

**LATIN AMERICAN TRADITIONAL PARTIES: THE IMPACT OF PARTIES'
INTERNAL FEATURES ON THEIR ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE, 1978-2006**

by

Laura Wills-Otero

B.A. in Political Science, Universidad de los Andes, 1998

M.A. in Political Science, Universidad de los Andes, 2002

M.A in Political Science, University of Pittsburgh, 2005

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This dissertation was presented

by

Laura Wills-Otero

It was defended on

December 6, 2010

and approved by

Barry Ames, Andrew W. Mellon Professor, Department of Political Science, U. of Pittsburgh

Steve Finkel, Daniel Wallace Professor, Department of Political Science, U. of Pittsburgh

Ana Maria Bejarano, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, U. of Toronto

Dissertation Director: Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, Associate Professor, U. of Pittsburgh

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Why do some parties suffer more than others under similar contextual conditions? Or why are some parties able to weather difficult external environments while others fail? The aim of this dissertation is to answer these questions. My argument claims that the internal organization of parties matters, because it affects their capacity to react and survive, especially in contexts of environmental changes. Specifically, parties that rely on vertical structures, where few leaders at the central level concentrate power and control the party's direction, are more likely to lose their political power in changing contexts than parties that rely on structures that are less hierarchical, where power is distributed among different leaders, and where leadership mobility is more likely to occur. Similarly, parties that lack democratic procedures for selecting their candidates suffer more in challenging environments than parties that have them. In non-democratic parties central leaders decide whom to nominate for public office, and party members and voters do not enjoy the possibility of participating in this process. The impossibility of voting for politicians that the electorate and party members prefer might lead them to withdraw their support for the organization. This is of particular relevance in times of crisis.

This argument is developed through the observation of Latin America's traditional parties. These parties dominated the political arena in the region during the last decades of the

twentieth century. They played a significant role in the legitimation of democratic politics in particular when countries transited from authoritarian regimes, and in policy-making processes. However, during the early years of the 21st Century (2000-2005), many of them faded, and political outsiders with antiestablishment discourses and new parties and political movements flourished. Other traditional parties survived and were able to respond successfully to contextual challenges successfully. The findings of the study indicate that the internal characteristics of parties matter. Empirical tests show that party characteristics mediate the responses that their leaders undertake as well as the resulting electoral outcomes. This finding adds to studies that focus attention on political parties as units of analyses.

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PREFACE

I arrived in Pittsburgh in August 2003 to initiate a life project which as time has passed has defined the course of my prior years, my present life and will definitely impact my future. In order to advance my academic career and to obtain a Ph.D diploma, it was necessary to finish this dissertation which would not have been possible without the support of many people.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Parties are the major actors of political representation in democracies. They have been acknowledged repeatedly as the critical link between voters and representatives and guarantors of democratic governance. Without them, a democracy can hardly be said to exist because they are the principal links between government and society. However, parties can lose their representative capacity, and be challenged by disaffected electorates that pursue other alternatives for political involvement. This dissertation focuses upon the electoral weakening of Latin America's traditional parties. These parties dominated the political arena in the region during the last decades of the twentieth century. They played a significant role in the legitimation of democratic politics in particular when countries transited from authoritarian regimes in the late 1950s (Colombia and Venezuela) and later on, in the late 1970s (e.g., Ecuador) and 1980s (e.g., Argentina, Uruguay, Chile). Latin American traditional parties structured post-authoritarian political and party systems; they defined the rules of the democratic game (i.e., electoral systems); they became consolidated as the principal agents of political representation and were the main actors in policy-making processes. However, by the beginning years of the 21st century (2000-2005) many of them faded, and political outsiders with antiestablishment discourses and new parties and political movements flourished. The eventual success of these new options affected the composition of the party systems, and reshaped relationships between agents of representation and the electorate. The decrease in votes of most traditional parties, the

disappearance of some others, and the emergence of new representative alternatives (e.g., parties, movements, ‘figures’) transformed countries’ political landscapes. In a context of structural, political and social crises, these new alternatives began to win a share of votes and political power that traditional parties formerly held. Their anti-political discourse and apparently non-traditional character captured the attention of disillusioned voters that perceived them as refreshing and encouraging actors. New parties and political movements presented themselves as political choices with no past economic or political failures to be held responsible for. On the contrary, traditional parties suffered electoral declines among other reasons, because they accumulate a history of poor economic performance and of unresolved representational shortcomings. Parties that had been key actors in the establishment and consolidation of new democratic regimes, failed to adequately perform in the economic and political realms during the first years after transitions from dictatorships. These factors and others that I present below, justify the selection of these parties as the case studies that I analyze here.

Traditional parties’ decline also has occurred in other contexts including industrialized democracies. In North America and in Western European countries long-lasting parties have been forced to confront a wide variety of challenges.. Some of these challenges have their origin in the changing nature of society. For example, the expansion of the middle classes has put into question the relevance of traditional mass-based and working class parties. Likewise, better educated and more affluent individuals have tended to adopt post-materialist values that come into conflict with traditional ideologies promoted by older parties. Interests groups and social movements that promote these ‘new’ issues have risen to address the new demands. Furthermore, technological developments in mass-communications media have created new channels of contact between political leaders and voters.

The general decline of traditional parties in both advanced and new democracies has produced a generalized fatalistic sentiment about the very survival of parties. Disillusioned citizens that no longer identify with these parties, as well as academicians, political analysts and journalists have declared the disappearance of traditional parties and their replacement by social movements, interest groups and other political structures more suitable for the social, economic, and technological realities. This fatalistic prediction contrasts with a more optimistic view that sees political parties as endemic to democracy. Parties confront challenges, but at the same time they do efforts to face them. In some cases they fail, but in others they respond successfully and survive. Traditional parties' adaptation to environmental challenges helps to guarantee the stability of the political system. Similarly, their demise threatens the legitimacy of the regimes. This particular fact vindicates the selection of traditional political parties as units of analyses in the study of contemporary party politics. Although debilitated, many traditional parties in Latin American democracies remain as central actors that shape political processes. Others, in fact have disappeared. The study and analysis of the electoral and internal dynamics of parties that survive and those that disappear, in particular in the presence of environmental challenges, might shed new light on the factors that explain the different possible outcomes. Are some parties better suited to respond to economic, political and social challenges is the main question that I address in this dissertation. As I show below, some Latin American traditional parties lost more votes than others in the last decades. The hypothesis that I raise here is that the internal structure of parties matters. It mediates the effects that environmental challenges cause on parties. Some structures, I will show, are less suitable to efficiently respond to those difficulties.

Latin American parties suffered memberships' declines and voter support during the past decade and a half (1990-2006). However not all of them lost political power to the same extent

nor at the same pace. While some parties disappeared, others survived and a few increased their levels of electoral support. Some parties lost votes and legislative seats progressively while others experienced precipitous declines. This occurred in both institutionalized and in inchoate party systems (Mainwaring and Scully 1995).¹ While the decline of parties in the latter is not surprising declines in institutionalized party systems indicates that this was a regional trend. This phenomenon raises a challenging question: why do some parties suffer more than others under similar contextual conditions? Or conversely, why are some parties able to weather difficult external environments while others fail? A general picture of what happened in the different countries illustrates the phenomenon to be studied.

By the first decade of the 21st century, parties that were dominant during the previous two decades in different Latin American countries had suffered a process of weakening. Institutionalized party systems in Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay and Costa Rica suffered changes when one or more of their component parties significantly decreased their vote share. In Venezuela, massive discontent with existing party options gave rise to the collapse of the party system in the 1990s. This outcome resulted when all the parties that comprised the system became electorally irrelevant. In Colombia, the two traditional parties' century-and-a-half dominance over the electorate loosened in the late 1990s, and independent and nontraditional candidates emerged and enjoyed some success. In Argentina, Uruguay and Costa Rica, while some traditional parties decreased their electoral power in legislatures and lost presidential elections, others increased their share of power. Similar situations occurred in inchoate party

¹ Mainwaring and Scully (1995) proposed the notion of *institutionalization* for the study of party systems in Latin America. They listed four variables to measure this concept: stability in interparty competition; stable roots in society; stability of the parties' internal rules and structures; and legitimacy accorded to the party arena by relevant actors. According to these four indicators, Latin American party systems were classified either as institutionalized (Venezuela, Costa Rica, Chile, Uruguay, Colombia and Argentina) or inchoate (Peru, Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador). Mexico and Paraguay formed a residual category of "hegemonic party systems in transition"

systems, and in those defined as hegemonic party systems in transition (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). Specifically, in Bolivia and Ecuador parties that inaugurated democratic elections in the late 1970s and mid 1980s became minor and sometimes marginal actors in the late 1990s and the early years of 2000s. Populist parties appeared, challenged and eventually defeated the oldest parties. In Peru, the system collapsed in early 1990 when the major parties became irrelevant. However, one of them (APRA) revived in 2006 by winning the presidential election. In Mexico and Paraguay, parties that had dominated politics for more than six decades were defeated in recent presidential elections (2000 and 2008 respectively). In the former country, another traditional party won the election, while in the latter a leader from a non-traditional party prevailed. In other countries, similar trends occurred. In Guatemala, parties that survived authoritarian regimes and became predominant during the first years of democratic government ceded power to other actors in the 1990s and 2000s. In El Salvador, one traditional party's share of power remained stable and another party's decreased. Finally, in three countries - Honduras, Nicaragua, and Chile - none of the traditional parties was defeated by other parties. They maintained their levels of political power relatively stable. The high volatility of the Brazilian political system, combined with the short life of parties, makes the definition of traditional parties difficult in that case. However, some of the 'new' parties inherited leaders and structures from older parties.

The generalized trend of the weakening traditional parties raises new questions related to Latin American democracies. For example, are debilitated parties going to disappear from the countries' party systems? Are they capable of recovering some of the lost power? And more importantly for the purposes here, why did some parties lose strength while others did not, or why did some suffer more than others? The aim of this dissertation is to answer these questions.

My argument claims that the internal organization of parties matters, because it affects their capacity to react and survive, particularly, in contexts of environmental changes. Specifically, parties that rely on vertical structures, where leaders at the central level concentrate power and control the party's direction are more likely to lose their political power in changing contexts than parties that rely on structures that are less hierarchical, where power is distributed among different leaders, and where leadership mobility is more likely to occur. Similarly, parties that lack democratic procedures to select their leaders suffer more in challenging environments than parties that have them. In non-democratic parties the central leaders decide whom to nominate for public office, and party members and voters do not have the possibility of participating in this process. The impossibility of voting for politicians that the electorate and party members prefer might lead them to withdraw their support from the organization. This is of particular relevance in times of crisis. This argument will be developed in Chapter 3.

The observation and analysis of Latin American traditional parties' internal features is appropriate to develop this argument. These parties had internal organizations that helped candidates participate, compete, and win public posts in consecutive presidential and legislative elections. In addition, they were recognized by the population as the actors that organized electoral competition and determined political processes. Although Latin American traditional parties were founded and established in different moments, all of them had roots in society. In spite of the latter and of the differences in their structure and internal formal procedures, these parties shared the fact that they were built upon formal, observable, and recognizable organizations.

The question of whether and how the internal organization of parties affects their electoral performance has important implications for the parties themselves, for the party system

and, in some cases, for the stability of the political regime. Because parties are the major agents of political representation, their weakening and eventual collapse threatens the stability of the party system to which they belong. When newer parties with solid organizations do not surface to fill the vacuum generated by weakened parties, it is likely that anti-establishment movements or highly personalistic parties or leaders will rise. The lack of legitimate organizations with the capacity to represent interests and organize a country's political life leads to vulnerable and highly unstable political systems. On the contrary, the survival of long lasting parties that enjoy credibility among the electorate and are recognized as legitimate actors provides stability to the party system and more broadly to the democratic system, since these parties remain as the main actors in the formation and maintenance of government.²

Despite the fact that Latin American traditional parties have been challenged by alternative political organizations and that some have suffered progressive declines while others were strengthened, few studies deal with this phenomenon. Systematic comparative studies are scant, if not non-existent. Moreover, the limited studies on this topic focus on individual cases, and the problem that has been more deeply scrutinized is related to party system changes instead of political party performance (Coppedge 1994; Dietz and Myers 2007; Seawright 2007; Tanaka 2006). The party system collapse in Peru and Venezuela motivated scholars to search for their causes. Students were challenged by the fact that this is a very rare outcome that has materialized in few cases, and occurred in two systems that differed widely in their degree of institutionalization. While the two-party system in Venezuela was highly institutionalized, the

² In this dissertation the unit of analysis is the *political party* and not the *party system*. A political party is a component part of the system. It has its own history and certain features that distinguish it from other parties that belong to the same system. A party's level of institutionalization is not necessarily the same as that of the system's level of institutionalization. The reason for this is that the definition of institutionalization is not the same for the two levels of analysis. A consequence of this is that weakly institutionalized parties can belong to a highly institutionalized party system, or vice versa (as defined by Mainwaring and Scully 1995). In Chapter 2, a review and a discussion are offered about how some authors define institutionalization at the party level (i.e., Levitsky 2003).

Peruvian system ranked low on that dimension (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). To account for this phenomenon, scholars have examined the impact of national economic crisis and economic reforms, the effect of corruption scandals and high levels of criminality, among other structural causes (Dietz and Myers 2007; Morgan 2007; Lupu 2011; Seawright 2007; Tanaka 2006). In general, they conclude that a sustained national crisis caused by these factors creates incentives for voters to defect from the parties that they supported in the past. This leads to a decay in the level of institutionalization of the party system and creates spaces for new leaders to emerge. Studies that examine parties' electoral performance, when incumbent parties decay electorally, analyze the impact of economic variables such as unemployment, inflation and growth. The general finding is that when an incumbent party performs poorly in an economic realm, the electorate votes for another one (Remmer 2003). Similarly, parties in power are also punished when they implement pro-market economic reforms that fail – as they did in the 1980s and 1990s (Lora and Olivera 2005). Thus, when the incumbent is a traditional party and either it performs poorly or it introduces unpopular reforms, it is highly likely that it will suffer a vote loss and a consequent electoral decline. Studies have also analyzed the impact of neoliberal reforms on the performance of traditional mass based labor parties. These parties were defeated because their links to their social bases were broken (Cavarozzi and Medina 2002).³ Incumbent traditional parties faced these crises. Consistent with the conventional view, these parties were weakened electorally because the economy performed poorly when they were in power. However, the diminished role of other traditional parties that were not in charge of the government challenges the idea that only those that are in power suffer electoral declines as a consequence of bad performance. Were non-incumbent parties also blamed for economic crises?

³ The Argentine mass based labor party, (Partido Justicialista (PJ)), is an exception to this situation. It survived neoliberal reforms.

Another challenging situation emerges from the fact that in order to restore the legitimacy of the system and deal with crises of representation, incumbent traditional parties altered the electoral rules. However, these parties' share of votes decreased. Contrary to common wisdom about payoffs that reformers obtain from modification of the rules of the game, the changes introduced in Latin American electoral systems were detrimental to incumbent parties, or at least they did not generate the expected results for those parties that introduced them. Evidence reveals that modifications to electoral rules did not solve the crises of legitimacy and representation. Scholars have showed that the changes affected negatively the electoral performance of the parties that introduced them (Crisp 2006; Molina and Perez 2004; Penfold-Becerra 2001; Salazar Elena 2004). The modifications were diverse since the challenges differed from one system to the other. For example, systems with high electoral thresholds decreased their levels of restrictiveness to increase political competition. Systems where legislators were too disciplined and responsible to party leaders introduced reforms to increase politicians' own reputations. By contrast, where legislators' personal reputations were very strong and party politics was lacking, changes were directed toward increasing the relevance of parties. Though these reforms altered the political landscape in different countries, they did not solve the crises of representation. Moreover, in some cases these were aggravated. For example, reforms that stimulated candidate-centered politics opened the door to extreme personality-centered politics and weak parties. The loyalties of traditional parties decayed while new parties based on strong personalities emerged (Crisp 2006; Mayorga 2001; Molina and Perez 2004). Or, a decrease in electoral thresholds stimulated parties to fragment (Botero 1998; Pizarro-Leongómez 1996). In sum, despite the fact that specific reforms varied in their content and direction, the political

outcomes in the long run were similar: traditional parties suffered a progressive process of weakening and lost their political relevance enjoyed for two decades or even longer.

