and electoral regimes in the developing world. Ted Brader and Joshua A. Tucker found that in post-Soviet Russia, electoral competition, over time, produced increasing levels of partisanship.[25] Mainwaring and

Scully stated in their pathbreaking volume on Latin American party system institutionalization that "no single factor is more propitious for the successful institutionalization of party systems than continuously having elections that are the principal route to state power."[26] Noam Lupu and Susan Stokes used evidence from Argentina in the twentieth century to argue that time spent under democracy facilitates the spread of partisan attachments and thus reduces electoral volatility—assuming that democracy is not "interrupted" by periods of democratic breakdown.[27]

In this book, I frontally challenge the argument that democracy facilitates party building. Focusing on the experience of electorally prominent left-wing parties born after the onset of the third wave of democratization in Latin America in 1978,[28] I argue, in direct contrast to the above accounts, that democracy impedes party building. I will elaborate this argument in chapter 1, but in brief, how does it work?

When new parties collapse, it is usually because they have weak organizations and therefore do not survive early electoral crises. New party elites only have electoral incentives to build strong organizations, however, if they are born under adversity—specifically, if they initially lack access to two major party "substitutes": mass media and state resources.[29] Herein lies the problem. In the contemporary developing world, new parties born under full democracy typically do not face such adverse conditions; that is, they tend to have, or quickly to gain, access to mass media and the state. Thus I argue, in direct contrast to Aldrich, that under democracy, politicians have incentives to turn away from (not toward) parties.

Paradoxically, it is where new parties originate under less-than-fully democratic conditions that elites have incentives to invest in organization. The ideal context is not one of repressive authoritarianism, where the cost of party building tends to be prohibitively high. Instead, it is one of liberalizing or competitive authoritarianism, where office seekers have space to organize and reasonable electoral prospects but more limited state and media access than under democracy. My takeaway argument in the book, then, is that new parties born under democracy are more likely to collapse than those born under liberalizing or competitive authoritarianism. This claim is original, and it is the book's theoretical centerpiece.[30]

The implications of this argument are somewhat bleak. Scholars widely agree that institutionalized political parties raise democratic quality and foster democratic consolidation.[31] I agree with this conventional wisdom: parties are good for democracy. Unfortunately, democracy is not good for party building, at least in the contemporary developing world. If elites and ordinary citizens in developing democracies do not

learn to build robust parties, or to function successfully in their absence, they may be forced to accept a degree of ungovernability and regime instability unfamiliar to previous generations of democratizers.

A key corollary of this argument is that party organization matters. In stressing this point, I depart from much of the recent scholarship on parties, which tends to downplay the role of organization. In the past few decades, scholars have argued that given the reach of broadcast media (especially television), parties and politicians no longer need strong "ground games" to appeal to masses of voters and win elections.[32] More recently, scholars have emphasized the role of effective branding in party success, positing that parties collapse when their brand (i.e., voters' image of them) fails.[33] These arguments are valuable—and true as far as they go—but parties do not exist in voters' minds alone. Parties are organizations, not mere brands, and the character of their organizations can determine whether they prioritize electoral competition or constituency representation;[34] achieve electoral success;[35] pursue subnational office;[36] act cohesively in the legislature;[37] and, most importantly for our purposes, survive electoral crises during their initial years of existence.

In the book, I also present an original explanation of why new parties fatally split. Schism—defined as the defection of a major leader or faction—is a frequent cause of new party death, and in recent decades scholars have begun to examine the origins of schisms in new parties. I contribute to this emerging literature by highlighting an understudied, undertheorized independent variable: the type of party leader. Only a tiny fraction of new parties ever rise to electoral prominence, and of this tiny fraction, a large proportion depend for their initial electoral success on the coattails of electorally indispensable leaders.[38] These externally appealing leaders invariably hold considerable power within their parties. But only some externally appealing leaders are internally *dominant*. Others are not because of their limited moral authority, weak cross-factional ties, and/or unrepresentative ideological profile. This variation, I argue, can determine whether new parties survive or collapse. New parties with externally appealing, internally dominant leaders rarely suffer schisms. By contrast, those with externally appealing, internally *non-*dominant leaders are vulnerable to deadly splits.

By placing much of my explanatory emphasis on parties' internal characteristics (i.e., organizational strength, sources of cohesion), I am "taking parties seriously" in this book. That is, I am not treating parties as mere units of party systems, or as pawns of external forces (e.g., electoral rules, public opinion, and class structure). Instead, I am treating them as agents in their own right, and complex ones at that. Individual parties vary in their internal characteristics, and because of this vari-

ation, they differ in their actions and outcomes, independently of the institutional, structural, and party system context in which they operate. My argument, then, belongs to a broad class of arguments, dating back more than a century, that emphasize the effect of parties' internal characteristics, or "internal lives," on their development and fortunes.[39] This class of arguments is consistent with organizational theory more broadly (e.g., in sociology and business), which has long acknowledged the role of internal factors (e.g., strategy and administrative structure), as distinct from environmental ones, in determining organizational success.[40]

LATIN AMERICA'S NEW LEFT CONTENDERS

In the book, I test my theoretical arguments through a comparison of successful and unsuccessful "new left contenders" in Latin America. By "new left contenders," I mean left-wing parties that emerged after the onset of Latin America's third wave of democratization in 1978 and rose to electoral prominence during their early years of existence. By "left-wing," I mean that these parties, in their rhetoric and platforms, placed central programmatic emphasis on the reduction of inequality through state action.[41] I examine why some of these new left contenders survived the early years of their existence and took root for decades as perennial electoral forces, while others collapsed shortly after achieving initial electoral success.