This outcome raises important theoretical questions not previously considered in comparative studies of political party change. Specifically, was institutional engineering insufficient to contain a crisis of representation that had its origins in other non-institutional causes? Or, did the reforms of electoral systems accelerate the weakening of traditional parties? In other words, were the reforms unable to counteract the social and economic sources of the crisis, or were the institutional changes part of the parties' deterioration processes?

Addressing these questions, this project will disentangle alternative arguments to ascertain the extent to which different independent variables affected traditional party electoral performance. As noted above, not all parties in the region suffered to the same extent during the past few decades. In contexts of economic, political and social turmoil, some parties disappeared from the electoral arena while others survived, and a few increased their levels of electoral support. This dissertation aims to understand why this happened. Were some parties better suited to respond to the economic, political and social challenges? Did the internal structure of traditional parties condition their electoral performance and the effects of contextual challenges, such as, for example, institutional reforms? The answer to these questions is affirmative. Before presenting the specific argument in detail, I define the population of interest in this study, and discuss conventional explanations that account for parties' electoral performance. The next section develops the former aim while the next chapter accounts for the latter.

1.1 LATIN AMERICAN TRADITIONAL PARTIES

Latin American political parties are very diverse in their origins, time of foundation, forms of organization and relevance as political actors. In this dissertation, the long lasting parties that were successful in consecutive legislative elections and in presidential contests during the last two to three decades of the twentieth century, and that were influential in decision and policy-making processes compose the population of study. I define these as the Latin American traditional parties. Political organizations that have not been electorally relevant, or those that were created by non-traditional leaders after transitions from authoritarian regimes to democratic governments occurred, are not included in this analysis of “traditional” organizations. These parties have challenged traditional parties, and in some cases they have been successful. However, many of them have not been able to consolidate enduring party structures.

Before defining in more detail Latin American traditional parties, it is necessary to clarify what a political party is and what functions it should perform. This is hardly an objective task. Various definitions offered by students on the topic are not uncontroversial. While some define parties as tools for gaining access to governmental office (Aldrich 1995; Epstein 1980; Schlesinger 1991), others state that they are mediating instruments designed to organize and make easier voter choices in order to influence the actions of government (Downs 1957; Key 1964), and still others argue that parties are ideological organizations that promote particular interests (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Even though there exists disagreement as to what political parties are and how they operate, relative consensus exists on the fact that they are necessary for a democracy to work. As Sartori puts it, they are “the central intermediate structures between society and government” (1976: ix). Parties are crucial actors in a democracy because they enable citizens to participate in elections for public office. They encourage participation, debate

and discussion of different issues, and promote the interests of their affiliates and constituents. Parties also hold politicians accountable for their actions and, finally, they are the link between the different branches of power within a political system. In summary, parties can be defined as organizations with an internal structure, as seekers of public office by electoral means, and as actors that influence policy within the government, or in the opposition. Leaders, candidates, bases of support and the electorate give life to the organization.

Parties can be classified in many different ways. They can be distinguished according to their social bases. For example a “mass-party” is understood to be the political arm of a social group (Gunther and Diamond 2003; Wolinetz 2002);⁴ a catch-all party is “an alliance or representative of citizens who share common, but potentially mutable, views on issues” (Katz 2006: 35); business-firm parties, elite, caucus and cadre parties are other types classified in the literature on this topic (Krouwel 2006). Parties are also classified according to their origin, which is related to the date of creation and to the ‘nature’ or historical moment and place in which they are created (Janda 1980; Panebianco 1988). The former characteristic is relevant because it indicates the longevity and maturity of the party. The latter is useful to understand the conditions under which it emerges. Another way of categorization is according to the ideological stance (Alexander 1973; Coppedge 1997; Sartori 1976). This provides information about the position of parties on policy issues. Finally, the organizational features define parties as more or less centralized, ‘democratized’, or personalized (Katz and Mair 1994). Two types of parties that are frequently defined as being in opposing shores are the clientelistic and the programmatic parties (Kitschelt 2000; Mainwaring and Torcal 2006).

⁴ In Latin America, examples of “mass-parties” are labor parties as AD in Venezuela or PJ in Argentina.

When can parties be classified as ‘traditional’? This is a pertinent question that has not been asked frequently in the literature related to the topic. Although some studies distinguish between ‘traditional’ and other types few have clearly defined the meaning of the term. Age of the parties is the most common characteristic that students link to it. The older they are, the more ‘traditional’ (Seawright 2007). This is a useful characteristic to define traditional parties. However, parties might be old but irrelevant in political terms. They might have been created in remote times, but they may not necessarily be influential actors in the electoral and policy-making arena. To qualify the definition of “traditional”, I follow North’s insight (2007) who states that historical trajectories are important as long as they determine experiences that shape processes. Consistent with this idea, other scholars state that something that is traditional plays an important role in the defining individuals’ experiences (Mudrovcic 2001; Ricoeur 1996). Regarding parties, others scholars argue that parties are traditional when they constitute reference points: they are recognized or remembered as organizations that exercise influence in the electoral arena, in policy-making processes and even in the formation or reaffirmation of values (Arias and Caballero 2003; Mair 1997; Portes 2006). Following these insights, old parties that historically obtained systematic low levels of electoral support and have not played a significant role as actors that shape policies, cannot be classified in the same category as long lasting parties that have been electorally successful and influential in decision and policy making processes. Taking this into account, this project considers ‘traditional’ only parties that have fulfilled these two conditions. Longevity is related to the role that parties have played as political actors. Those that have dominated the political picture by systematically and consecutively electing a significant number of representatives for public office are considered traditional (Alexander 1973; 1988).

Another problem that emerges when traditional parties are defined considering only their age is that the origins of younger parties can sometimes be found in older ones. Political leaders from long-lasting parties might form new options using the original organizational structures and bases of support. Occasionally the name is the only aspect that is ‘new.’ Thus, some ‘new’ parties are in fact ‘traditional.’ These might be fractions, dissidences, or some kind of derivation of older ones. Another criterion that has been used to decide whether a party is traditional or not is based on its organizational continuity (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). A party that maintains stable its basic structures and uses its organization to perform tasks are adequately equipped to prolong its life.

Following this discussion, which Latin American parties are traditional? They are the parties that dominated the national political landscape in these countries during the second half of the twentieth century, and as such developed an extensive party tradition within the electorate. When democratic governments were reinstalled in the countries that transited from authoritarian regimes in the 1980s and 1990s, the electorate was conscious of the existence of these parties or their leaders and could distinguish these parties from others. This occurred also in those countries that enjoyed democratic governments since the mid-century (Colombia, Venezuela and Costa Rica). Public recognition was important for these parties to receive support in electoral contests. Winning presidential elections and legislative seats increased the possibilities for these parties to be influential actors in the design of policy and in processes of institutional reforms.

I define traditional parties as those that meet three simultaneous conditions. First, those parties were already formed by the time the third wave of democratization started in Latin America (1978), or by the year in which democratic elections were re-inaugurated (whatever happened later). Second, the parties’ political leaders that participated in the inaugural elections

came from the period that preceded the Third Wave of Democratization.⁵ They were political leaders either in their parties or well-known leaders that would establish parties as soon as this process began. In addition, at least one of the following two conditions has to be met. The party won a presidential election at least once since the third wave of democratization began. Or, during the same period, the party won a substantive share of seats in the lower chamber or unicameral legislature for at least two consecutive elections (at least 15% of the seats). According to these criteria, between 1978 and 2006 there were about 48 traditional parties in the region. Table 1.1 lists these organizations in the different countries and indicates each party's foundation year. While countries differ in the number of traditional parties that integrate their systems (between two and five), parties vary in their longevity: a few of them were created in the nineteenth century, most of them were formed in the early and the mid twentieth century, and others were founded just before the Third Wave of Democratization began.

Table 1.1. Latin American Traditional Parties

Country	Party	Year of Foundation	Longevity to 2006 ⁶
<i>Andean Region</i>			
Colombia	Liberal Party (PL)	1848	158
	Conservative Party (PC)	1849	157
Venezuela	Democratic Action (AD)	1936	62
	Social Christian Party (COPEI)	1946	52
Ecuador	Concentration of People's Forces (CFP)	1946	60
	Social Christian Party (PSC)	1951	55
	Democratic Left (ID)	1970	36
	Popular Democracy (DP)	1977	29
Peru	Peruvian Aprista Party (APRA)	1924	82
	Popular Action (AP)	1956	34

⁵ Following Huntington (1991), the Third Wave of Democratization starts in 1974 when Portugal undergoes a democratic transition. Following this case, a global trend of democratization occurs throughout Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. In Latin America, the period starts in 1978.

⁶ In Venezuela, the party system collapsed in 1998, when AD and COPEI became electorally irrelevant. I calculate their age until that year. In Peru, AP disappeared in 1990 when Alberto Fujimori won the presidential election.

Bolivia	National Revolutionary Movement (MNR)	1942	64
	Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR)	1970	36
	Democratic and Nationalistic Alliance (ADN)	1978	28
<i>Southern Cone</i>			
Argentina	Radical Civic Union (UCR)	1890	116
	Justicialist Party (PJ)	1945	61
Uruguay	Colorado Party (PC)	1836	170
	National Party (PN)	1836	170
	Broad Front (FA)	1971	35
Paraguay	Colorado Party (ANR-PC)	1874	132
	Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA)	1978	28
Chile	Socialist Party of Chile (PSCh)	1948	58
	Democratic Christian Party (PDC)	1957	49
	Party for Democracy (PPD)	1987	19
	Independent Democratic Union (UDI)	1989	17
	National Renovation (RN)	1989	17
Brazil	Democratic Social Party (PDS)	1980	26
	Party of the Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB)	1988	18
	Workers Party (PT)	1980	26
<i>North and Central America</i>			
Panama	Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD)	1979	27
	Arnulfista Party (PA)	1990	16
Costa Rica	National Liberation Party (PLN)	1951	55
	Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC)	1983	23
Nicaragua	Sandinista National Liberal Front (FSLN)	1961	45
	Constitutionalist Liberal Party (PLC) ^a	1988	18
Honduras	Liberal Party of Honduras (PLH)	1890	116
	National Party of Honduras (PNH)	1916	90
El Salvador	National Republican Alliance (ARENA)	1981	25
	Democratic Christian Party (PDC)	1960	46
Guatemala	Guatemalan Christian Democracy (DCG)	1955	51
	Union del Centro Nacional (UCN)	1984	22
	Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG)	1988	18
	National Advancement Party (PAN)	1989	17
Dominican Republic	Dominican Liberation Party (PLD)	1973	33
	Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD)	1939	67
	Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC)	1964	42
Mexico	Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)	1929	77
	National Action Party (PAN)	1939	67
	Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD)	1989	17

a: In 1990 the party was part of the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO), an alliance that defeated the FSLN.

Sources: Alcántara and Freidenberg 2003; Nohlen 1993; 2005; Alexander 1988; Historical documents.

Table 1.1 reflects the diversity of Latin American traditional parties. The year of foundation shows that some parties have survived for more than a century, while others were established much later. The differences in parties' longevity are found across countries and

within party systems. Some of the oldest parties experienced the suspension of elections in the 1970s, and were able to revive themselves when democratic governments were reinstalled in the 1980s. That is the case for CFP and PSC in Ecuador; APRA and AP in Peru; the MNR and MIR in Bolivia; PJ and UCR in Argentina; PC, PN and FA in Uruguay; the ANR-PC and PLRA in Paraguay, the PSCh and PDC in Chile; the PA in Panama; the FSLN in Nicaragua; both traditional parties in Honduras; the PDC in El Salvador; DCG in Guatemala; and the three Dominican parties. Not all the parties formed before the authoritarian periods survived. Many of them disappeared because they were not able to maintain their organizational structures and electoral machines during a period in which elections did not take place or were fraudulent. Other parties made alliances with the dictatorships and disappeared when these came to an end. The parties in Colombia, Venezuela and Costa Rica failed to experience electoral interruptions after the late 1950s. These countries enjoyed the longest democratic experience during the second half of the twentieth century. Finally, the youngest parties emerged shortly before the authoritarian periods ended or as soon as democratic elections were re-inaugurated. However, most of them were formed by leaders that dominated the political scene in the past. ADN in Bolivia is a clear example. The party was formed in 1978 by Hugo Banzer, a General that assumed the presidency in a *coup d'etat* in 1971, and established a military government that lasted until 1978. When pressured by external actors he decided to institute a democratic opening, form a party and run for office that year. The Partido Arnulfista (PA) in Panama is another party that traces its origins to a leader that played an important role in the country's political history. Arnulfo Arias gave his name to this party. He had been an influential politician since the 1930s, elected president (and overthrown) on three occasions (1940, 1949 and 1968),

and a victim of fraudulent elections in 1964 and 1984.⁷ In Brazil, the PDS represented a continuation of the National Renovating Alliance (ARENA), a rightist party created in 1965 that changed its name in 1980. ARENA leaders continued to be the same in the PDS. In Guatemala, the FRG was formed by Efraín Ríos Montt, a politician who was a presidential candidate in 1974, and leader of a *coup d'état* in 1982. He remained in power until 1983 when he was overthrown. Soon after this, Ríos Montt created the party as an instrument of power with the purpose of participating in future elections. In Mexico, the PRD is considered a traditional party despite the fact that it was founded in the late 1980s, much later than the PRI and the PAN. It classifies in this sample, because its founder leaders came from the PRI and had a long political career there. In particular Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano, the son of the former President of the country Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), was an active PRI's militant since the mid 1950s.⁸ As such, he accumulated big influence and power within the organization. This allowed him to defect from the dominant party in 1987 and create the new party. The PRD started its life nurtured by the popularity of a traditional leader, and by the support that other founder leaders, also former “priistas”, enjoyed.⁹

Table 1.1 also shows that party systems varied in terms of the number of traditional parties that composed them. In a majority of the countries, two parties dominated the political landscape during the second half of the twentieth century. In a few cases, three, four or five traditional parties gained seats in legislatures or alternated in the presidency. Table 1.2 reveals

⁷ The party changed its name several times. When it was created in the 1930s, it was known as the National Revolutionary Party (PNR). In 1948, Arias bolted from this party and formed the Authentic Revolutionary Party (PRA). In 1960, the party was re-legalized as the Panamenista Party (PP), which was then named Authentic Panameñista Party (PPA) in 1984. Short after Arias died in 1988, his followers registered the party as the Arnulfista Party (PA), and in 2005 it recovered the previous name (Panameñista Party) (García Díez 2003)

⁸ Cárdenas served as senator for the state of Michoacán from 1974 to 1980 and as governor of the same state from 1980 to 1986.

⁹ Other former PRI members that defected from the party and participated in the creation of the PRD were the traditional figures Ifigenia Martínez and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo.

one consequence of this fact. In systems where fewer traditional parties compete (two), the share of votes they obtain is larger than in systems where more parties contest elections. This explains (in part) the diversity in the range of votes and in the level of success of these parties. As the Table shows, parties with fewer competitors are more likely to elect their presidential candidates.¹⁰ Also, they tend to register a higher share of votes in legislative elections. However, this does not explain why some parties suffer more than others in contexts of environmental challenges.

Table 1.2. Traditional Parties in Presidential and Legislative Elections

Party	Presidential Elections won by the party	Average Share of Legislative Seats (%)¹¹
<i>Andean Region</i>		
Colombia		
Liberal Party (PL)	1978, 1986, 1990, 1994	1978-1986: 54.27
Conservative Party (PC)	1982, 1998	1978-1986: 41.04
Venezuela		
Democratic Action (AD)	1984, 1989	1978-1988: 50.57
Social Christian Party (COPEI)	1979	1978-1988: 34.74
Ecuador		
Concentration of People's Forces (CFP)	1979	1979-1988: 19.61
Social Christian Party (PSC)	1984	1979-1988: 9.38
Democratic Left (ID)	1988	1979-1988: 32.87
Popular Democracy (DP)	1998	1984-1992: 7.92
Perú		
Peruvian Aprista Party (APRA)	1985, 2006	1980-1990: 40.37
Popular Action (AP) ^a	1980	1980-1985: 30
Bolivia		
National Revolutionary Movement (MNR)	1985, 1993, 2002	1985-1993: 30.53
Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR)	1989	1985-1993: 21.28
Nationalistic Alliance (ADN)	1997	1985-1993: 26.37
<i>Southern Cone</i>		

¹⁰ Some traditional parties did not gain the presidency during the period under consideration (1978-2006). Such is the case of the Chilean PPD and UDI; the Brazilian PDS; the PLRA in Paraguay, the Guatemalan UCN, and the Mexican PRD.

¹¹ These numbers are the average share of legislative seats during the first decade in which parties competed once they re-entered into the political arena

Argentina		
Radical Civic Union (UCR) ^b	1983, 1999	1983-1993: 41.14
Justicialist Party (PJ)	1989, 1995, 2003	1983-1993: 44.43
Uruguay		
Colorado Party (PC)	1984, 1994, 1999	1984-1994: 34.67
National Party (PN)	1989	1984-1994: 35.37
Broad Front (FA)	2004	1989-1999: 27.66
Paraguay		
Colorado Party (ANR-PC)	1989, 1993, 1998, 2003	1989-1998: 56.81
Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA)		1988-1998: 26.66
Chile		
Socialist Party of Chile (PSC) ^c	2000, 2006	1989-1997: 9.44
Democratic Christian Party (PDC)	1989, 1993	1989-1997: 32.23
Party for Democracy (PPD)		1989-1997: 13.04
Independent Democratic Union (UDI)		1989-1997: 10.29
National Renovation (RN)		1989-1997: 16.97
Brazil		
Democratic Social Party (PDS)		1986-1990: 10.33
Party of the Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB)	1994, 1998	1990-1998: 11.25
Workers Party (PT)	2002, 2006	1986-1994: 3.95
North and Central America		
Panamá		
Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD)	1994, 2004	1989-1999: 34.83
Arnulfista Party (PA) ^d	1999	1994-2004: 21.77
Costa Rica		
National Liberation Party (PLN)	1982, 1986, 1994, 2006	1978-1986: 50.88
Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC) ^e	1978, 1990, 1998, 2002	1978-1986: 40.94
Nicaragua		
Sandinista National Liberal Front (FSLN)	2006	1990-2001: 42.61
Constitutionalist Liberal Party (PLC) ^f	1990, 1996	1990-2001: 50.56
Honduras		
Liberal Party of Honduras (PLH)	1981, 1985, 1993, 1997, 2005	1981-1989: 50.98
National Party of Honduras (PNH)	1989, 2001	1981-1989: 49.99
El Salvador		
National Republican Alliance (ARENA)	1989, 1994, 1999, 2004	1985-1994: 41.55
Democratic Christian Party (PDC)	1984	1985-1994: 36.01
Guatemala		
Guatemalan Christian Democracy (DCG)	1985	1997-2006: 6.85
Union del Centro Nacional (UCN)		1985-1994: 18.20
Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG)	1999	1994-2003: 50.92
National Advancement Party (PAN)	1995	1990-1999: 23.93
Dominican Republic		
Dominican Liberation Party (PLD)	1996, 2004	1982-1990: 55.83
Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD)	1978, 1982, 2000	1978-1986: 48.14
Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC)	1986, 1990, 1994	1986-1994: 41.11
México		
Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)	1988, 1994	1988-1997: 55.95
National Action Party (PAN)	2000, 2006	1988-1997: 24.55

^a AP disappeared after the 1985 general elections.

^b In the 1999 presidential elections, the UCR elected Fernando de la Rúa with the Alliance for Work, +Justice and Education (Alianza para el Trabajo, la Justicia y la Educación).

^c In 1988 the PSCh, PDC and PPD formed the Coalition of Parties for Democracy (Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia). Until 2006 all presidential candidates presented under this banner won the elections.

^d In the presidential 1999 election, Mireya Moscoso from the Arnulfista Party presented her candidacy with the Union for Panama Alliance (Alianza Unión por Panamá).

^e Before 1986, this party was the Partido de Unidad.

^f In 1990 the PLC joined the National Opposition Union (UNO), an alliance composed of anti-sandinistas parties. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro won the contest.

Figure 1.1 reveals the electoral trajectories of forty-eight parties in eighteen Latin American countries. These plots show how each party's electoral performance changed over time. The horizontal axis in the graphs registers the total number of years the parties competed in elections since the first time they participated once the Third Wave of Democratization started. For purposes of comparison, the first year of electoral competition is defined as 0 for all parties.¹² It seems obvious that the trajectories are dissimilar. However, some patterns do emerge. While few parties clearly increased their vote shares over time, most of them lost votes. Others experienced irregular trends (increased and then decreased votes or vice versa). The plots also show that some parties changed more abruptly than others, either because their vote losses or gains were larger or because the pace of change was faster. The graphs reveal that some parties that were majoritarian at the beginning of the period ($\geq 50\%$ share of votes) ended up being a minority party (UCR, PLC, PC, PUSC, PRD, PRSC, DCG, PRI, PDC) or disappeared (AP, AD, COPEI) from the electoral arena. Other parties maintained a relatively stable share of votes (e.g., PLN, PL, PN, PJ) while a few that initially were minority parties gained strength by

¹² The first year of electoral competition varies among countries. Democratic periods began at different moments in different countries. This is important to take into account because the regional context in which parties started to compete was not necessarily the same. For example, in the 1980s Latin American countries confronted deep economic crises. However, not all traditional parties had to confront that challenge. In addition, parties that are observed during a longer period (i.e., 1978-2006) are likely to have a different electoral trajectory than those parties that are observed during a shorter period (i.e., 1989-2006). I deal with these differences in chapter five where I test empirically the central argument of this dissertation.

the end of the period (PAN, PLD). Finally, every point in a plot represents an electoral period in which the party competed. These points reflect that some parties participated in more elections than others. On occasion, this was a result of longer democratic periods where elections started sooner and parties were able to compete in all events. The plots do not reveal that in some elections parties formed strategic alliances with others in order to increase their share of votes (for example, UCR and FREPASO in the 1997 Argentine elections; MIR and ADN in 1993 Bolivian elections). When this occurred, the majority of the votes for the alliance were supplied by the traditional parties. For this reason, I count the alliance as if it was the traditional party.. The preliminary evidence presented in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 and in Figure 1.1 reveals important differences across Latin American traditional parties. Not only do they differ in their origins or date of foundation but also in their electoral trajectories as political actors. Despite this heterogeneity, the evidence confirms the occurrence of a trend in Latin American traditional parties. Over time, most of these parties decreased their share of power. At the beginning of the democratic period, the average traditional party gained about 30% of votes in legislative elections. Three decades later, they obtained around 20% of the total share of votes. This indicates that these parties in fact confronted a crisis, though at different levels and speeds. As noted before, some parties were able to increase their votes over time. Why most parties lost power while other increased it, is the question that I will try to solve in this dissertation. In the next chapter, I discuss conventional explanations that account for the weakening of parties in power. In the next section, I introduce case studies that illustrate the phenomenon analyzed in this dissertation, and I explain the logic of their selection. In Chapter four, I study these cases in more detail.

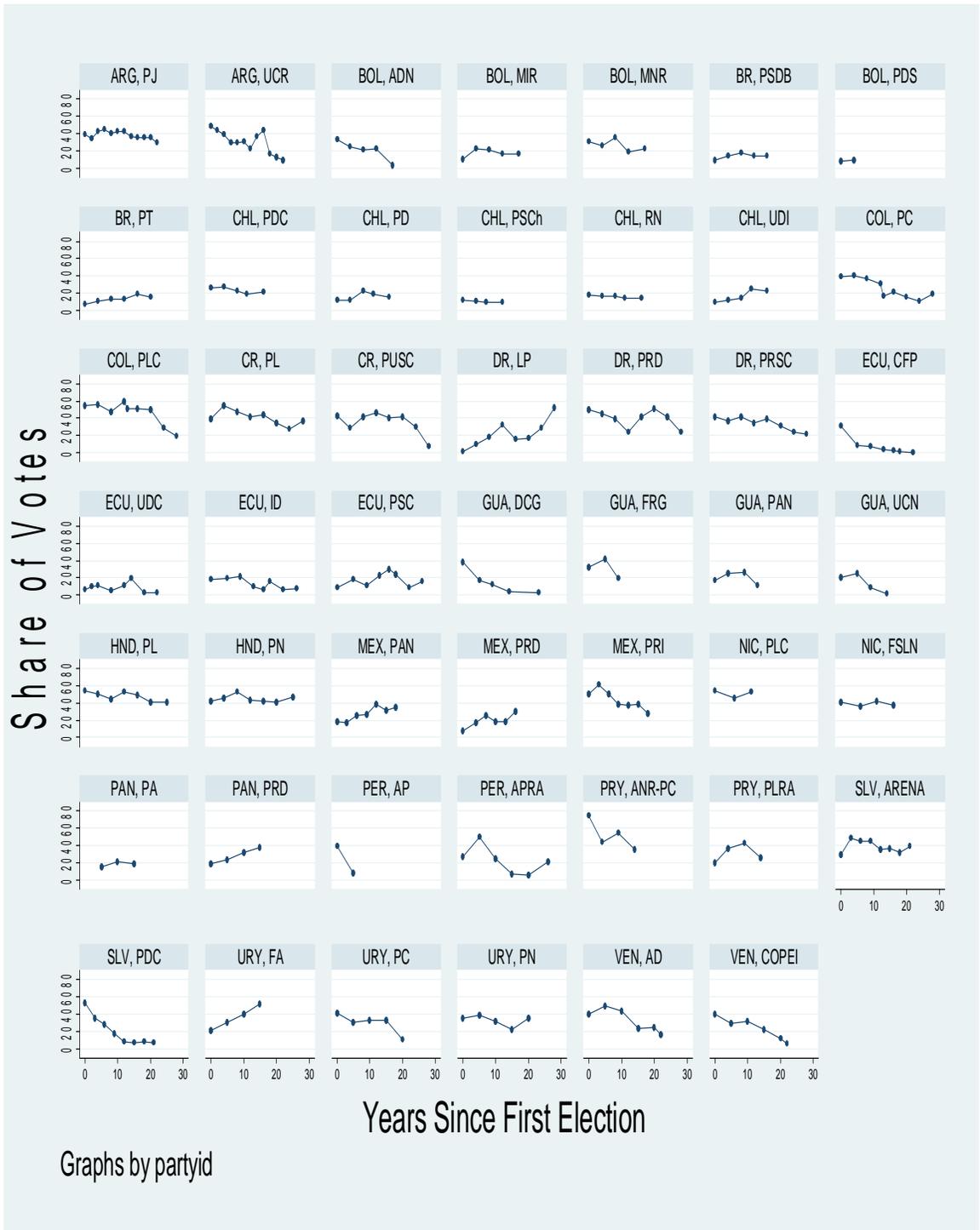


Figure 1.1. Electoral Trajectories of Latin American Traditional Parties. Share of Votes in the Lower Chamber, 1978-2006

1.2 CASE STUDIES

In order to analyze the phenomenon considered here and to clarify the causal mechanism linking explanatory variables to outcomes, this dissertation includes case studies. I study the party systems of Colombia and Venezuela and within them the electoral performance of their traditional parties: the Liberal Party (PL) and Conservative Party (PC) in Colombia and Democratic Action (AD) and the Social Christian Party (COPEI) in Venezuela. These cases illustrate how traditional parties progressively lost their electoral share of votes, though at different levels and different rates.

The research design that I employ in the selection of two Latin American party systems, is a “most similar systems” design (Przeworski and Teune 1970; Przeworski and Teune 1982). This is the first step in defining the sampling frames. The Colombian and Venezuelan party systems were selected given the fact that they share a number of characteristics uncommon in other Latin American countries. For example, both countries enjoyed an uninterrupted period of democratic stability after the late 1950s when political contenders signed pacts that permitted transitions from military dictatorships.¹³ By contrast, many other countries in the region were victims of authoritarianism during the 1960s and 1970s. Only since the late 1970s and early 1980s did countries in the region begin to establish democracies. Second, a long tradition of electoral party politics characterized the political system in both countries. Once democratic governments were inaugurated in the late 1950s, elections were accepted as the mechanism to decide who governed. Third, by the late 1950s the two countries represented institutionalized

¹³ The other country that enjoyed democratic stability in the 20th century is Costa Rica. However, I do not include it in the case studies because other characteristics at the sub-regional level (Central America) differentiate it very much from Colombia and Venezuela (Andean Region).

party systems. The systems were characterized by having relatively low levels of electoral volatility and ideological polarization, a high degree of social allegiance with the parties that composed the systems, and the existence of solid party organizations – albeit less in Colombia than in Venezuela - (Mainwaring and Scully 1995).¹⁴ Despite these similarities, traditional political parties within these systems witnessed different rates of decay in the 1990s and 2000s. While the Venezuelan party system collapsed in the late 1990s after the traditional parties (AD and COPEI) that composed it experienced a simultaneous and deep electoral crisis, in Colombia the traditional parties have survived. Although they lost their long-established hegemonic status in both presidential and legislative elections, - in 2006 they obtained the lowest share of votes in all their history –these parties are still important actors in the electoral arena and influential in their representational function. Following this dissertation’s argument, and the adopted research design, differences with regard to parties’ electoral performance (the outcome to be studied) can be attributed to variations in a main explanatory factor, holding constant extraneous sources of explanation (Przeworski and Teune 1982). In this case, the internal characteristics of political parties constitute the main explanatory factor. Although the pattern of these four traditional parties’ electoral performance over time goes in the same direction (decline), the level and rate of the vote losses varies significantly. Also, the parties’ internal characteristics are very different. These two aspects are very important as criteria to select cases that illustrate the postulates developed in this dissertation.

Variation in the electoral performance of these parties raises important questions about conditions under which they were challenged and suffered electoral losses. Did the vote share decline given the structural, contextual and political context? Did the parties’ internal features

¹⁴ Costa Rica, Chile, Uruguay, and to a lesser degree Argentina were also defined as having institutionalized party systems (Mainwaring and Shugart 1995: 17).

affect their electoral performance? Or did variation in these characteristics explain different levels of losses? Theoretical answers to these questions are offered in Chapters two and three. In depth analyses of the Colombian and Venezuelan traditional parties are done in Chapter four.

Despite the similarities described above, differences between the two countries cannot be ignored and shall be considered in order to understand the trajectories that the political systems followed in the last decade. In particular, the characteristics of the political parties and the electoral rules that have determined the way in which politicians are elected have differed in both countries since the installment of democratic governments. Parties have differed in their origins, bases of support, political orientation, electoral strategies, and internal structures. These differences (among others) raise an important problem in small-N studies like this. The possible explanations for the different outcomes exceed the number of cases to be studied. Or as Lijphart (1971) describes it, this is a problem of “many variables, small number of cases” (685). To deal with this shortcoming, I follow the strategy suggested by this scholar: after doing a comparative analysis among two party systems (four traditional parties), I test the formulated hypotheses in a larger sample (Latin American traditional parties) using statistical methods. An increase in the number of cases “improves the chances of instituting at least some control” (686). In the next following paragraphs I summarize some factors that differentiate the parties under scrutiny.

First, Colombian traditional parties – the Liberal Party (PL) and the Conservative Party (PC) emerged in the mid-19th century, and since then, they “were the most important institutions of social and political control” (Bejarano forthcoming, 30). In a weakly institutionalized state, they played a central role dominating political life. These parties penetrated deeply into the civil society and created two powerful partisan subcultures. Since their emergence, until the late 1980s, the PL and the PC maintained control of the electoral arena and too occupied the majority

of the elected public offices. In Venezuela, AD and COPEI were created much later than the PL and PC in Colombia. They were formed during the 1930s and the 1940s. Parties that were created in the 19th century did not survive the accumulation of power of successive military governments. Only after the death of Juan Vicente Gomez, an omnipotent ruler who monopolized political power between 1908 and 1935 was it possible to consolidate long lasting political parties in this country.

Regarding the parties' origins, the PL and PC in Colombia emerged as expressions of ideological, religious and regional cleavages in the mid nineteenth century; they were elitist and oligarchic in their character, and built upon a predominantly agrarian society in which landed oligarchies concentrated political power while the peasant rural population constituted a significant portion of the parties' bases of support (Bejarano forthcoming, 31). Patron-client relationships defined the dynamics between representatives and represented, and parties were primarily clientelistic in character rather than programmatic or ideological. Venezuelan traditional parties, on the contrary, were mass-based parties with few connections to the 19th century traditional and oligarchic elites. They were founded in the mid twentieth century, a century later than in Colombia. These parties were formed to represent a diversity of social groups that were emerging as a consequence of rapid social transformations taking place in the country since the 1920s and 1930s. Urban middle sectors, an organized working class and a mobilized peasantry constituted a coalition that gave the Venezuelan AD and COPEI a more programmatic and ideological and lesser clientelistic character.