From a theoretical perspective, then, my unit of analysis is the new partisan contender. A new partisan contender is a political party that rises to electoral prominence during its early years of existence. The cases under empirical investigation in this book (Latin America's "new left contenders") are a specific subset of new partisan contenders: those belonging to the left and born in Latin America after the regional onset of the third wave.

What counts as a party? A party is more than a group that runs candidates for office under a common label;[42] this definition would include any multiparty electoral coalition. In my definition, a party is a group of politicians running for office under a common label such that, on balance, members value the "whole" as much as, or more than, the constituent "parts." In other words, a multiparty coalition is not a party if the constituent parties are clearly more important than the coalition itself (e.g., Chile's Concertación; and Argentina's coalition of the Radical Civic Union [UCR] and FREPASO in the late 1990s).

Accordingly, I operationalize a party as (1) a legally registered party; (2) a legally registered coalition in which there has been a major effort, involving all major factions, to transform the coalition into a party or permanent coalition (e.g., Peru's IU in the second half of the 1980s); or

(3) a legally registered coalition in which the dominant faction prioritizes the coalition's fortunes over the fortunes of any constituent party, including its own if applicable (e.g., FREPASO from its founding onward).

Why do I focus on the Latin American left in this book?[43] Latin America is the world's most unequal region, and extreme inequality arguably creates a natural constituency for the left. Prior to the third wave, governments across Latin America proscribed, defrauded, or repressed the left, and numerous Latin American militaries toppled left governments in military coups.[44] When the third wave swept across Latin America during the 1980s, and later when the Cold War ended, Latin America's left parties had an unprecedented opportunity to contest elections freely, on a region-wide scale, and without substantial fear of fraud, repression, or coups. Yet, in most Latin American countries—including some of the most unequal ones (e.g., Colombia and Honduras)—new left parties either did not emerge; or "flopped" (i.e., emerged but never rose to electoral prominence); or turned out to be mere "flash" parties (i.e., rose to electoral prominence but collapsed shortly thereafter).[45] In such cases, working-class and lower-income citizens, instead of voting for left parties, often voted for catch-all clientelistic parties without national redistributive agendas (e.g., Colombia's Liberals and Conservatives; and Honduras's Liberals and Nationals) or for antiestablishment outsiders (e.g., Peru's Alberto Fujimori; Venezuela's Hugo Chávez; and Ecuador's Rafael Correa). Populist presidents (e.g., Fujimori, Chávez, and Correa) and dominant governing parties (e.g., Argentina's Peronist Party [PJ]) faced fewer checks and constraints, leading to corruption, abuse, and even democratic breakdown.

By contrast, where major new left parties took root, clientelistic and populist strategies became less effective, and democracies stabilized (e.g., Brazil, El Salvador, and Mexico). Where new left parties won national elections, large-scale redistribution and significant reductions in inequality followed (e.g., Brazil after the PT's 2002 presidential victory). In sum, the fact that new left parties did not take root in most Latin American countries constitutes an empirical puzzle in light of the region's extreme inequality, and the divergent fates of these new left parties had normatively significant effects on inequality levels and democratic quality and stability in the region.

Who precisely were Latin America's new left contenders? In 1978, military regimes governed all but a handful of Latin American countries. Over the next decade, most of these regimes fell, with some quickly collapsing (e.g., Argentina's last military dictatorship) and others gradually liberalizing (e.g., Brazil's military regime). By the mid-1990s, there were no military regimes and only a few authoritarian regimes (e.g., Mex-

ico and Cuba) in Latin America. Mexico, under civilian single-party rule throughout the third wave, democratized in 2000. In short, the vast majority of Latin American countries shifted from authoritarian rule to democracy either during or shortly after the third-wave period (1978–1995).[46]

After the onset of the third wave, new parties emerged in every Latin American country except Cuba. In total, hundreds of parties were born. The vast majority never took off electorally; most of these quickly disappeared, while a small number persisted for decades as marginal parties. A few dozen, however, at least briefly rose to national electoral prominence. These new partisan contenders did not necessarily win national elections, but they seriously vied for national power, and they won enough elections at the congressional level, and often at the subnational level as well, to play major roles in their country's politics.

A subset of these new partisan contenders belonged to the left. Latin America's new left contenders had much in common, making them a useful population for comparison. For one, they emerged in a common regional and historical context. Latin American countries have broadly similar histories (e.g., Iberian colonial heritage), cultures (e.g., Catholicism), socioeconomic characteristics (e.g., middle-income status and high inequality), and institutional arrangements (e.g., presidentialism and proportional representation). Moreover, Latin America's new left contenders shared a left-wing program, achieved at least initial electoral success, and emerged in the same rough period (1978–2005).