Besides the differences in the origins and character of the traditional political parties in Colombia and Venezuela, the electoral rules in these two countries have differed since democratic governments were installed in the late 1950s. In Colombia, a proportional

representation system that used faction lists was employed between 1930s and 2003. This system allowed each political party to present simultaneously and without limits as many closed lists as desired. The lists could include an unlimited number of candidates and they were elected in the order determined by party leaders. Seats were allocated to the party's factions. In addition, no minimal threshold was required to form lists. The faction lists stimulated party fractionalization and produced a party system with two poorly disciplined and increasingly fragmented organizations.¹⁵ Politics became personalized and "partisan mobilization was replaced by patronage-oriented appeals" (Archer 1995: 165). The political system dominated by the two traditional parties, did not represent the interests of a large proportion of the society.

In Venezuela, a proportional representation system with closed and blocked lists was in place between 1958 and 1993. This system gave the party leaders the privilege organizing the lists, while it compelled their members to accept their position on the list, and to follow the party's guidelines. Moreover, the system limited the alternatives offered to the voters, which until the late 1970s, only had the opportunity to deposit a single ballot for a political party and elect simultaneously senators, deputies, state legislative assemblies, and municipal councils. Voters did not have the possibility of choosing their preferred candidates within a party, nor could they hold legislators accountable. These rules, among other factors, made the Venezuelan political parties highly centralized, cohesive and disciplined. They were vertically integrated organizations in which national political leaders played a powerful role.

In the early 1990s both countries introduced electoral reforms to deal with crises of representation. The central goals of the reforms differed. While in Colombia the purpose was to encourage the formation of stronger and more disciplined parties rather than personalism, in

¹⁵ This outcome was also shaped by the National Front, a pact established by the two parties in which power was equally distributed among them during 16 years.

Venezuela the reform sought to decentralize parties and bring legislators closer to the voters. The reforms varied in their content and direction, given that the origins of representational shortcomings were different in each country. However, political outcomes in the long run were similar: traditional parties suffered progressive declines and lost the political relevance they enjoyed for decades. AD and COPEI in Venezuela suffered more than the PL and PC in Colombia. Though all the parties experienced a decrease in their electoral power, COPEI was the party that suffered the most, followed by AD. In Colombia, the decline of the PL was deeper than that of the PC. In this context, some parties suffered more than others after electoral reforms were adopted and other contextual factors affected their performance – e.g., economic crisis -. Analysis of these parties will allow us to understand if some of them were better suited than others to respond to economic, political and social challenges. Differences in the parties' internal structures and organizations seem to be factors that determine various outcomes.

1.3 PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

The next chapter reviews the literature that accounts for traditional explanations for the decline of political parties. Chapter three focuses upon works that deal with the internal structure of political parties and identifies the factors that I argue influence their capacity for adaptation to challenging contexts. I introduce the general argument of this dissertation.

Chapter four introduces the case studies that illustrate how traditional parties progressively lost their electoral share of votes, though at different levels and different rates. An analysis of the economic, political and social context during this period is undertaken to identify the factors that affected the electoral performance of these parties. I describe the ways in which

parties responded to the crisis (among other strategies, they introduced electoral reforms), and show that not all parties suffered to the same extent. It is argued that some were better suited to respond to challenging contexts than others. As a consequence, it is suggested that parties' internal structure is an important factor that has to be considered when the effects of institutional reforms and other factors are analyzed.

The chapter also studies the internal structure of the Colombian and Venezuelan traditional parties at the beginning of the period under scrutiny (1978). Characteristics that distinguish one party from the other(s) are identified. It is hypothesized that a party's internal structure, for example the degree of power centralization, shapes a party's responses to challenging conditions (e.g., an economic crises; a new institutional setting). In other words, the internal structure of a political party is a variable that conditions its capacity to adapt to a new context – either institutional or structural.

In Chapter five I do an empirical analysis that tests the hypotheses presented in previous chapters and the main argument of the dissertation. I find evidence related to the importance that the internal conditions of political parties have on their electoral performance. The structure of relations or distribution of power within these organizations and the mechanisms through which politicians and parties' members are elected are key explanatory factors that need to be considered when the electoral trajectories of parties are analyzed. I also find evidence for conventional explanations about the effects that economic and contextual factors have on the weakening of incumbent parties. However, this evidence is not very strong. Finally, I test the hypothesis that institutional reforms do not always benefit the actors that introduce them. I find empirical evidence that support this idea. The final chapter discusses the results and establishes a research agenda for the future.

2.0 DETERMINANTS OF PARTIES' ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE: TRADITIONAL EXPLANATIONS RECONSIDERED

What are the effects of economic, contextual and political or institutional conditions on the electoral performance of traditional parties? This chapter examines literature that offers explanations about the negative impact that economic crises, and contextual situations (i.e., scandals) have on the performance of incumbent parties in competitive regimes.¹⁶ Moreover, it offers an additional explanation about the effect of institutional variables. In particular, it argues that changes to the rules of the game affect the performance of parties, but not necessarily as reformers anticipated. In addition, I state that these reforms affect parties differently depending on their internal characteristics. Conventional and new hypotheses about the impact of the different variables on the electoral performance of Latin American traditional parties are offered.

2.1 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The question of whether economic conditions affect the electoral fortunes of political parties has been asked repeatedly in different times, contexts, and nations, and has been tested in both

¹⁶ Although this dissertation focuses on Latin American traditional parties, the literature review includes works that study the electoral performance of parties in advanced industrial democracies (i.e., the North America and Western Europe). Party de-alignment has also occurred in these countries.

aggregate or macro level studies and individual or micro level analyses (Abramowitz 1996; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002; Fiorina 1981; Kinder and Kiewiet 1981a). In the view of many of these scholars, what usually captures voters' attention is what politicians have done (or promised to do) for the economic well-being of the nation and its citizens. The basic contention of what is popularly known as the 'economic voting approach' is that citizens react to their material conditions, supporting incumbents' reelection when conditions are good, and opposition candidates or parties in bad times. This premise is derived from the original and seminal works of Downs (1957) and V.O Key (1966). The former states that vote decisions are taken following an individual rational calculus where "each citizen casts his vote for the party he believes will provide him with more benefits than any other" (Downs 1957: 36). In this view, future achievements of the incumbent party are evaluated in light of its past performance. The other perspective argues that voters evaluate the results accomplished by the incumbent party and based on that, they reward or punish it (Key 1964). Questions of whether voters respond to past or future conditions and whether they maximize their own well being or that of their society have fueled the controversy on economic voting at least for the past three decades (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981b). In general, and drawing mainly on the experience of European and North American countries, consensus has emerged on the fact that the economy affects electoral outcomes. Voters care more for the national economic situation than for their own situation, and they assess the future government's performance rather than the past economic performance.¹⁷ In addition they become more sensitive when the economy suffers downturns (Bloom and Price 1975; Chappell and Keech 1985; Kinder and Kiewiet 1981a). When an incumbent runs for reelection, voters adopt a "sociotropic retrospective": they evaluate the performance of the

¹⁷ In Kinder and Kiewit terminology, the electorate is 'sociotropic prospective' (1981).

incumbent and, based on that, they support or blame him/her (Nadeau and Lewis-Beck 2001). Despite this evidence, it is not always clear what specific economic variables are important, when, how and where do they matter, and to what extent they interact with other political and contextual conditions. As I argue below, the impact of economic variables should be analyzed by controlling for other variables that might be theoretically important for explaining electoral performances of political actors. Non-economic issues, as for example, post-materialist values; technological developments; and the institutional framework in which political action takes place, among others, also shape voter decisions for whom to vote.¹⁸ This idea is particularly relevant contemporaneously, when the emergence of new parties and social movements everywhere, and a changing character of the electorate have placed new demands on the policy agendas of parties. Economic progress in wealthy countries is no longer a priority for voters neither for parties.

Many students have evaluated competing theories by adding other variables to economic voting models (Fiorina 1981; Inglehart 1990; Lewis-Beck 1988; Norpoth 2001; Powell and Whitten 1993). In advanced democracies, institutional settings, partisan identification, ideological inclinations, cultural and demographic variables, among others, have been tested to assess their impact on vote choice (Kiewit 1983; MacKuen 1983; Nannestad and Paldam 1994; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). Empirical evidence shows that all these factors explain, to some extent, voter preferences and the electoral performance of political parties. Traditional parties' de-alignment in these countries is largely explained by structural and social

¹⁸ In the Latin American context other factors also might be important independent variables in explaining party votes. For example, evidence exists that political violence has a negative impact on turnout (García Sánchez 2009). This is of particular importance for countries like Colombia, where confrontations between illegal armed groups (guerrillas and paramilitaries) and state actors (the military) prolong a more than six decades internal conflict.

transformations. For example, a more educated population and social cleavages that promote non-economic interests (e.g., peace; pro-choice policies; anti-nuclear initiatives; energy and environmental issues) have raised and challenged parties that defend 'traditional' values, as for example, economic progress (Inglehart 1990). Similarly, the changing nature of society (i.e., its modernization and secularization) has affected negatively the levels of affiliation with mass-based parties and with denominational parties. A wider middle class (and a reduction of the working class) has reduced social divisions based on class conflicts. These phenomena, and others, have transformed the linkages between politicians and voters. Traditional parties have suffered the consequences of these changes. Declines in their votes' shares are explained by the creation of new parties that respond to the new social demands (Dalton 2002; Gunther et al 2002).

In developing countries and unstable democracies, such as those in Latin America, the relationship between economic conditions and electoral performance also has been analyzed. Scholars have tested the argument in national case studies (Domínguez and McCann 1995; Remmer and Gélinau 2003; Seligson and Gómez 1989; Weyland 1998) and in cross national analyses (Remmer 1991; Remmer 1993; Roberts and Wibbels 1999; Echeagaray 2005). These works conclude that the economy is an important predictor of parties' electoral performance, and that it has a larger impact in these countries than in industrialized democracies. The high levels of poverty and inequality in Latin America, explain these countries' higher vulnerability to changing economic conditions. The post-materialistic variables that explain party de-alignment in North American and in Western European democracies are not as relevant in these low and middle income countries. Table 2.1 compares advanced democracies and Latin American countries according to their 1991 and 2001 Human Development Index (HDI) and GDP Per

Capita (PPP in US\$).¹⁹ The evidence shows that Latin American countries do not perform well in their social indicators and poorer than North American countries and Western European democracies. In comparison to the former, the levels of the HDI in Latin America are very low. Most people do not have access to income and employment opportunities, or to education, health and a clean and safe physical environment. On average, the HDI in industrialized democracies was 0.962 and 0.925 in 1991 and 2001 respectively, while in Latin America it was 0.706 (1991) and 0.745 (2001). A similar situation occurs with the levels of development. GDP per capita is three times higher in industrialized democracies than in Latin American countries. In 1991, GDP per capita in North America and in Western European countries was, on average, US\$16,936 millions. Ten year later it grew to US\$26,784 millions in these countries. In Latin America, the levels of GDP per capita were US\$4,498 (1991) and US\$6,011 (2001). These numbers indicate that industrialized democracies are much wealthier than developing countries. In the latter, economic development is clearly an important issue (if not the most important), and poor economic performance highly affects the incumbent party. In wealthy countries, non-economic related issues (post-materialistic values) are likely to influence voter preferences and party agendas. For these reason, it is possible to think that non-traditional parties that promote those interests are capturing votes from parties that defend traditional values, such as economic progress.

¹⁹ “The Human Development Index (HDI) measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living.” Scale: 0-1, where 1 indicates high human development. Source: Human Development Report 1994 and 2004 (<http://hdr.undp.org/>)

Table 2.1. Human Development Index (HDI) and Per Capita GDP in Industrialized Western

Democracies and in Latin American countries

Country	Human Development Index (HDI)		GDP per capita (PPP US\$)	
	1991 (Rank)	2000 (Rank)	1991	2000
Canada	0.983 (2)	0.940 (3)	19,320	27,840
Iceland	0.983 (3)	0.936 (7)	17,480	29,581
Sweden	0.982 (4)	0.941 (2)	17,490	24,277
Switzerland	0.981 (5)	0.928 (11)	21,780	28,769
Norway	0.978 (6)	0.942 (1)	17,170	29,918
USA	0.976 (7)	0.939 (6)	22,130	34,142
Netherlands	0.976 (8)	0.935 (8)	16,820	25,657
France	0.971 (10)	0.928 (12)	16,340	23,509
United Kingdom	0.967 (11)	0.928 (13)	16,340	23,509
Denmark	0.967 (12)	0.926 (14)	17,880	27,627
Finland	0.963 (13)	0.930 (10)	16,130	24,996
Germany	0.959 (14)	0.925 (17)	19,770	25,103
Belgium	0.958 (16)	0.939 (4)	17,510	27,178
Austria	0.957 (17)	0.926 (15)	17,690	26,765
Italy	0.955 (18)	0.913 (20)	17,040	23,626
Luxembourg	0.954 (19)	0.925 (16)	20,800	50,061
Spain	0.951 (20)	0.913 (21)	18,520	19,472
Ireland	0.945 (23)	0.925 (18)	11,430	29,866
Greece	0.934 (24)	0.885 (24)	7,680	16,501
Portugal	0.905 (36)	0.880 (28)	9,450	17,290
<i>Uruguay</i>	<i>0.879 (32)</i>	<i>0.831 (40)</i>	<i>6,670</i>	<i>9,035</i>
<i>Chile</i>	<i>0.878 (38)</i>	<i>0.831 (38)</i>	<i>7,060</i>	<i>9,417</i>
<i>Costa Rica</i>	<i>0.976 (40)</i>	<i>0.820 (43)</i>	<i>5,100</i>	<i>8,650</i>
<i>Argentina</i>	<i>0.854 (43)</i>	<i>0.844 (34)</i>	<i>5,120</i>	<i>12,377</i>
<i>Venezuela</i>	<i>0.848 (44)</i>	<i>0.770 (69)</i>	<i>8,120</i>	<i>5,794</i>
<i>Mexico</i>	<i>0.838 (45)</i>	<i>0.796 (54)</i>	<i>7,170</i>	<i>9,023</i>
<i>Panama</i>	<i>0.796 (54)</i>	<i>0.787 (57)</i>	<i>4,910</i>	<i>6,000</i>
<i>Brazil</i>	<i>0.759 (60)</i>	<i>0.757 (73)</i>	<i>5,240</i>	<i>7,625</i>
<i>Colombia</i>	<i>0.757 (61)</i>	<i>0.772 (68)</i>	<i>5,460</i>	<i>6,248</i>
<i>Paraguay</i>	<i>0.667 (73)</i>	<i>0.740 (90)</i>	<i>3,420</i>	<i>4,426</i>
<i>Ecuador</i>	<i>0.655 (77)</i>	<i>0.732 (93)</i>	<i>4,140</i>	<i>3,203</i>
<i>Peru</i>	<i>0.644 (78)</i>	<i>0.747 (82)</i>	<i>3,110</i>	<i>4,799</i>
<i>Dominican Rep.</i>	<i>0.622 (80)</i>	<i>0.727 (94)</i>	<i>3,080</i>	<i>6,033</i>
<i>Nicaragua</i>	<i>0.612 (85)</i>	<i>0.635 (118)</i>	<i>2,550</i>	<i>2,366</i>
<i>El Salvador</i>	<i>0.524 (94)</i>	<i>0.706 (104)</i>	<i>2,110</i>	<i>4,497</i>
<i>Honduras</i>	<i>0.492 (100)</i>	<i>0.638 (116)</i>	<i>1,820</i>	<i>2,453</i>
<i>Guatemala</i>	<i>0.488 (103)</i>	<i>0.631 (120)</i>	<i>3,180</i>	<i>3,821</i>
<i>Bolivia</i>	<i>0.416 (110)</i>	<i>0.653 (114)</i>	<i>2,170</i>	<i>2,424</i>

Source: United Nations Development Programs, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/>

In Latin America, the 1980s was marked by deep economic crises that undermined “support for incumbents and provoke[d] high levels of electoral volatility” (Remmer 1991, 777). The economic crisis had multiple origins, among others, a drastic rise in the price of imported oil following the emergence of OPEC; an increase in external debts; a rise in US interest rates, and a resulting loss of access to foreign credit. A widespread pattern of simultaneous inflation and economic stagnation produced lower growth rates. An indicator of this situation was the decline of the import-substituting industrialization (ISI) model pursued by many developing countries for several decades.²⁰ Institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) refinanced Latin American debts and promoted the implementation of orthodox stabilization and adjustment programs. The so-called “Washington Consensus”, or “neoliberal model”, underscored an expanding role for the free market and consequently constraints upon an activist state. In particular, reforms included fiscal policy discipline, public spending restrictions, tax reforms, liberalization of interest rates, trade and inward foreign direct investment, a competitive exchange rate, privatization of state enterprises, deregulation and property rights (Smith, Acuña and Gamarra 1994). Although almost every country in the region implemented these reforms, their pace, timing, and degree varied.²¹ This is not the place to undertake an in-depth analysis about the impact of these economic reforms. However, it is worth mentioning some consequences that economists, observers and policy makers underline. Though controversy on this exists, studies in the early 2000s agreed that after two decades of implementation of these

²⁰ The Keynesian-ISI model served as the economic model during the latter part of the Great Depression, World War II, and the post-war period.

²¹ Lora (1997) classifies countries following the timing and speed of the reforms. “Early Reformers” were Argentina, Chile, and Jamaica; “Gradual Reformers” were Colombia and Uruguay; Bolivia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Dominican Republic classified as “Recent Reformers”, and finally, “Slow Reformers” were Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Venezuela”.

reforms, economic development did not reach anticipated levels (Huber and Stolt 2004; Lora and Panizza 2002). As Dani Rodrik pointed out,

the reforms did not always work out the way they were intended. While growth generally improved across much of Latin America, it was in most countries less than the reformers had originally hoped for (...) The critics, meanwhile, argue that the disappointing outcomes have vindicated their concerns about the inappropriateness of the standard reform agenda (Rodrik 2006).

Critics of these reforms claim that neo-liberal reforms produced higher levels of poverty, income inequality, unemployment and informality (Huber and Stolt 2004; Portes and Hoffman 2003). Despite the failure to generate sustainable economic growth and improved social conditions, students also recognize that the reforms were successful in introducing fiscal discipline and monetary stability in most Latin American countries. The importance of this issue for the present study relates to the effects that structural changes might have had on the performance of Latin America's traditional parties. Did economic conditions that resulted from neoliberal reforms impact the electoral fortunes of these parties?

The literature that links these reforms to the role of political parties, and more specifically to their electoral performance, states that market-oriented measures affected mostly left-wing parties. These parties' political agendas were discredited when liberal economic policies were implemented across the region (Abal Medina and Suárez Cao 2003; Burgess 1999; Levitsky 2003). Market liberalization altered the character and purpose of state power – it decreased -, the nature of state-society relations and, as a consequence, the links between political parties and their representatives. In particular, parties that promulgated inward-oriented, or state-led capitalist development – import substitutions industrialization (ISI) – were more likely to be 'victims' of the structural reforms. However, the evidence is contradictory. Although studies have demonstrated that labor-based parties in fact suffered electoral losses, they also stress that not all of these parties were affected to the same extent. Some were able to adapt their programs,

redefine the relations with their constituencies, and implement policies contrary to previous party positions (i.e., the Justicialist Party in Argentina). Moreover, analyses that observe long-term effects caused by the neoliberal reforms of the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, have concluded that left-wing parties ended up winning electoral contests in the 2000s, after neoliberal reforms failed to accomplish expected goals (Queirolo Velasco 2006). Some of these left-wing parties were 'traditional' – the PJ-FPV in Argentina, the PT in Brazil, the FA in Uruguay, and the PSCh in Chile – and others like the Fifth Republic Movement (MVR) in Venezuela and the Movement towards Socialism (MAS) in Bolivia, appeared as new political choices that signalled the collapse of these countries' traditional parties. However, not only left-wing parties were affected by the economic crises in the early 1980s, nor were they the only winners when structural reforms adopted by market-oriented incumbents failed to achieve their goals. Other parties – in the centre and centre-to-right ideological spectrum also suffered crises and limitations of the reforms. But some of them also ended up strengthened, or simply did not suffer large electoral losses. To what extent did the economic crises affect the electoral fortunes of traditional parties in the region? Following the economic voting theories, I argue that poor economic conditions, affected the performance of traditional parties, in particular of those that were in power (incumbent parties). These parties were the dominant actors in the legislatures and presidencies when the economic crises exploded in the early 1980s. They were the actors that implemented the structural and not necessarily successful reforms. Thus, these parties were blamed by the electorate, which decided to support non-traditional parties. This hypothesis follows an intuition that past studies have tested.

A clarification is appropriate here. Attribution of responsibility is more likely to take place when voters identify a visible actor. In a presidential system, the president of the country is

the economic manager personified, more than legislators (Nadeau and Lewis-Beck 2001). Voters tend to attribute responsibility to her/him, and not to congress members. In congress, it is more difficult to identify someone that is responsible for the country's economic situation. Thus, voters do not blame legislators as much as the president if they suffer the consequences of poor economic performance. However, when an incumbent is associated with a political party, it is highly likely that voters assign the same responsibility to his/her party in congress and vote in the same direction.

Economic crises and the implementation and eventual failure of neoliberal reforms are part of the explanation about the weakening role of traditional parties in Latin America during the 1990s and 2000s. These parties inaugurated democratic periods after years of authoritarian regimes, but at the same time they confronted crises that led them to take unpopular decisions. Mass party organizations were undermined by orthodox measures. These processes eroded the linkages between these parties and their constituencies and allowed new actors to emerge and assume some of the functions that the traditional parties once monopolized. Parties that at the beginning of the democratic period were the major political actors suffered electoral defeats as a consequence of bad economic conditions. In many cases, these parties (traditional) were displaced by political outsiders who promoted anti-establishment discourses. Despite evidence that shows that unpopular economic reforms and poor economic performance were important factors that affected parties' electoral fortunes, other variables might also account for traditional parties' weakening.²² The next subsection introduces political scandals and institutional changes as other determinants of this phenomenon.

²² It is important to underline that not all countries suffered equally during the crisis. Also, not all countries implemented market reforms to the same degree. Finally, those reforms did not fail in all cases.

2.2 POLITICAL CONTEXT: THE IMPACT OF SCANDALS AND INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

Studies of mass politics and political parties document an increasing effect of mass media on the political behavior of both representatives and represented (Aldrich 1995; Dalton and Wattenberg 2002; Katz and Mair 1995; Mair 1997). The massive use of nationwide radio, cable, television networks and mass-circulation newspapers and magazines, have impacted political parties in many different contexts (i.e., industrialized and developing democracies). During electoral campaigns individual candidates use the media to attract votes and raise money. Once in office, they use the media to promote and defend their service. On the other side, voters become familiar with political candidates through the media. Also, individual evaluations of incumbent politicians are shaped by news reported in the media. For example, political scandals and acts of corruption in which the executive is involved negatively affects presidential approval ratings (Norpoth 1996). Technological innovations have made political activities vastly different than they were a few decades ago. The massive use of media has transformed the ways in which politicians relate to their constituencies.

In Latin America, evidence shows that since the inauguration of democratic governments, the massive use of media has increased dramatically. As in developed countries, this has influenced political processes in the region. For example, political campaigns have become more visible for more people. Also, political scandals transmitted by television, radio, and newspapers have expanded since the early 1980s (Conaghan 1996; Weisbord 2000),²³ An increasing number of acts of corruption, abuse of power, and violations of human rights involving public

²³ I borrow Pérez-Liñán's definition of political scandals. He defines them as "news events disclosing acts of corruption or abuse of power performed by politicians" (2007, 65).

functionaries have been reported in the media. Scandals have become significant predictors of presidential crises (presidential impeachment) across the region: “(...) media scandals (particularly when they involved the president directly) eroded presidential popularity and encouraged popular uprising against these administrations” (Pérez-Liñán 2007). In this dissertation I offer a similar hypothesis. I argue that political scandals – commonly transmitted in the media - explain decreasing levels of traditional party electoral performance. In particular, the president’s party is affected when the incumbent is accused of committing acts of corruption or abuse of power.

Economic crises and an increase in political scandals did not occur in isolation from a particular political context. In Latin America, traditional parties suffered not only the consequences of poor economic conditions and of scandalous politicians. They also decreased their share of power because conditions of the political system –e.g., the institutional framework - led them to lose votes too. After long periods of authoritarian regimes, deep crises of political representation erupted.²⁴ I argue here that these crises were partially caused by the institutional design in place. At the beginning of the democratic period, some systems severely restricted political competition and only majority parties had real possibilities of being elected to representative institutions. Other systems promoted strong relationships between party elites and legislators, but failed to establish any personal connections with the voters that elected them (closed lists and small district magnitudes). In contrast, in some systems, extensive personal relations between politicians and their constituents bolstered the importance of political parties

²⁴ In developed countries, a deep crisis of political representation also affected the performance of traditional parties. Post-materialist interests and new political agendas challenged the existence of those parties that promoted ‘traditional’ issues. The emergence of strong social movements and the expression of demands through public protests are symptomatic of a representational crisis in these countries (see Offe 1996; Laclau and Chantal 2004)

(open, faction, and unblocked lists). Disenchanted voters started to withdraw their support from the existing (traditional) parties because they were not fulfilling their function as representative actors. This situation led politicians to reshape the terms of the relationships between representatives and citizens (Crisp 2006; Mainwaring, Bejarano, and Pizarro-Leongomez 2006; Tanaka 2006). In order to avoid their own defeat, incumbent legislators introduced changes in the electoral rules. They anticipated a decrease in their vote share if no action were taken directed toward solving representational shortcomings.

Table 2.1 shows the various systems and reforms implemented to elect presidents and legislators in Latin American countries between 1978 and 2006. Regarding the electoral formula for choosing presidents, the most evident change is the shift from simple plurality to plurality with a minimum threshold or to a majority runoff. At the beginning of the period, eight countries elected their presidents using two-round systems. At the end of the period, this number increased to fourteen. In legislative elections, changes were multiple and diverse. While some of them were adopted to open the systems by creating opportunities for minoritarian or new parties, and increasing political competition, others were implemented to curtail competition by increasing electoral thresholds. Reforms were also designed to modify relationships between politicians and their constituencies. Changes were introduced either to produce closer relationships between elected representatives and their voters, - candidate-centered reforms -, or they were directed toward increasing the links between politicians and party leaders: party-centered reforms. Reforms oriented toward opening the system and encouraging closer relationships between legislators and their constituencies include higher district magnitudes; introduction of open lists; allocation formulas with low thresholds – e.g., Hare –; elimination or decrease of electoral thresholds; and adoption of mixed proportional systems. On the other side, changes designed to

limit competition and promote the centralization of power for party leaders include lower district magnitudes; introduction of closed or unblocked lists; allocation formulas with high thresholds (d'Hondt); and establishment or an increase in electoral thresholds.

Table 2.2. Latin American Electoral Systems, 1978-2006

Country	Electoral System	Number of Seats and Districts in the Lower or Unique Chamber
Andean Region		
Colombia	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1978-1990: Plurality 1991-2006: Two-Round System	1978-1990: 199/26 1991-2006: 162-33
	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1978-2002: Faction List PR System; Hare; Single Tier ²⁵ 2003-2006: Unblocked List PR System; d'Hondt; Single Tier ²⁶	
Venezuela	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1978-2006: Plurality	1978-1992: 200/20 1993-1997: 98/23 (first tier) and 102/102 (second tier) 1998-1999: 101/24 (first tier) and 88/88 (second tier) 2000-2005: 67/24 (first tier) and 100/100 (second tier)
	<i>Legislative Electoral System:</i> 1978-1992: Closed List PR System; d'Hondt; Single Tier 1993-2006: Closed List Mixed PR System; Two Tiers	
Ecuador	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1979-1997: Two-Round System (threshold of 50%+1 or 40%) 1998-2006: Two-Round System (threshold of 50%+1 or 40% and an advantage of 10% of the votes over the second candidate)	1979-1983: 57/20 - 12/1 1984-1987: 59/20 - 12/1 1988-1991: 60/20 - 12/1 1992-1995: 65/21 - 12/1 1996-2001: 70/21 - 12/1 2002-2006: 100/22
	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1979-1997: Closed PR System; Hare; Two Tiers 1998-2006: Open List PR System; d'Hondt; Two Tiers 2003-2006: Open List PR System; d'Hondt; Single Tier	
Peru	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1980-2006: Two-Round System	

²⁵ The Lower Chamber has one or two tiers. In the second case, seats are awarded in two competitive overlapping tiers (e.g., seats awarded in both single member districts and PR lists, or both regional and national PR lists).

²⁶ This reform was used for the first time in the 2006 legislative elections for the first time.

	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1980-1984: Closed List PR System; Open List; d'Hondt; Single Tier 1985-2006: Unblocked List PR System; d'Hondt; Single Tier	1980-1984: 180/25 1985-1991: 180/26 1992-1994: 80/1 1995-2000: 120/1 2001-2006: 120/25
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1985-2006: Two-Round System ^a In 1994: The Congress chooses from the two most voted candidates.	
Bolivia	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1985-1990: Closed List PR System; Hare; Single Tier 1991-1993: Closed List PR System; Saint League; Single Tier ²⁷ 1994-2006: Closed List Mixed PR System; d'Hondt; Two Tiers ²⁸	1985-1996: 130/9 1997-2005: 62/9 (first tier) and 68/68 (second tier) 2006: 60/9 (first tier) and 70/70 (second tier)
Southern Cone		
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1983-1994: Electoral college (with majority in the college) 1994-2006: Two-Round-System (threshold: 45% or 40% of the votes and an advantage of 10% of the votes over the second candidate)	
Argentina	<i>Legislative Electoral System^a</i> 1983-2006: Closed List PR System; d'Hondt ; Single Tier	1983-1990: 254/24 1991-2006: 257/24
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1984-1996: Plurality (double simultaneous vote) 1997-2006: Two-Round-System	
Uruguay	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1984-2006: Faction List PR System; d'Hondt; Single Tier	1984-2006: 99/1
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1989-2006: Plurality	
Paraguay	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1989-1992: Incomplete List Majoritarian System; Closed list Single Tier 1993-2006: Closed List PR System; d'Hondt; Single Tier	1989-1992: 72/1 1993-2006: 80/18
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1989-2006: Two-Round System	
Chile	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1989-2006: Unblocked List PR System; d'Hondt; Single Tier	1989-2006: 120/60 ²⁹
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1986-2006: Two-Round System	
Brazil	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1986-2006: Unblocked List PR System; d'Hondt; Single Tier	1986-1990: 487/26 1991-1994: 503/27 1996-2006: 513/27
North and Central America		

²⁷ This allocation formula was used only in the 1993 legislative election.

²⁸ This reform was effective for the first time in the 1997 legislative election.

²⁹ The binomial system was adopted in 1989. Before the dictatorship, the average district magnitude was larger: 150 legislators were elected in 28 districts, so the ADM was 5.36.

	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1994-2006: Plurality	
Panama	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1994-2006: Unblocked List PR System; Hare; Single Tier	1994-1998: 72/40 1999-2003: 71/40 2004-2006: 78/40
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1978-2006: Two-Round System (threshold: 40%)	
Costa Rica	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1978-2006: Closed List PR System; Hare; Single Tier	1978-2006: 57/7
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1990-1994: Plurality 1995-2006: Two-Round-System (threshold: 40% or 35%)	
Nicaragua	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1990-2006: Closed List PR System; Hare; Two Tiers	1990-1995: 90/8 (first tier) and 20/1 (second tier) 1996-2000: 70/12 (first tier) and 20/1 (second tier) 2001-2006: 70/17 (first tier) and 20/1 (second tier)
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1981-2006: Plurality	
Honduras	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1981-2004: Closed List PR System; Hare; Single Tier 2005-2006: Open List PR System; Hare; Single Tier ³⁰	1981-1984: 82/18 1985-1988: 134/18 1989-2006: 128/18
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1985-2006: Two-Round-System	
El Salvador	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1982-1987: Closed List PR System; Hare; Single Tier 1988-2005: Closed List PR System; Hare; Two Tiers 2006: Closed List PR System; Hare; Single Tier	1982-1987: 60/14 1988-2005: 64/14 (first tier) and 20/1 (second tier) 2006: 84/15
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1985-2006: Two-Round System	
Guatemala	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1985-2006: Closed List PR System; d'Hondt; Two Tiers ³¹	1985-1989: 75/22 - 25/1 1990-1993: 87/23 - 29/1 1994-1997: 60/23 - 20/1 1998-2003: 85/23 - 28/1 2004-2006: 127/22 -31/1
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1978-1994: Plurality 1994-2006: Two-Round System	
Dominican Republic	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1978-2001: Closed List PR System; d'Hondt; Single Tier	1978-1981: 91/27 1982-1997: 120/30

³⁰ The open list was used in the 2006 legislative election for the first time.