The left faced three broad challenges during this period. First, the debt crisis and implosion of the import substitution industrialization (ISI) model, along with the decline and collapse of the Soviet Union, gave rise to a policy consensus around free markets, or neoliberalism, among Latin American elites. Consequently, the left's old economic platform (e.g., industrial protectionism, price controls, and nationalization) became less feasible politically. Left parties from the 1980s onward faced pressure to embrace or accept market reforms, even though, in doing so, they risked tainting their image and losing their programmatic distinctiveness.[47]

Second and relatedly, the decline and fall of international communism produced new ideological divisions within the Latin American left. Forced to grapple with the defeat of revolutionary leftist ideas, sectors of the Latin American left underwent a process of ideological "renovation," abandoning socialism in favor of social democracy.[48] Yet revolutionary leftism did not disappear during the third wave, even after the fall of the Berlin Wall. On the contrary, the radical left remained a nontrivial force in much of Latin America, and internecine conflict between radicals and

moderates posed a threat to the internal cohesion of left movements and parties.[49]

Third and finally, the debt crisis, failure of ISI, and neoliberal turn contributed to deindustrialization and the decline of labor unions, limiting the left's capacity to mobilize and appeal to the popular classes.[50] As Latin American governments abandoned protectionism in the 1980s and 1990s, many domestic industries folded and shrank, and the industrial trade unions on which left parties had traditionally depended folded and shrank with them. Deindustrialization, along with rising formal unemployment during the economic "lost decade" of the 1980s, led to a significant expansion of the informal and low-end service sectors of Latin American economies. Compared to industrial workers, these workers were geographically dispersed and occupationally diverse. They were unorganized both across and within occupational sectors. Traditional working-class interests (e.g., union benefits) did not align with theirs. Many in the informal sector viewed themselves as entrepreneurs, not laborers. Due to these factors, left parties had difficulty reaching and appealing to large swathes of the lower-income electorate, particularly while retaining the loyalties of the declining traditional working class.[51] In short, the sociological shifts that coincided with the third wave—particularly deindustrialization and the growth of the informal and low-end service sectors—complicated the left's task of mobilizing and appealing to the popular classes.[52]

The left also benefited from some common opportunities, especially once the third wave concluded. As already noted, Latin America's chronically high levels of poverty and inequality gave left parties a natural constituency in the region. Moreover, a set of economic developments beginning in the late 1990s put the left in a particularly advantageous political position. In 1997 Latin America entered into a half-decade-long economic crisis, contracting by 2 percent between 1997 and 2002. This recession led to the electoral defeat of numerous center and center-right governments and eroded public support for neoliberal economic policies. Seizing the opportunity, left candidates won presidential elections across the region during and shortly after the recessionary period. Then, early in the first decade of the 2000s, economic conditions dramatically improved, with skyrocketing commodity prices leading to a sustained economic boom and massive fiscal surpluses. These conditions generated public support for left governments that had recently taken office and enabled them to invest heavily in social programs.[53]

Amid this common regional backdrop of challenges and opportunities, Latin America's new left contenders experienced divergent outcomes. Some survived—that is, sustained their electoral relevance for

TABLE I.1 NEW LEFT CONTENDERS THAT COLLAPSED

Country	Party	Birth
Argentina	Front for a Country in Solidarity (FREPASO)	1994
Colombia	April 19th Movement Democratic Alliance (AD M-19)	1990
Costa Rica	Broad Front (FA)	2004
El Salvador	Democratic Convergence (CD)	1987
Guatemala	National Unity of Hope (UNE)	2002
Paraguay	National Encounter Party (PEN)	1991
Peru	United Left (IU)	1980
Peru	Independent Moralizing Front (FIM)	1990
Peru	Peruvian Nationalist Party (PNP)	2005

TABLE I.2 NEW LEFT CONTENDERS THAT SURVIVED

Country	Party	Birth
Bolivia	Movement toward Socialism (MAS)	1995
Brazil	Workers' Party (PT)	1980
Chile	Party for Democracy (PPD)	1987
Costa Rica	Citizen Action Party (PAC)	2000
El Salvador	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN)	1992
Mexico	Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)	1989
Nicaragua	Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)	1979
Panama	Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD)	1979
Venezuela	Unified Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV)	1997

decades. Others collapsed—that is, disappeared or fell into electoral marginality shortly after rising to electoral prominence. I operationalize new left contenders as Latin American parties born between 1978 and 2005 that centrally emphasized state-led reduction of inequality in official party documents and won at least 10 percent of the vote in a national legislative election (e.g., congressional or constituent assembly).[54] Within this population, I classify as cases of survival those that stayed above the 10 percent threshold for five or more consecutive national legislative elections.[55] The rest I classify as cases of collapse.[56]

Survival, then, does not imply multiple *generations* of electoral relevance. Some parties remain perennial electoral contenders for many generations (e.g., Argentina's PJ), while others only maintain their electoral success for a generation (e.g., Mexico's Party of the Democratic Revolution [PRD]). I do not analyze such variation in this book. In theoretical terms, I examine why some new partisan contenders survive the formative decade and last at least a generation, not why, among these survivors, some last for multiple generations or centuries.

Based on my operationalization criteria, I count eighteen Latin American new left contenders (see tables I.1 and I.2). Nine of these collapsed, including Argentina's Front for a Country in Solidarity (FREPASO), Peru's United Left (IU), and Colombia's April 19th Movement Democratic Alliance (AD M-19) (see table I.1). The other nine survived, including Brazil's Workers' Party (PT), El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), and Mexico's PRD (see table I.2). What explains the divergent trajectories of Latin America's new left contenders? That is the broad empirical puzzle addressed in this book.