³¹ Before 1985, the legislature had only one electoral tier.

	2002-2006: Unblocked List PR System; d'Hondt; Single Tier	1998-2001: 149/30 2002-2005: 150/30 2006: 178/32
	<i>Presidential Electoral System</i> 1988-2006: Plurality	
Mexico	<i>Legislative Electoral System</i> 1988-2006: Closed List Parallel-Plurality PR System; Hare; Two Tiers	1988-2006: 200/5 (first tier) and 300/300 (second tier) ³²

^a If no candidate gains the majority of the vote, Congress chooses from the two most voted candidates. Before 1994 the choice was among the top three candidates.

Sources: Colomer 2004; Negretto 2006; Nohlen 2005; Wills-Otero and Pérez-Liñán 2006

The multiple changes that occurred across the region since 1978, indicate that electoral institutions are not as stable and resistant to change as often assumed (Dunleavy and Margetts 1995; Lijphart 1994). On the contrary, frequent institutional reengineering that has taken place since the Third Wave of Democratization, indicates high instability in both party systems and institutional rules (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). The phenomenon of constant institutional changes occurs in “nations in which party systems have remained unsettled” (Boix 1999: 610). As has been shown by students of party politics, several Latin American countries are characterized as having inchoate party systems (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). In all cases in which party systems are characterized as such, reforms have been implemented (Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru). The only exception is Brazil. However, in countries where institutionalized party systems or systems in transition were in place in the mid 1990s, changes in electoral rules have taken place as well (Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Mexico and Paraguay).³³ Various and sometimes contradictory reforms were introduced to deal with the crises of representation and more than that, to protect incumbent parties from losing additional

³² Before 1988, the ADM was smaller: 100 legislators were elected in three districts, and 300 were chosen in single member districts. The ADM was 5.75.

³³ Mainwaring and Scully do not include Central American countries in their analysis. In most of these countries (El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic), reforms to electoral systems have been introduced as well.

power (in particular, reforms to elect legislators). These parties were threatened by structural challenges that exploded in the early 1980s, and some of them witnessed a decrease in their vote share. Thus, institutional reforms were attractive for these parties to recover power, or at least to avoid defeat (Boix 1999; Colomer 2004; Jones 2005).

Following the general expectation about the impact of electoral reforms implemented by incumbent politicians, I hypothesize that these electoral reforms improved the electoral performance of the parties that introduced them. However, evidence shows that in the long run the consequences of new institutional settings were not beneficial for all parties that designed and implemented them. Some ended up losing more power, while political opportunities for new political parties – often anti-establishment movements - were created. Gains of new actors implied losses for older parties. Reformers' miscalculation or a generalized disenchantment with traditional politicians reshaped the configuration of power in different countries' representative institutions. This outcome raises an important theoretical question, already posed in the introductory chapter. Specifically, was institutional engineering insufficient to contain a crisis of representation that had its origins in other non-institutional causes? Or, did reforms of electoral systems accelerate the weakening of traditional parties? In other words, were the reforms unable to counteract the social and economic sources of the crisis, or were institutional changes part of the parties' deterioration processes? The answer that I offer here follows the central argument of this dissertation, which I summarized in chapter one and will develop in more detail in the next chapter. Anticipating, I argue that electoral reforms were beneficial for some of the parties that introduced them but harmful to others. Because parties' internal structures differ from one another, the effects of electoral rules are also distinct. In particular, parties' internal structure and their levels of internal democracy condition the responses that leaders implement when

institutional changes take place. Parties that have hierarchical structures, where central leaders concentrate the party's power are less likely to respond successfully to institutional reforms, simply because these parties do not have the capacity to respond rapidly to the changes and adapt to the new context. On the contrary, parties that are horizontal in their structure, where power is decentralized, and more leaders have opportunities to respond to the changing context are more likely to respond favorably to reforms. This idea will become clearer in the next chapter.

In addition, I argue that the type of reforms (e.g., to open or to close the system) benefit parties that have certain internal conditions but not others. In particular, reforms directed toward opening political systems are more beneficial when parties have less hierarchical structures than when they have centralized structures. Horizontal organizations have a wider spectrum of possibilities to respond to change. Hierarchical parties have more difficulties when these types of reforms are implemented because they do not have organizational structures at levels different from the central one. On the contrary, reforms to close the system are harmful for parties that have decentralized structures but they are helpful for parties with hierarchical structures. These hypotheses are tested empirically in the sixth chapter.

2.3 CONCLUSION

The hypotheses presented in this chapter are directed toward validating previous explanations for electoral declines of traditional political parties in industrialized democracies and developing countries. However, following the idea that I introduced in Chapter one about the importance that the internal organization of parties might have, the explanations presented in this chapter are not enough to account for this phenomenon. As I showed earlier, traditional parties suffered

electoral losses but at different levels and rates. These differences and the consideration of parties' internal features are not included in existent studies on the performance of these organizations over time. In the following chapter I deal with these shortcomings and I explain why and how conventional explanations will be analyzed in the presence of parties that differ in their internal characteristics. These factors might be determinants of parties' electoral performance, or might condition their responses to challenging contexts.

3.0 THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF LATIN AMERICAN PARTIES

By the mid 2000s many Latin American parties that were dominant during the previous two decades had ceded power to non-traditional parties and to ‘anti-establishment’ leaders. In Venezuela, Democratic Action (AD) and the Social Christian Party (COPEI) collapsed soon after the candidate from the ‘Movimiento V República’ won the 1998 presidential election. In Bolivia, the Movement for Socialism (MAS) defeated the traditional parties in the 2005 presidential elections. In that year’s legislative elections, only one of the three traditional parties participated – the National Revolutionary Party (MNR) – and the share of votes that it obtained was very low (5.6%). In Colombia, the Liberal Party (PL) and the Conservative Party (PC) obtained the lowest share of votes ever in the legislative elections in 2002. In the same year’s presidential election, they were defeated by a candidate from a new party ‘Primero Colombia’. In Paraguay, more than five decades of Colorado Party (PC) dominance were challenged in the 2003 legislative election when the party lost a third of the votes. In the 2008 presidential election, a the candidate from the Patriotic Alliance for Change (APC) won the contest. Similarly, the powerful and seemingly unshakable Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico lost its congressional majority in Congress in 1997 and the presidential election in 2000. In other countries, like Argentina and Uruguay, traditional parties are still the major agents of political representation, but as in other cases, most of them have witnessed a decrease of power in recent elections. Despite this evidence, and even though some journalists and political analysts claim that the decadence of

traditional parties is a generalized regional trend, Figure 1.1 in Chapter one revealed that not all parties have suffered to the same extent. In contexts of economic, political and social turmoil, different parties react in different ways. Some suffer significant electoral losses, but others are able to respond effectively and survive. What explains dissimilar outcomes under similar contexts?

The argument that I develop in this chapter is that a party's internal organization is a strong determinant of its own electoral performance. The structure of relations between different levels within the organization –e.g., between the national leadership and local leaders, or party's militants - and the way in which power is distributed within the party affect the dynamics of parties and their capacity to respond to environmental challenges. The next section discusses the literature that deals with internal organization of political parties and identifies some dimensions that affect their capacity to adapt to changing environments. The second section develops the central argument of this dissertation in more detail and introduces the main hypotheses that guide the rest of this work. The third section explains the operationalization of parties' internal traits and classifies Latin American traditional parties according to those internal characteristics. The final section concludes.

3.1 ORGANIZATION OF PARTIES AND THEIR ADAPTIVE CAPACITY³⁴

The study of parties and party systems constitutes one of the largest and most active subfields within comparative politics. We know a great deal about parties and voters, about parties and their relationships to governments, and about parties and other competitors in democratic regimes. However, empirically grounded research on parties as organizations is much more limited. In Western European countries and the US works on this topic began after the second half of the 20th Century (Gunther, Montero, and Linz 2002; Gunther and Diamond 2003; Katz and Mair 1992; Katz and Mair 1994; Panebianco 1988). Much of classic theoretical groundwork for the modern study of parties focuses on the role of parties as organizations (Duverger 1954; Michels 1959; Ostrogorski 1964). However, systematic comparative analyses were absent until the early 1990s (for exception, see Janda 1980). Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair's work, published in 1992, was the first effort to accumulate empirical data about the organization of parties in industrialized democracies. Their research opened the doors for the development of comparative studies in the subfield (Lawson 1994). As interest in the organization of parties has grown, questions of parties' adaptation and change have revived. Studies started to explore how contextual conditions impact the behavior and the performance of parties (Harmel and Janda 1982; Katz and Mair 1992; Panebianco 1988), and how parties' organizational structures affect their adaptive capacities (Kitschelt 1994; Koelble 1991). In general, these works suggest that *leadership autonomy* from the party's rules and procedures help leaders adopt strategic

³⁴ Parts of this chapter were published in: Wills-Otero, Laura. 2009. "From Party Systems to Party Organizations: The Adaptation of Latin American Parties to Changing Environments", *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 1 (1), pp. 123-142.

decisions. In addition, *leadership renovation* is instrumental for adopting changes that old-guard leaders are unable to undertake. And finally, strong *party rootedness in society* enables leaders to find popular support even when they make unexpected strategic decisions..

In developing countries - particularly in Latin America – knowledge about the internal organization of parties is scarce, although increasing in recent years. New academic works have started to differentiate parties within systems by understanding their organizational structure, their internal dynamics, their programmatic agendas, ideological orientations, their recruitment mechanisms, the ways in which they interact with their constituencies, and the strategies they use to attract voters. The accumulation of research has improved the quantity and quality of information about parties and party systems in the region. A number of studies has attempted to do systematic comparisons among parties and countries, thus increasing opportunities to postulate testable hypotheses and advance broad theoretical arguments (e.g., Alcántara Sáez and Freidenberg 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Carey and Polga-Hecimovich 2006). Scholars borrowed methodological strategies applied in the study of parties in advanced democracies, and started to identify and operationalize features of the organizations in the region (Alcántara Sáez 2004a; 2008; Alcántara Sáez and Freidenberg 2003b; Ramos Jiménez 2001). Other scholars have relied on case studies to explain party behavior and their capacity to adapt to opportunities and constraints posed by changing conditions in particular contexts (Burgess 1999; Burgess and Levitsky 2003; Greene 2007; Langston 2006; Levitsky 2003). These studies have been useful for a better understanding about the origins, organization and trajectories of parties that have played important roles in their countries' political processes. Finally, a novel line of research in the region has begun to examine the behavior of party members, assuming that they are crucial actors in determining the way in which the parties behave and respond to the changing national

conditions (e.g. Alcántara Sáez 2008; García Díez and Mateos-Díaz 2008). Thus, the internal working of political parties intrigued experts of Latin American politics, who began to pay more attention to parties as units of analysis in their studies since the early 2000s.

Beyond their different approaches, ranging from micro-analysis to case studies, to comparative political studies, these works share a concern with the internal characteristics of political parties and the effect that these features have on the policy-making processes and on their own electoral performance. For example, a case study on the Argentine Peronist Party suggests that non-institutionalized party structures explain to a large extent that party's successful responses to the environment (Levitsky 2003). Another case study on the Mexican traditional parties shows that intraparty conflicts among opposing sectors account for parties' electoral failures, and for their incapacity to adapt to changing contextual conditions (Greene 2007). Similarly, other works underline the decisive role that politicians play in determining the internal dynamic of organizations to which they belong (Alcántara 2008). I discuss these works in more depth below.

Different works propose moving beyond a conceptual framework phrased in terms of presence or absence of certain characteristics at the systemic level to research on the internal organization, internal working and institutionalization of individual political parties. Focusing attention on parties as units of analysis allows researchers to understand better how parties adapt to new contextual situations and why some succeed while others fail. However, despite the common interests that these works share, no agreement exists yet on which concrete characteristics affect their performance. Distinct party dimensions are considered in different works, and no general theoretical arguments have been proposed until now. For example, while in some cases it is argued that a *party's level of institutionalization* is the principal characteristic

that shapes its responses to changes (Burgess and Levitsky 2003; Levitsky 2003), other studies state that it is the *availability of resources* and *intra-party relations* that explain the capacity to adapt (Greene 2007), or the *ideological and programmatic dimensions* of parties (Alcántara Sáez 2008; Freidenberg, Díez, and Valduvieto 2008; Ruiz Rodríguez 2008). This controversy might be explained by the different –and limited - samples of parties that scholars have studied until now, and by the environmental conditions that they consider more frequently, namely, the economic context. A broader sample of parties and the analysis of other shocks – for example, institutional reforms – can help to clarify which internal characteristics explain their adaptive capacity to different circumstances.

Regardless of the alternative and sometimes contradictory dimensions that different authors underline as key explanatory variables, some agreement exists on the fact that when environmental conditions challenge the performance of parties, those with more flexible structures are more likely to survive. On the contrary, parties that rely on rigid structures have more difficulties in reacting to new conditions. Notwithstanding this agreement, it is not clear what the different scholars mean by flexible or rigid parties, and how this influences their behavior. Are flexible parties those that change their internal rules frequently? Or, are they flexible because their levels of leadership renovation are high? Are rigid parties those that restrict their actions to the existent formal rules? Or are they rigid because their organizations are highly bureaucratized? Answers to these questions are ambivalent and controversial in the literature. Neither is it clear how rigid or flexible parties affect their internal dynamics and electoral performance. How and why are flexible parties more successful than rigid parties? Do these parties always succeed? These questions are discussed in the following sections.

In the next subsections, I discuss dimensions that different authors have identified as relevant to disentangle the relationship between parties' organizational characteristics and their capacity to adapt to changing environments. Following that review, the argument of this dissertation will be developed.

3.1.1 Institutionalization and Internal Structure of Parties

Asking why some Latin American labor-based parties were able to adapt to neoliberal reforms while others failed, Levitsky (2003) studies the Argentine Peronist Party, (or Justicialist) Party (PJ), and places it in comparative perspective. He argues that a party's capacity to adapt to a new context is influenced by its degree of institutionalization. In a challenging context, some parties are successful adapting their structures and/or strategies while others fail to do so. When parties succeed they survive electorally; when they fail their share of votes decreases substantially and eventually they disappear from the electoral arena. The question that Levitsky addresses is related to the extent to which a party's level of institutionalization is associated with its likelihood to survive changing socioeconomic conditions. The answer is that parties with lower levels of institutionalization are more able to adapt and survive in a context of economic crisis or change, than well-institutionalized party structures. What exactly Levitsky means by a party's level of institutionalization is not very clear. Institutionalization is related to a party's internal routinization. This is understood as a "state in which the rules and procedures within an organization [either formal or informal] are widely known, accepted, and complied with" (18). Whereas highly routinized rules are internalized and actors take them for granted, a weakly routinized set of rules "is a state in which rules and procedures are fluid, contested and routinely circumvented or ignored". The argument is that parties that display flexible structures, are lowly

routinized or lowly insitutionalized parties that have a greater opportunity for adaptation in contexts of crisis or environmental change than highly routinized parties because party leaders have a “greater room to maneuver as they search for and carry out adaptive strategies” (19).