From a theoretical perspective, then, my dependent variable is the survival or collapse of new partisan contenders. This dependent variable is fairly distinctive within existing party literature. I investigate individual parties, not party systems[57] or ideological partisan clusters.[58] I focus on new, not established, parties.[59] I ask how new parties maintain electoral prominence, not how they attain it.[60] I define success merely as sustained electoral relevance, in contrast to studies that define success, wholly or in part, in terms of presidential victory;[61] parliamentary discipline;[62] organizational centralization and/or routinization;[63] ideological purity or integrity;[64] and programmatic stability.[65]

Most distinctively, I examine successful and unsuccessful cases of party building. This point bears emphasis. I am offering the most systematic analysis to date of left-wing party-building outcomes in contemporary Latin America. Indeed, this book is one of relatively few party analyses that deeply investigates cases of failure, or that thoroughly compares cases of success and failure (although there are notable exceptions).[66]

Why does this matter? The vast majority of new parties worldwide either flop or collapse. To date, scholars have largely ignored unsuccessful cases of party building, focusing instead on the tiny fraction of new parties that achieve sustained electoral relevance. Take, for example, the classic scholarship on parties and party systems. This literature is predominantly based on studies (mostly historical) of the United States and Western European countries. Since almost all Western polities developed and maintain stable party systems, these theories tend to take successful party building for granted and to focus on factors that shape emerging parties and party systems—such as electoral rules;[67] patterns of suffrage expansion;[68] social cleavages;[69] access to patronage;[70] parties' relationship to external organizations;[71] the internal ratio of pragmatists and ideologues;[72] centralization or diffusion of power within the national party apparatus;[73] and charismatic leadership.[74] As a rule, these studies leave aside a more fundamental question: under what conditions do parties and party systems take root in the first place?

TABLE I.3 DEMOCRACY AGAINST PARTIES (LATIN AMERICA'S NEW LEFT CONTENDERS)

	Survived	Collapsed
Born under democracy	MAS (Bolivia, est. 1995) PAC (Costa Rica, est. 2000) PSUV (Venezuela, est. 1997)	FREPASO (Argentina, est. 1994) AD M-19 (Colombia, est. 1990) FA (Costa Rica, est. 2004) CD (El Salvador, est. 1987) UNE (Guatemala, 2002) PEN (Paraguay, est. 1991) IU (Peru, est. 1980) FIM (Peru, est. 1990) PNP (Peru, est. 2005)
Born under authoritarianism, civil war/major insurgency	PT (Brazil, est. 1980) PPD (Chile, est. 1987) FMLN (El Salvador, est. 1992) PRD (Mexico, est. 1989) FSLN (Nicaragua, est. 1979) PRD (Panama, est. 1979)	

TABLE I.4: BIRTH ENVIRONMENT OF NEW LEFT SURVIVORS (1978–2005)

Birth environment	Total country years	New Left Survivors
Electoral democracy	318	3
Authoritarianism or civil war/major insurgency	168	6

Existing scholarship on party building in contemporary Latin America similarly selects on the dependent variable. Although the vast majority of recently emerged Latin American parties have flopped or collapsed, scholars have written hundreds of book-length studies on successful cases but only a few such studies that analyze unsuccessful cases in depth.[75] This inattention to unsuccessful new parties is methodologically problematic and has inhibited theory building. Without studying unsuccessful attempts to build parties, we cannot fully understand why a small fraction of attempts succeed.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Existing theoretical approaches to party building, while furnishing many valuable insights, shed limited light on the divergent fates of Latin America's new left contenders. Let us go through several alternative explanations based on existing approaches and assess their usefulness for our puzzle.[76]

Democracy and Party Building

Take, first, the above-characterized argument that democracy itself, particularly if uninterrupted, should lead to the formation of durable

parties.[77] The evidence from Latin America's new left contenders supports the opposite conclusion (see table I.3). Of the region's eighteen new left contenders, twelve were born under democracy, and six were born under authoritarian rule. Of the twelve born under democracy, nine collapsed (e.g., Argentina's FREPASO, Colombia's AD M-19, Costa Rica's FA, Guatemala's MAS, and Paraguay's PEN), and only three survived (e.g., Bolivia's MAS and Venezuela's PSUV). By contrast, all six of the new left contenders not born under democracy survived (e.g., Brazil's PT, Mexico's PRD, El Salvador's FMLN, and Nicaragua's FSLN).

To illustrate the point another way, between 1978 and 2005, Latin American countries collectively spent 318 years under electoral democracy and roughly half as many years (168) under authoritarian rule, civil war, or major insurgency (see Appendix 1). Yet, only one-third of Latin America's surviving new left contenders (three of nine) were born during 318 "country years" of electoral democracy, while two-thirds (six of nine) were born during just 168 country years of authoritarian rule, civil war, or major insurgency (see table I.4).[78]

Institutionalist Approaches

Next, take the more specific argument that stable parties emerge in democracies that have the right institutions (e.g., constitutions, electoral laws, etc.). Institutionalist scholarship has posited several relevant arguments in recent decades: that parliamentary systems are superior to presidential systems (especially those with constitutionally strong presidents) in fostering party discipline, autonomy, and cohesion (Samuels and Shugart 2010);[79] that vertical centralization is superior to federalism, and plurality electoral systems superior to proportional representation (PR) systems (especially those with open lists and high district magnitude), in reducing party system fragmentation;[80] that low legal barriers to entry facilitate new party creation;[81] that high legal barriers to entry strengthen incentives for new parties to invest in territorial organization;[82] and that generous public financing of parties facilitates new party consolidation.[83]