Following this argument, the capacity of a party to respond to a crisis is associated with 1) its ability to remove old-guard leaders reluctant to introduce reforms; 2) the extent to which leaders can act without constraining their actions to strict rules and procedures and to a hierarchy that establishes a vertical decision-making process; and 3) the extent to which the party’s structure can be reformed to respond to changing contexts. If party rules define strict mechanisms of recruitment, career paths and rigorous procedures to introduce modifications or reforms, and at the same time the rules are highly routinized or institutionalized, the likelihood for that party to adapt successfully to a new context is low. In contrast, in the absence of strict recruitment filters and bureaucratic career paths, the renovation of leaders occurs at a faster pace. Leadership renovation facilitates programmatic adaptation and change. Similarly, when a party lacks established bureaucratic routines and mechanisms of accountability, leaders at the base and at the elite levels enjoy sufficient autonomy to carry out adaptive strategies. These conditions and the low routinization of key aspects of the party facilitate internal modifications when necessary.³⁵

In Latin America, mass-labor parties were affected by the neoliberal reforms that were introduced in the late 1980s and 1990s. The programs and policies that these parties promoted were discredited, and changes in the class structure “eroded the coalitional foundations of labor-based parties” (1). According to Levitsky, those parties that combined societal rootedness and weak bureaucratic structures were more adaptable than those that had more highly

³⁵ These modifications imply the redefinition of the party’s programs and the targeting of new electoral constituencies.

bureaucratized structures. The PJ in Argentina and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico are two examples of the former category. The American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) in Peru also qualifies, but in contrast to the other two parties, it failed to adapt to the new conditions, in part because it had a more highly structured and disciplined organization.³⁶ Among those that were able to survive, the PJ was more successful than the PRI: while the former maintained stable electoral bases in the 1980s and 1990s (40.7 and 39.2 percent of votes in legislative elections, respectively), the latter suffered a moderate electoral decline (from 61.1 percent in the 1980s to 49.5 percent of votes in the 1990s). Despite this, the PRI was relatively successful in adapting to a multitude of challenges. These parties' capacity for adaptation was made possible through their control of the presidency and their highly centralized leadership.³⁷ The party leader, which was the country's president in Argentina and Mexico, enjoyed a substantial degree of discretion to decide intraparty rules, select party leaders, and impose candidates. Moreover the parties had high levels of leadership turnover given the fact that they possessed non-bureaucratic hierarchies.

On the other hand, highly routinized parties have more difficulty in implementing strategic changes and as a consequence they suffer steep electoral declines. Democratic Action (AD) in Venezuela is a clear example. During the 1990s this party declined electorally. It became marginal after losing more than fifty percent of the vote in legislative elections from the 1980s (46.7 percent) to the 1990s (22.7 percent). Following the argument developed by Levitsky, this failure is explained by the party's high level of institutionalization. AD relied on a

³⁶ Though the party had a potential capacity for adaptation given the fact that it had a centralized and personalistic leadership with a substantial degree of discretion the leaders in the party made the wrong decisions (Levitsky 2003). The party suffered a steep electoral decline in 1990 when Alberto Fujimori won the presidential elections. Only in 2006 when Alan García returned to the presidency was the party able to recover some power.

³⁷ Following Levitsky, the role that party leaders play when they also control the presidency is important. In times of failure the party survives in a decentralized way until one candidate regains the presidency and centralizes decision-making.

highly routinized structure that had bureaucratized hierarchies and an entrenched oligarchic leadership (Coppedge 1997).

Although Levitsky offers an interesting argument about a party's ability to adapt its structures and organizations to challenging external conditions, the relationship between institutionalization and what he calls 'flexibility' is ambiguous. He states that highly institutionalized parties are those that have established rules and procedures that are deeply embedded and difficult to modify. As such, these parties are inflexible. A flaw in this idea is that parties that are highly institutionalized might have internal 'routinized' rules that allow them to be flexible. For example, rules might define horizontal structures rather than bureaucratized vertical hierarchies. Or rules can provide leaders with discretionary power to act and decide how to proceed. Another possibility is that in a highly institutionalized party, leaders do not necessarily have to follow a strict career path to become influential figures within the party. An example of this characteristic would be the case of traditional Colombian parties, the Liberal Party (PL) and the Conservative Party (PC). These parties also confronted economic and institutional challenges in the 1990s and they survived despite being institutionalized. In sum, parties might be highly institutionalized but at the same time flexible, as permitted by their rules. In fact, some Latin American traditional parties that were institutionalized as defined by Levitsky (2003) were able to maintain their levels of electoral support during times of deep structural reforms without altering their internal rules and structures. Rather than preventing these parties' leaders from adopting strategies to respond to the changing conditions, the rules might have established arrangements that facilitate adaptation. Keeping the institutional rules stable does not necessarily imply not modifying strategies of action. For example, party leaders might decide to redefine relations with members and target new electoral constituencies without

altering the party's organizational features. Indeed, parties that are widely recognized by the population and show certain degrees of stability in their organizations and rules might be more likely to maintain their bases of support than parties that alter their structures frequently. In the latter scenario, major or frequent rule and structural changes may create uncertainty for voters and, as a consequence, a party's electoral performance may be negatively affected. Finally, it is more efficient for parties to use existing structures rather than create new ones. In sum, it is not merely weakly institutionalized parties that are able to adapt their structures and/or strategies to a changing environment. Parties that are highly institutionalized can also be successful making adjustments to confront challenging conditions. Similarly, weakly institutionalized parties are not always successful at responding to a challenging context. In many cases, parties that lack clear regulations or weak structures have major difficulties obtaining votes. This happens in both normal and critical times. An example of this latter scenario is the case of Colombia where a multitude of parties and political movements emerged after the promulgation of a new constitution in 1991. Many of these parties obtained political representation in the legislature. However, most of these gains were insignificant— many obtained no more than one seat in the Congress - and their capacity to survive more than one election was low. One explanation for this is the lack of clear regulations within the parties, and their incapacity to form strong organizations that provide them with a mechanism to respond to the environmental demands, such as the new institutional setting defined in the constitution (Ungar Bleier and Arévalo 2004).

Summing up, both highly and weakly institutionalized parties might be able to adapt to changing conditions or fail to do so. This fact weakens the hypothesis that the degree of institutionalization is what determines adaptability. Institutionalization is a multidimensional concept, and as such it is complex. Disaggregating it into its constituent parts might be

advantageous, because not all its components affect the internal dynamic of a political party the same way and to the same extent.³⁸ What is clear from the discussion above is that leaders are instrumental for their party's survival and, as such, they play a key role. Successful adaptation of the PJ indicates that the role of its central leader was an important factor, in particular when he controlled the presidency. His decisive role was shaped by the loosened party's structure that allowed him to make unconventional (and sometimes unpopular) decisions. The dimensions that Levitsky considers in his analysis about party adaptation – leadership renovation, leadership autonomy, and structural pliability - are certainly important to understand why some parties succeed while others fail. However, other factors related to the internal organization of parties can also be influential in their capacity to respond to challenges. In the following subsections I discuss other works that offer alternative explanations to account for party adaptation to changing environments.

3.1.2 Intraparty Conflict and Ideological Adaptation

Other studies that deal with a party's' adaptation capacity in changing environments ask whether material resources, intraparty coordination, and a party's ideological stance have some effect. For example, Greene (2007) analyzes the PRI dominance in Mexico and its decline after 1997, when it lost its legislative majority for the first time. He explains what accounts for the incapacity of other parties to challenge the PRI until 2000 when the National Action Party (PAN) won the presidential elections. He also explains the forces that led to PAN's victory after being in the opposition for many decades. The main argument presented is that the PRI was able

³⁸ Some scholars like Janda (1980) and Panebianco (1988) include the party's age, its electoral legislative and leadership competition as dimensions that constitute the concept of institutionalization.

to win elections during six decades without being challenged by the opposition parties because it enjoyed dramatic resource advantages, and because it was able to raise the costs of participation for the opposition. The impossibility for PAN and the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) to challenge the dominant party is explained not only by their lack of equivalent resources but also because they were non-unified actors who were ideologically polarized on economic policy. These two features prevented these parties from coordinating their actions against the PRI for a long time. Like Levitsky, Greene analyzes turbulent times to explain how different parties respond to challenging conditions and why some are more successful than others. However, Greene differs in how he approaches the phenomenon, stating that the PRI failed after the government introduced reforms –namely privatization - that deprived the party of resources that traditionally facilitated buying voters’ loyalty.³⁹

Though the PRI remained competitive in federal elections, its electoral decrease in the 1998 legislative elections and later defeat in the 2000 presidential contest, reveal the party’s incapacity to maintain its status as the dominant party. Parallel to the explanation about the defeat of the PRI, Greene accounts for opposition parties’ growth and the eventual PAN victory. After being minor parties since their emergence, these parties were able to respond successfully to the economic crisis that led PRI to its downfall. For this outcome to happen, PAN and the PRD had to adapt some aspects of their internal dynamic.

Within both PAN and PRD, distinct and opposite preferences among their members produced internal coordination problems that raised limits to those parties’ success. The parties were non-unified actors. Intraparty conflicts contributed to the parties’ incapacity to adopt

³⁹ Beginning in 1982, the federal government confronted an economic crisis that caused “declining real wages, increasing poverty, and faltering growth”. The government’s response to this situation was similar to other governments in the region that also confronted economic crisis in that decade: the introduction of market-oriented reforms that “included downsizing the public bureaucracy and selling off state-owned enterprises” (173).

strategies that allowed them to grow into powerful and influential actors.⁴⁰ Furthermore, ideological polarization and restricted recruitment of candidates and activists were additional factors that explained why these parties were unable to coordinate efforts against the PRI. While the PAN was a right-wing party that appealed to upper- and middle-class constituencies, the PRD was a left-wing party that drew support principally from the urban poor. Only those that identified ideologically with one or the other party were allowed to join the organization. Specifically, PAN's formal rules were designed to preserve the party's ideological principles. The rules restrained membership growth, and restricted the party's flexibility to respond successfully to changing conditions. The PRD was more formally open, but "recruitment was *de facto* regulated by factions comprising partisan groups, social movements, and nongovernmental organization (....) Factions operated as filters to ensure that only recruits who were known to share the party's ideological line played a role in local leadership and party conventions" (Greene 2007: 190). According to Greene, this dynamic of individual-level recruitment created rigid "party organizations that are slow to innovate in the face of new opportunities" (Greene 2007:175). These parties were able to challenge the PRI only after they reached an internal consensus on programmatic issues, and the parties' leaders autonomously decided to open their organizations, target new electoral constituencies, and adopt more centrist positions. In fact, PAN's presidential victory in the 2000 elections was only possible after the party moved beyond its traditional core constituency and targeted traditional and new constituencies.

The ideological polarization -that according to Greene made the opposition parties rigid- is similar to Levitsky's argument that it is the party's non-flexibility or high degree of

⁴⁰ While earlier joiners preferred closed organizations that functioned as "tight-knit clubs with deep links to constituencies", later joiners "wanted to open their parties to the broader society" and transform the tight-knit clubs into catch-all parties (179).

routinization (institutionalization) that explains its failure in electoral contests. However, that argument falls short in explaining the eventual success of parties that remained in the opposition for a long period of time. Among other reasons, this is because their rules were highly institutionalized. As noted earlier, PAN, a party with entrenched formal rules, defeated the PRI and the PRD in the 2000 presidential election. This case shows that a party that was internally rigid and traditionally institutionalized was able to modify strategies and challenge an ‘unbeatable’ party. This example challenges the argument that states that only flexible parties are able to survive difficult situations. Both flexible and rigid parties, as well as institutionalized and non-institutionalized parties, may find opportunities to be successful. However, these conditions (degree of institutionalization and degree of flexibility) might also be a cause of failure, particularly in contexts of environmental changes.

In explaining opposition parties’ successes – in this case the ‘rigid’ PAN-, the role that party leaders play is important. Vicente Fox, a new leader within the PAN with the capacity to make autonomous decisions transformed a highly restrictive minor party into an open organization with the capacity to appeal to diverse groups of voters, recruit activists with heterogeneous backgrounds, and exhibit centrist political positions. This fact supports the idea that the role of leaders is decisive for a party in order to adapt to new conditions. When party leaders are relatively autonomous within the organization, they have ‘room for maneuver’. The capacity of party leaders to influence the party’s internal dynamic also is shaped by leadership composition. When old-guard leaders are removed from the party, or at least when they are open to negotiations, new generations of reformers might enter the party and implement strategic decisions that adapt the organization to a new context. Finally, the idea that ideological relaxation explains to a large extent the ability of both the PAN and PRD to thrive while the PRI

was losing resources, adds a new dimension that appears to be important in the understanding of party's adaptation strategies. The next subsection discusses this idea.

3.1.3 Ideological and Programmatic Coherence

Additional studies on the adaptability of political parties consider a party's ideology as an important variable to analyze its electoral and policy performance. While some scholars state that ideological coherence helps a party to be consistent in its behavior (Alcántara 2008; Green 2007), others suggest that those parties that are more heterogeneous in their ideological stances are more likely to occupy power positions than parties that are more homogenous (Freidenberg, García Díez, and Llamazares Valduvicio 2008). Homogenous parties often are in the opposition because they do not appeal to the median voters, but to voters with extremist ideological positions. This idea suggests that in order to perform better electorally parties should appeal to a diversity of constituencies rather than concentrate their efforts on those voters that concur with the party's ideology. When parties that are extremist in their positions relax their stances, the probability of increasing their electoral capacity is higher. Thus, an adaptation strategy that parties incorporate when the environmental conditions change is an attenuation of their ideological positions. "Non-dogmatic" stances help parties attract more voters.

Another dimension that scholars consider analyzing parties' internal organization and behavior relates to their programmatic coherence, which is defined as "the degree of agreement that gives rise to the articulation of concrete proposals within parties." (Ruiz Rodríguez 2008: 170). When a party's members agree in their positions about issues, the party will be internally unified and as such, it will be effective in performing its functions. On the contrary, non-coherent parties are fragmented or factionalized and ineffective, unless there is some mechanism

for enforcing party discipline. Ruiz Rodríguez shows that Latin American parties vary in the degree of their internal programmatic coherence. According to her empirical analysis, some parties such as the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), the Broad Front (FA) in Uruguay, and the Radical Civic Union (UCR) in Argentina are highly coherent, while others like the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) in El Salvador, the National Advancement Party (PAN) and the Guatemala Republican Front (FRG) and the PJ in Argentina are highly incoherent. Other parties in the region have intermediate levels of coherence. Some argue that less coherent parties are more flexible and more able to accommodate their programs to changing conditions. However, it also might occur that “a high degree of incoherence can be just as damaging as an excessive amount of coherence” (Ruiz Rodríguez 2008). The degree of a party’s coherence affects it differently depending on which aspect of the party is observed. For example, “a great degree of coherence will help a party to be more efficient in its parliamentary function. In the electoral sphere, however, there is evidence to support the idea that the most incoherent, ‘catch-all’ parties tend to be the most successful in the Latin American region.” (Ruiz Rodríguez 2008: 186).

Empirical evidence on electoral results shows that this argument is controversial. While the coherent PRD in Dominican Republic and the UCR in Argentina have decreased systematically their share of votes since the mid- to the late-1990s, the also coherent FA in Uruguay defeated the traditional majority parties in the 2005 presidential election. Similarly, while the incoherent PJ in Argentina and ARENA in El Salvador were able to maintain their share of votes in legislative and general elections during the 1990s and the first years of the 2000s, the also incoherent Guatemalan PAN and FRG decreased significantly their share of votes since the late 1990s. These inconsistent outcomes challenge the hypothesis that the degree

of internal coherence affects the performance of parties. Though this might be true, the direction of the relationship is unclear. Thus, the dimension of programmatic coherence seems to be less relevant to understanding parties' adaptation strategies in challenging contexts than others, like leadership renovation and autonomy.

Although different studies on the internal structure of Latin American parties shed light on factors that shape their dynamics and affect their performance, cases that have been studied are not only scant but they have been most commonly analyzed in isolation from other parties. Case studies are useful to understand specific dynamics and factors that affect a party's functioning. As has been shown, the Argentine PJ's low levels of institutionalization explain its successful adaptation to the profound socioeconomic crises of the 1980s and 1990s. In Mexico, ideological conflicts within the PRD and PAN account for the impossibility of their challenging the powerful PRI during a long period before 1997. In other cases, highly bureaucratized parties failed to respond to challenges and consequently were defeated (AD and COPEI in Venezuela; APRA in Peru). Although these interpretations might be accurate in case specific explanations, we do not know if factors that explain the performance of a particular party also predict other parties' performance. For this reason, it is necessary to analyze a broader sample of parties. As stated clearly in the introduction, most traditional parties in Latin America suffered electoral defeats when they confronted economic and political challenges in the 1980s and 1990s. However, some parties suffered more than others and in some cases traditional parties were able to maintain their levels of electoral support or increase them. The diverse outcomes will be analyzed in the context of different contextual challenges, for example, socioeconomic crises, institutional reforms, political scandals. Parties react differently to diverse challenges. However, certain internal features might limit the possibilities in the manner they respond. What are those

characteristics that shape parties responses and affect their performance? In the next section a tentative answer to this question is offered.