This literature offers little insight into the divergent fates of new left contenders in contemporary Latin America. First, much of it does not address which variables contribute to new party survival, instead addressing which variables facilitate new party creation or affect the number of national parties. Second, as already noted, Latin American countries are institutionally similar in important ways. In particular, all are presidential systems and have either PR electoral systems or (in a few cases) electoral systems that include both PR and plurality districts. Third, where Latin American countries do differ institutionally, these

institutional differences do not correlate with the survival and collapse of new left contenders.[84] New left contenders have survived where presidents are constitutionally strong (e.g., Brazil and Chile) and weak (e.g., Mexico); where district magnitude is low (e.g., Chile) and high (e.g., Brazil); where states are federal (e.g., Brazil) and unitary (e.g., Chile and El Salvador); and where legal barriers to entry for party formation are high (e.g., Brazil) and relatively low (e.g., Bolivia). Similarly, new left contenders have collapsed in various institutional contexts (e.g., Argentina, Colombia, Peru, and Guatemala). Notably, new left contenders have survived in institutional contexts considered particularly inhospitable to party building (Brazil)[85] and collapsed in institutional contexts specifically designed to foster party building (Peru).[86]

Left Adaptation

A third approach attributes new left survival to ideological and tactical moderation, or "adaptation." As noted earlier, when Latin America's new left contenders emerged, the region was shifting toward neoliberalism, making the left's traditional economic platform politically infeasible. According to some scholarship, the region's left parties, to thrive and endure in this environment, had to abandon revolutionary leftism and adopt more moderate policy objectives (i.e., social democracy instead of socialism) and more moderate means of pursuing power (e.g., elections instead of mass mobilization or armed struggle). On this argument, parties that adapted, such as Uruguay's FA, El Salvador's FMLN, and Brazil's PT, were more likely to take root, while parties that failed to adapt, such as Venezuela's LCR and Peru's IU, were more likely to collapse.[87]

   This approach has limited utility for our empirical puzzle. To begin, the variable of adaptation does not strongly correlate with the survival and collapse of recent new left contenders in Latin America. While some parties that adapted took root (e.g., Uruguay's FA, El Salvador's FMLN, and Brazil's PT), others collapsed (e.g., Ecuador's PSP [Patriotic Society Party], and Argentina's FREPASO). Equally, while some that did not adapt collapsed (e.g., Venezuela's LCR and Peru's IU), others took root (e.g., Bolivia's MAS, Venezuela's PSUV, and to some extent Mexico's PRD). The variable of adaptation may have a stronger (albeit far from perfect) correlation with new left presidential victory (e.g., Uruguay's FA, El Salvador's FMLN, and Brazil's PT).[88]

   In addition, it is not clear that parties like Uruguay's FA, El Salvador's FMLN, and Brazil's PT took root because they adapted, or that parties like Venezuela's LCR and Peru's IU collapsed because they did not adapt. In chapter 3, for example, I will show that the IU's radicalism does not adequately explain its collapse.

Brand Dilution

A fourth approach attributes divergent party-building outcomes to success or failure in brand development. According to Noam Lupu, new parties must develop a brand to establish a partisan electoral base. A party's brand is what it "stands for" in voters' minds. To build a strong brand, a new party must distinguish itself from other parties and behave consistently over time, showing commitment to a particular program or group for years. Brand dilution occurs when parties implement policies inconsistent with past positions and/or form strange-bedfellow alliances with previous rivals. On this account, ideological moderation or adaptation did not help Latin America's new left contenders. Rather, it hurt them by contributing to brand dilution. Lupu argues that if parties dilute their brands, they become electorally dependent on performance and susceptible to short-term retrospective voting.[89] If they perform poorly, they are highly vulnerable to collapse.[90]

Lupu's approach, while insightful and useful, is incomplete. It suggests that new parties collapse simply because voters reject them. But a subset of new parties survive voter rejection. Many new parties fail to win much electoral support initially. A smaller but still significant number quickly rise to prominence, then hemorrhage support. These electoral crises occur due to numerous possible factors.[91] But crucially, some parties survive them instead of flopping or collapsing. In other words, when new parties flop or collapse, it is not merely because voters reject them; it is also because they are ill-equipped to survive voter rejection.

Why, then, do some new parties survive electoral crisis, while others do not? As noted above, one of my central claims in this book is that new parties, to be durable, must exist on the ground, not merely in voters' minds. Put differently, strong parties need strong organizations, not just strong brands. Strong organizations matter precisely because they enable parties to survive and rebound after electoral letdowns and setbacks. In chapters 2, 4, and 5, I will show that Argentina's FREPASO, Brazil's PT, and Mexico's PRD all suffered early electoral crises, but that the PT and PRD survived these crises because, unlike FREPASO, they had strong organizations.

In short, a limitation of voter-centered approaches is that they do not take party organization seriously. A second limitation of such approaches is that they do not explain why new parties split. Although electoral crisis (i.e., loss of voter support) is the most common trigger of new party collapse, another common trigger, as noted earlier, is schism. In fact, since the onset of the third wave in Latin America, schisms have been the second most frequent trigger of new party collapse—after

electoral crisis.[92] To maximize the likelihood of survival, new parties must have both strong organizations and sources of cohesion. Thus, we must go beyond voter-centered approaches and ask: What factors facilitate party organization building, and what factors generate cohesion in new parties?

Legal Organizational Barriers to Entry

As noted earlier, one strand of institutionalist scholarship posits that high legal barriers to entry strengthen incentives for new parties to invest in organization building. Given my focus on organizational strength, this argument bears attention. Latin American countries vary both cross-nationally and internally over time in the stringency of the organizational requirements that new parties must satisfy to acquire legal existence. In some contexts, parties must meet fairly cumbersome organizational requirements to secure legal registry. They may, for example, have to establish formal offices in a certain percentage of municipalities in a certain number of states, or recruit a certain percentage of those states' populations as members. One might posit that such stringent legal requirements explain why some Latin American new left contenders heavily invested in organization building, and thus why they survived. Margaret Keck, for example, argues in her seminal study of Brazil's PT that the PT founders expended great effort to meet the burdensome organizational requirements imposed by Brazil's liberalizing authoritarian regime.[93]

But this alternative explanation, too, has limited utility for our purposes. First, as observed earlier, new left contenders have constructed strong organizations where legal barriers to entry were relatively low (e.g., Bolivia). Notably, Mexico's PRD built a strong organization even though, to secure registry, it simply inherited the registry of one of its constituent parties (see chapter 5). Second, where high legal barriers to entry do correlate with successful organization building, the relationship, I posit, is not causal. Stringent legal requirements require new parties to establish offices and recruit members, but if new parties do not have additional incentives to build strong organizations, they will only do the bare minimum necessary for legalization. They will not establish more offices and recruit more members than the law requires. To the extent possible, they will create ghost offices and recruit merely nominal members. They will not erect unnecessary obstacles to membership or place significant burdens on new members. As I show in chapters 4 and 5 on Brazil's PT and Mexico's PRD, Latin American new left contenders that built strong organizations did not behave in this way.

This approach has an additional theoretical limitation. While legal requirements may create incentives for party elites to invest in territorial

organization, they do not generate masses of party activists, nor do they generate the higher causes that motivate these activists to sacrifice their time, labor, and resources for new parties. Masses of activists and higher causes must come from elsewhere, which brings us to another approach.

Access to Mobilizing Structures

Some scholars have argued that success or failure in party organization building depends on whether new parties have access to "mobilizing structures"—that is, preexisting organizations, usually in civil society (e.g., unions, churches, and social movements). Access to mobilizing structures lowers the costs of organization building by giving new parties ready-made territorial infrastructure and organized networks of potential recruits. If new parties lack such access, the argument goes, organization building becomes difficult. One might argue, more specifically, that access to a strong, organized industrial working class is particularly important for party organization building on the left.[94]

The variable of a strong, organized industrial working class explains very little for our purposes. Earlier, I noted that Latin America's debt crisis and neoliberal turn significantly weakened unions in the region. Moreover, in some Latin American countries, the unions that remained intact through the economic crisis and structural reforms of the 1980s and 1990s broadly maintained their alliances with traditional populist parties (e.g., Mexico's PRI and Argentina's PJ).[95] It is unsurprising, then, that almost all the new left contenders in Latin America that built large territorial organizations were not labor-based (e.g., Mexico's PRD, El Salvador's FMLN, Nicaragua's FSLN, Bolivia's MAS, and Peru's IU). Brazil's PT stands as an exception to this trend (see chapter 4 for details on the PT's labor origins). Thus, while union-centered approaches help to explain the organizational strength of one new left contender (Brazil's PT), they do not explain organizational strength among Latin America's new left contenders generally.

The variable of access to mobilizing structures more broadly (i.e., not merely to unions) is more explanatorily powerful. The vast majority of new left contenders that built strong party organizations did so on the back of mobilizing structures, whether unions/social movements (e.g., Brazil's PT, Bolivia's MAS, and Mexico's PRD), insurgent organizations (El Salvador's FMLN and Nicaragua's FSLN), or previous authoritarian regimes (e.g., Panama's PRD). As I will argue in chapter 1, access to mobilizing structures significantly facilitates successful organization building.

Yet access to mobilizing structures is not sufficient for successful organization building. Even though such access lowers the costs of or-

ganization building (as already noted), organization building remains time-consuming, labor-intensive, and electorally costly. Thus, as I will argue in chapter 1 and show empirically in chapter 2 (on Argentina's FREPASO), new parties, including those with access to mobilizing structures, tend to distance themselves from potential feeder organizations, and not to invest even minimally in organization, if they do not have powerful incentives for organization building. In order to understand the determinants of organization building, we must look beyond access to mobilizing structures.

External Conflict as a Source of Cohesion

Shifting to sources of cohesion, under what conditions do new parties avoid fatal schisms? Scholarship has long argued that parties prevent defection by dispensing patronage to members.[96] But patronage does not generate robust cohesion, as patronage seekers may "jump ship" in the event of electoral crisis.[97] Patronage-based cohesion is especially fragile in new parties, which tend to have weak brands and thus are more susceptible to electoral crisis (and the resulting elite defections) than institutionalized parties. In Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, and elsewhere, numerous new patronage-based parties suffered enervating splits during the third wave.[98]

Some analyses have therefore emphasized the importance of going "beyond patronage," arguing that parties are more likely to avoid schisms during the formative years if they have alternative, or "non-material," sources of cohesion.[99] These analyses have argued, in particular, that periods of elevated polarization and conflict (e.g., revolution, civil war, authoritarian repression, and populist mobilization) generate intraparty cohesion by sharpening "us–them" distinctions, strengthening collective identities, and fostering perceptions of a "linked fate" among members.[100]

This conflict-centered approach is useful, to a degree, for explaining variation in the cohesion levels of Latin America's new left contenders. As noted earlier, only three of nine new left survivors were born during 318 country years of electoral democracy, while six of nine were born during just 168 country years of authoritarian rule, civil war, and major insurgency. Moreover, two of the three survivors born under democracy still developed under conditions of massive social protest and conflict (Bolivia's MAS and Venezuela's PSUV). More generally, of the successful cases of party building in the past 150 years in Latin America, a disproportionate number emerged under circumstances of revolution, civil war, insurgency, authoritarian rule, or populist mobilization.[101]

Conflict-centered approaches, however, leave key facts and variation unexplained. Some new partisan contenders split despite having emerged

in contexts of polarization and conflict (e.g., Peru's IU, Venezuela's LCR, and Guatemala's PAN). Also, during periods of populist mobilization and conflict, antipopulist forces almost never cohere (e.g., anti-MAS forces in Bolivia).[102] Moreover, intensity of conflict does not strongly correlate with cohesion levels among new partisan contenders. Both Peru's IU and Guatemala's PAN, for example, developed under conditions of civil war where per capita death tolls exceeded those experienced by Brazil's PT, Mexico's PRD, Bolivia's MAS, and Venezuela's MVR/PSUV. Yet, while the PT, PRD, MAS, and PSUV survived intact as political parties, the IU and PAN both splintered and collapsed.

Internal Ideological Divisions

A different approach attributes new party cohesion to ideological unity, or to the absence of major internal ideological divisions.[103] Earlier, I observed that internecine conflict between moderates and radicals posed a common challenge for Latin America's new left contenders. One might argue that such conflict, where it existed, prevented new left parties from becoming or remaining cohesive.

This argument, too, has serious limitations. To begin, when ideologically divided parties split, they do not necessarily do so along ideological lines (e.g., Peru's IU [see chapter 3]). Moreover, many left contenders of recent origin in Latin America took root despite deep moderate/radical divisions (e.g., Uruguay's FA, El Salvador's FMLN, Brazil's PT, and Mexico's PRD). As I show in chapters 4 and 5, for example, Brazil's PT and Mexico's PRD originated as parties *of* factions (not *with* factions) and experienced frequent internal conflict in their early years, both between Marxists and social democrats and between institutionalists and advocates of mobilizational tactics. Yet, they remained intact.

Coalitions versus Parties

Finally, I argued earlier that some multiparty coalitions can reasonably be treated as parties. Accepting this, one might still argue that multiparty coalitions tend to be more loosely bound than parties and thus more prone to fatal splits. Although this argument is probably true to some extent, it leaves much unexplained. Take parties/coalitions of recent origin in Latin America. Within this population, there are parties that have fatally split (e.g., Venezuela's LCR, Guatemala's PAN, and Colombia's PVC) and multiparty coalitions that have avoided fatal splits (Uruguay's FA, Costa Rica's Social Christian Unity Party [PUSC]). Moreover, it is important not to overstate the difference between coalitions (e.g., Uruguay's FA and Peru's IU), on the one hand, and parties like Brazil's PT, Mexico's PRD, and El Salvador's FMLN, on the other. Some fronts

evolve into permanent coalitions (e.g., Uruguay's FA) or formal parties (Costa Rica's PUSC).[104] Others nearly become formal parties (e.g., Peru's IU [see chapter 3]). At the same time, mass-based parties, like fronts, are often highly factionalized and experience frequent internal conflict between radicals and moderates. On numerous occasions, these internal conflicts threaten to lead to schisms (e.g., the PT and PRD)[105] or do lead to nonfatal ones (e.g., the FMLN).

CASE SELECTION AND METHODS

Having reviewed existing approaches, we return to our empirical puzzle: Why did some of Latin America's new left contenders survive, while others collapsed? Early in this chapter, I very briefly outlined my theoretical arguments: first, new parties are more likely to build robust organizations if they lack access to state and media substitutes, and second, they are more likely to avoid fatal schisms if they have an externally appealing, internally dominant leader. I emphasized that new parties born under democracy, because they are more likely to have state or media access, are more likely to collapse than those born under liberalizing or competitive authoritarian rule.

In the book, I test to what extent these arguments explain the divergent fates of Latin America's new left contenders by conducting a qualitative comparison of "most similar" cases. The most similar method requires me to select two or more cases that represent my population (new left contenders in Latin America); that differ on my dependent variable (survival vs. collapse); that differ on my independent variables of interest (i.e., access to state or media; presence of an externally appealing, internally dominant leader); and that resemble each other, or "approximately match," on as many other potentially relevant independent variables as possible.[106] I infer from this correlation that variation in my hypothesized explanatory variables causes variation in my dependent variable.[107]

In accordance with the most similar method, I have selected four new left contenders: Argentina's FREPASO, Peru's IU, Brazil's PT, and Mexico's PRD. In addition to sharing the characteristics common to all new left contenders, these four cases approximately match on a set of additional, potentially relevant dimensions (for a discussion of these additional similarities, see the empirical overview section at the end of chapter 1). Yet, they differ on my dependent variable: two collapsed within a decade of rising to electoral prominence (FREPASO and the IU), while the other two survived their early years of existence and took root for decades as perennial electoral contenders (the PT and PRD).

In an effort to solve my broad empirical puzzle—explaining divergent outcomes between Latin America's new left contenders general-

ly—I devote the bulk of the book to explaining the divergent outcomes of these four cases specifically. In other words, the narrow empirical question that I thoroughly tackle in this book is: Why did FREPASO and the IU collapse shortly after their initial success, while the PT and PRD survived and took root for decades?

In my case studies of these four parties (chapters 2 through 5), I show the causal mechanisms of my theoretical arguments at work. The case studies are detailed narrative analyses, which trace the causal processes leading from my explanatory variables (access to state or media; externally appealing, internally dominant leader) to my dependent variable (survival or collapse).[108]

The case studies draw on data from thirteen to fourteen months of interviews and archival research in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Lima, Peru; São Paulo, Campinas, and Brasilia, Brazil; and Mexico City, Mexico. In total, I conducted eighty-five interviews with party elites, party activists, party observers, and country-based scholars, and I examined thousands of documents from official party archives, newspaper archives, and interviewees' personal archives. The case study chapters draw on numerous additional sources, including dozens of published interviews with party members,[109] retrospective firsthand testimonies,[110] and detailed scholarly analyses conducted by party members.[111]

While published firsthand accounts and expert secondary analyses furnished most of the evidence necessary for scoring the four cases on my variables, interviews and archives provided most of the evidence necessary for demonstrating causal mechanisms in my case studies.[112] Interviews present methodological challenges, as ideas and events that may not have seemed important to participating actors in the moment (e.g., a party's reliance on mass media or quick access to state resources) might come to seem important in retrospect. For this reason, it is crucial, in interviews, to pose general, open-ended questions, and to listen for unprompted statements, so as to avoid implanting ideas in the interviewee's mind.[113] The validity of interview evidence also depends on repetition across a diverse range of interviews. Insofar as multiple interviewees with different beliefs and loyalties (e.g., radicals and moderates in a particular party) independently confirm that a particular meeting occurred, or that a particular line of thought prevailed among the party elite or activist base, one can be more confident that the interviewees have not erred, confabulated, or provided idiosyncratic, unrepresentative interpretations of events.[114]

Still, no interviewing technique can wholly circumvent the problems associated with hindsight. Thus, archives are an invaluable source of evidence. Unlike interviews, archives reveal what participants and observers

thought and expressed in real time, before they knew how events would ultimately unfold.[115] I draw on contemporaneous sources for each of my case chapters. These include, but are not limited to, the following: for chapter 2 (FREPASO), the *New York Times*, the Argentine newspapers *Clarín*, *Página/12*, and *La Crónica*, and the Argentine magazines *Gente* and *Unidos*; for chapter 3 (IU), the Lima-based newspaper *La República*; for chapter 4 (PT), materials from the Perseu Abramo Foundation's Sergio Buarque de Holanda Center: Documentation and Political Memory and the Edgar Leuenroth Archive at the University of Campinas; and for chapter 5 (PRD), the Mexican magazine *Proceso*.[116]

BRIEF ROADMAP AND A NOTE ON SCOPE

The remainder of the book consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 details my theoretical arguments, then provides an empirical introduction and overview. As already noted, Chapters 2 through 5 present my case studies of FREPASO, the IU, the PT, and the PRD. Chapter 6 provides suggestive evidence of generalizability by applying my theoretical arguments to shadow cases. The concluding chapter identifies alternative paths to new left party building, discusses theoretical implications, and raises questions for future research.

Regarding scope, although I focus on Latin America's new left contenders in this book, my theoretical arguments do not apply exclusively to the Latin American new left. On the contrary, my relatively narrow empirical focus serves a broader purpose: to identify conditions for the survival of new partisan contenders generally—that is, to new partisan contenders across world regions, historical periods, and the ideological spectrum.

APPENDIX 1: DEMOCRACY, AUTHORITARIANISM, CIVIL WAR/MAJOR INSURGENCY IN LATIN AMERICA (1978–2005)

ARGENTINA

1978–1983: Authoritarianism
1983–2005: Democracy

BOLIVIA

1978–1985: Authoritarianism
1982–2005: Democracy

BRAZIL

1978–1985: Authoritarianism
1985–2005: Democracy

CHILE

1978–1990: Authoritarianism
1990–2005: Democracy

COLOMBIA

1978–2005: Civil war/major insurgency

COSTA RICA

1978–2005: Democracy

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

1978–2005: Democracy

ECUADOR

1978–1979: Authoritarianism
1979–2005: Democracy

EL SALVADOR

1978–1980: Authoritarianism
1980–1992: Civil war/major insurgency
1992–2005: Democracy

GUATEMALA

1978–1996: Civil war/major insurgency
1996–2005: Democracy

HONDURAS

1978–1982: Authoritarianism
1982–2005: Democracy

MEXICO

1978–2000: Authoritarianism
2000–2005: Democracy

NICARAGUA

1978–1979: Civil war/major insurgency
1979–1981: Authoritarianism
1981–1989: Civil war/major insurgency
1989–2005: Democracy

PANAMA

1978–1989: Authoritarianism
1989–2005: Democracy

PARAGUAY

1978–1989: Authoritarianism
1989–2005: Democracy

PERU

1978–1980: Authoritarianism
1980–1992: Civil war/major insurgency*
1992–2005: Democracy

URUGUAY

1978–1985: Authoritarianism
1985–2005: Democracy

VENEZUELA

1978–2005: Democracy

Source: Reprinted with permission from Steven Levitsky, James Loxton, and Brandon Van Dyck, "Introduction: Challenges of Party Building in Latin America," in *Challenges of Party-Building in Latin America*, eds. Steven Levitsky, James Loxton, Brandon Van Dyck, and Jorge Domínguez (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), Appendix 2, 47–48.

*From 1990 to 1992, Peru simultaneously experienced insurgency and populist government. I score Peru as a case of civil war/major insurgency during this period because civil wars and major insurgencies tend to be more polarizing than populism.