3.2 AN ALTERNATIVE ARGUMENT

Latin American traditional parties confronted a diversity of environmental challenges during the 1980s and 1990s. While some responded appropriately and retained their share of power, others failed to do that and were electorally weakened and, in some cases, disappeared from the political landscape. As recent studies have shown, the internal structure of parties mediates their responses to these challenges. The present study adopts that organizational approach to analyze parties' electoral performance. It argues that a party's structure, internal relations and dynamics influence the strategies and behavior that the leaders within the organization adopt. Variation on these dimensions across parties may have important implications for their performance. The following subsection develops this idea.

3.2.1 The Internal Organization of Parties

In order to exist and become agents of political representation, parties require an internal organization. An organization provides them with infrastructure to perform different tasks. It also defines a structure of relations among the members that integrate them. Different types of organizations define different types of parties. For example, parties might be constantly active and develop various tasks, or they can be active only during electoral periods. In the former case, parties are vote-seekers, policy-seekers and office-seekers, while in the latter they are only vote

and office-seekers. The structure of relations also differs across parties, as defined by the way in which power is distributed or the extent to which leaders exercise influence over their bases. Power can be concentrated in a single individual, in a group of leaders, or it can be distributed among several leaders. Also the organization might be structured into a few or many levels. Some parties have a central or national level from where all the decisions are taken. Others have different levels (national, regional/departmental or local) each of which exercises power in the party's decision-making processes. Concentration or distribution of power and the number of levels define a party's organization as vertical (concentration) or as horizontal (distribution). Parties that are vertical or hierarchical are highly centralized. On the contrary, horizontal parties are decentralized. Another characteristic that defines the internal dynamic of a party is its degree of internal democracy. On one extreme, parties can be highly democratic or they can be non-democratic at the other extreme. This feature influences relations among leaders, bases of support and members, as well as decision-making processes, as will be explained below.

Although most traditional parties in Latin America were conceived as having hierarchical structures, they vary in their internal organizations. Parties have structures that are semi-hierarchical, horizontal, semi-horizontal or mixed. Similarly, parties vary in their degree of internal democracy from low to high levels. Over time, these parties have maintained their original internal characteristics basically unaltered. Party adaptation to environmental changes has not involved the transformation of structures. Rather, contextual challenges have prompted changes in party *strategies*. Given the stability of Latin American traditional parties' internal features, they are observed at the beginning of the democratic period, when the Third Wave of

Democratization began in the late 1970s. These initial conditions that do not change much are expected to set the trajectory of parties (Thelen 1999, 2004).⁴¹

An additional reason to consider party characteristics as time-invariant variables is that systematic and comparative information over time is scant. The absence of information is symptomatic of no or few modifications of party's internal organizations. Some individual cases confirm this suspicion; the PL and the PC in Colombia; AD and COPEI in Venezuela, the PRI, the PAN, and the PRD in Mexico; AP in Peru; the PRD, the PLD and the PRSC in Dominican Republic. Case studies of these parties show that parties' internal structures have suffered few modifications (if any) over time. These few changes – and others that might have occurred – do not matter much. As I stated above the initial conditions set the party's future trajectory, because the structure and public reputation of parties cannot be transformed in a short period. The next two subsections explain how a party's internal structure and its level of internal democracy have affected its electoral performance over time.

3.2.1.1 The Internal Structure

It was already argued that the internal structure of parties has an important effect on their electoral performance and on their capacity to adapt. Two types of parties have been distinguished according to this characteristic: hierarchical (or vertical) and horizontal parties. The main distinguishing factor in this classification is the extent to which power is concentrated, and the ways in which relations among the party's members are structured. In one extreme power can be highly concentrated in the hands of a single individual or in a small group of leaders. On

⁴¹ This idea follows path dependency theory that claims that history matters because “formations put in place in the early stages of an institutional or policy life effectively come to constrain activity after that point” (Peters 2001; Skocpol 1992).

the other extreme it can be distributed widely among many leaders. Intermediate levels of power concentration are found in parties that have decentralized structures where leaders at sub-national levels accumulate some power, but at the same time, they are supervised by leaders at the central level. When power is concentrated in the hands of one single person or in a small group of leaders, the structure of the party is hierarchical or vertical. In these parties decisions are made at the top of the organization. Leaders at the central level control and supervise the operation of the party inside their different organs in their different levels. Power concentration in the hands of one or few leaders harms traditional parties (particularly in times of crises) because only the leaders at the central level are entitled to run the party, decide on its strategies and implement them. When these leaders do not take the right decisions, the party as an organization suffers electoral declines. In hierarchical parties, party members at other levels (sub-national levels) are constrained by the central leaders' decisions. Although common wisdom states that centralized organizations are more effective than decentralized ones in making fast decisions, the impossibility of sub-national leaders to respond to their constituency directly ends up harming the entire organization. Disappointed voters that do not find answers to their demands withdraw their support to the organizations. In addition, when the performance of the party is poor and leaders remain the same, the probability that voters withdraw their support from the organization increases because they do not find new leaders (different from traditional politicians) for whom to vote. Lack of political alternatives (new leaders) leads the electorate to vote for another party, if any.

On the other hand, horizontal parties are those in which power is decentralized among many persons at different levels – national, regional and local. Although a central leadership might exist in these parties, leaders at other organizational levels also have power to make

autonomous decisions. Leaders at the regional or local level respond to their constituencies directly rather than to a central authority or national leader. In this sense, their relations with voters are close and the possibilities of supplying specific or localized demands are high. In addition, decentralized parties are more likely to have a larger supply of leaders than centralized parties (i.e., national, regional and municipal leaders). Thus the possibilities for voters to withdraw their support from a leader that did not perform as expected and extend it to another person within the party are higher than in hierarchical parties where leaders are less numerous.

Parties that are decentralized facilitate formation of factions within themselves. Because many leaders enjoy some power and, at the same time, possess the means of using it (infrastructure), incentives for creating factions within the party are high. As a group of individuals within the party, a faction promotes interests that do not necessarily concur with those of the entire party. Its main purpose is to achieve particular goals that it defends, and advance its agenda and power within the organization. As such, existence of one or more factions can be a source of conflict and of intra-party competition. Faction leaders compete among themselves and among the non-factional leaders of the organization. This can lead to a highly factionalized party that fails to accomplish its major goal of political representation. However, existence of factions might also be beneficial for the party when it confronts challenges. When one faction fails to respond to external demands, another might be more successful. Factions represent channels for representation of a multitude and sometimes contradictory interests and their leaders represent different political choices to voters. When a faction leader performs poorly and loses credibility among the electorate, the existence of alternative faction leaders with the potential to occupy elected positions might be beneficial for the party. Loyal voters might decide to support a candidate from an alternative faction rather than

defect from the party. This dynamic also promotes leadership renovation, which is instrumental in times of crises. New leaders represent novel choices to voters and provide the party with ‘new windows of opportunity’ for survival. On occasion, appearance of powerful leaders that enjoy high approval ratings is enough for the party to adapt to new circumstances, even though adaptation implies radical changes within the organization. On the contrary, old-guard leaders that are reluctant to cede power are blamed when the party performs poorly. The electorate punishes these leaders, and the party becomes a victim of electoral defeats. In vertical or hierarchical parties, concentration of power in one single person or in a reduced or closed group of leaders decreases the voters’ possibilities of finding political alternatives within the organization. In times of crises, when party leaders fail to respond adequately, the likelihood that the electorate withdraws its support for that party is high. In sum, a decentralized or horizontal party structure that distributes power among many leaders at different levels and generates incentives for the creation of factions is more likely to deal appropriately with contextual challenges than parties that concentrate power in one or a few traditional politicians. When strategies that these leaders adopt fail to respond adequately to environmental conditions, voters withdraw their support for the entire organization. Lack of political alternatives (new leaders) leads the electorate to vote for another party, if any.

Similar arguments have been developed in advanced industrialized countries. Studies point to parties internal characteristics that help them (or not) to adapt and survive during periods of environmental crisis. In particular, leadership autonomy, leadership renovation, and party rootedness in society are variables that facilitate the adaptation of parties. Yet, in other contexts (i.e., Latin America) the influence of these variables is more difficult to assess. For example,

although Latin American traditional parties have roots in society,⁴² they are not the European mass-bureaucratic parties that possess “extensive base-level organizations, large activist bases, and relatively stable core electorates” (Levitsky 2003, 13). Party roots in society are far stronger in advanced industrial democracies than in Latin American countries. Stronger party roots produce stable links between the represented and their representatives. In addition, linkages between voters and parties are programmatic and ideological. On the contrary, weak party roots in society produce more instability or electoral volatility. In addition, linkages between voters and politicians are personalistic or/and clientelistic (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006). Most parties in Latin America have these characteristics. Many of them are clientelistic. Other parties are highly personalistic, and deeply influenced by the power of central figures. These distinctions between vertical and horizontal parties have received little attention in the dominant literature on party organization and change, and they seem to be highly relevant in the Latin American context (and probably in other developing countries).

Some centralized or hierarchical parties where one or few persons enjoyed the power to decide a party’s destiny (who has the power, how to govern and what decisions to make) were AD and COPEI in Venezuela;⁴³ the Peruvian APRA⁴⁴ and AP; the Ecuadorian PSC, ID and CFP;⁴⁵ the Chilean UDI and PSC; the Uruguayan PN and PC;⁴⁶ the Paraguayan PC; the Brazilian

⁴² This is one of the characteristics that define these parties as traditional. See chapter one.

⁴³ Carlos Andrés Pérez (AD) and Rafael Caldera (COPEI) were the more visible heads of the parties.

⁴⁴ Alan García has played a central role within the party leadership.

⁴⁵ León Febres Cordero and Jaime Nebot were central leaders in PSC, while Rodrigo Borja was in ID.

⁴⁶ The Uruguayan parties are by definition factional. The electoral system in place since the re-inauguration of elections in the democratic period (Faction List PR System) promotes the creation of internal factions. Despite this, national political leaders within the PC and the PN have been very influential in the party dynamics (more in the PC than in the PN).

PT; the Mexican PRI;⁴⁷ the Costa Rican PLN and PUSC; the FRG in Guatemala;⁴⁸ the PLH and PNH in Honduras;⁴⁹ the FSLN and the PNL in Nicaragua⁵⁰; and the PA in Panamá.⁵¹ These parties, in general, displayed very low levels of leadership renovation. Most of the leaders and politicians are (or were) traditional figures unwilling to cede their power. Less hierarchical parties that display a structure where leaders at regional or local levels enjoyed some power were the PSDB in Brazil, the Chilean PSCh; the PRD and PAN in México (the latter is more decentralized than the former); the DCG and the PAN in Guatemala; the PRD en Panamá and the FA in Uruguay. The most decentralized or horizontal parties were the Chilean PDC; the Argentine PJ and the PL in Colombia.⁵² Some parties with internal factions that influenced their parties' fortunes were the PDC and PSCh in Chile, the three Uruguayan parties (FA, PN and PC), the Colombian PL, the PLH in Honduras; the FSLN in El Salvador, among others.⁵³ In the next section I explain how I operationalize this party dimension.

3.2.1.2 Internal Democracy

The level of internal democracy within a party is another characteristic that affects its dynamic and performance. This refers to the processes by which candidates within a party are chosen for

⁴⁷ This party has a hierarchical structure, but at the same time it has internal factions that are renovated in each electoral period. National leaders exercise power to a great extent. Therefore, this party is classified in this category.

⁴⁸ Efraín Ríos-Montt concentrated all the party's power.

⁴⁹ The leadership in PLH has had factions that limit power to some extent.

⁵⁰ Daniel Ortega (FSLN) has been the central leader since the beginning of the democratic period.

⁵¹ Arnulfo Arias, the party's founder was its leader until his death. His wife, Mireya Moscoso inherited this power.

⁵² Traditionally, the party's laws establish a structure where leaders at the national level concentrate a large amount of power. However, as a consequence of electoral laws that allowed parties to present an unlimited number of lists, the PL decentralized its structure and became highly factionalized (to a lesser extent, the PC adopted the same strategy).

⁵³ The examples provided here are supported by evidence presented in several sources (e.g. Alcántara and Freidenberg 2003; Bejarano; Burgess and Levitsky 2003; Collier 1991) and complemented by experts in each country. I provide a list of these persons below.

public office and the extent to which party members and voters can participate in these processes. Both centralized or hierarchical parties and decentralized or horizontal parties might have or lack processes of internal democracy. In that sense, the degree of centralization and the level of internal democracy are different aspects of a party's organization. One party might rate high on one dimension but low on the other. For example, the Argentine PJ is a decentralized or horizontal party that displays low levels of internal democracy.⁵⁴ Or, the hierarchical AD in Venezuela employed internal democracy to choose its leaders.

One procedure of internal democracy is the use of primaries to elect presidential candidates. Scholars have assessed the impact that this mechanism has on candidates' strength. Empirical tests show that the effects of this procedure vary with the political environment. In particular, while studies in the US indicate that primaries produce weaker candidates than other methods (Atkeson 1998, Kenney and Rice 1987), scholars of Latin American elections show that "primary-selected candidates are stronger than those selected by other procedures" (Carey and Polga-Hecimovich 2006: 530). The main distinguishing factor these scholars identify as an explanatory variable that produce this difference is the type of party system in place. While the US has a two-party system, most Latin American countries have multiparty systems. In the former, weaker candidates emerge from primary elections because only the most committed partisans are more likely to participate in these contests. As a consequence, non-voters in primaries are misrepresented in general elections, and candidates are elected with fewer votes. Another factor that negatively affects the candidates' strength is the internal division that a party suffers when different candidates compete in primary elections. These findings are challenged in Latin American multiparty systems where primaries are tested to produce stronger candidates –

⁵⁴ Internal democracy in the PJ is low. Usually candidates are not elected through democratic elections. .

with broad popular appeal - than other methods. In these countries, primaries are “an electoral asset by providing a stamp of democratic legitimacy.” (Carey and Polga-Hecimovich 2006: 542). When parties display low levels of popular confidence among other reasons because they lack transparent procedures for candidates’ selection – central party leaders determine the nominees -, adoption of democratic procedures helps recover legitimacy. I follow this intuition to develop the idea presented below.

When mechanisms of internal democracy are used, party members and voters can participate in various ways, ranging from a mediated indirect party vote to unrestricted participation. For example, primaries are an open form of participation in which candidates are chosen by party members (closed primaries) or by voters (open primaries). The latter way of choosing candidates is more inclusive than the former. In parties that are internally democratic more people have a direct say in who is selected and, consequently, in how they are represented. As these processes are open, they tend to be more transparent than selection of candidates in parties that lack democratic mechanisms. Moreover, the supply of candidacies is higher in democratic parties than in non-democratic ones. Individual politicians have more incentives to participate in nomination processes when they know that they are likely to receive support from voters. In non-democratic parties, where a closed group of leaders (or the national party leader) decides who will be candidates for future elections, politicians lack incentives to promote their candidacy. They know that either they will be nominated or that they will not. In any case, the decisions about nomination and selection are pre-determined by the central leaders.

These factors influence a party’s electoral performance in different ways. First, the level of internal democracy affects the range of candidates that participate in nomination processes. The more democratic a party is, the larger the number of candidates. More candidates provide

electors more options. If they do not like a particular candidate, they can choose among other alternatives. Second, related to this, parties that are more democratic are more likely to renew their leaders. Renovation is useful, in particular when a party confronts challenges. If incumbent politicians do not perform well, voters can choose new politicians that represent alternative ideas or interests. When a party does not have the capacity to remove those failed leaders, it is more likely that voters defect from it. Processes of internal democracy where candidates compete among themselves encourage leadership mobility. This at the same time stimulates more party members to postulate their candidacies. Third, democratic elections contribute to the election of strong candidates. These processes may be “more effective than elite-driven search processes in identifying candidates with broad popular appeal”. (Carey and Polga-Hecimovich 2006: 534)

Evidence shows that few Latin American traditional parties started the Third Wave of Democratization with internal procedures for selecting their candidates. The Colombian PL realized “quasi primaries” in 1978 to select its presidential candidate. That same year, the PUSC in Costa Rica and AD in Venezuela also held primaries. However, most parties did not possess democratic procedures for selecting their leaders. In these cases, leaders at the central level held total control over nomination decisions. Some began to implement these procedures soon after the first time in which they participated in elections. For example, the PJ and UCR realized primaries in 1988; the Dominican PRD, the PC in Uruguay and ANR-PC in Paraguay did the same in 1982, 1989 and 1993 respectively. Another case is the Chilean “Concertación” which adopted open primaries after 1993 (Zovatto and Freidenberg 2007).⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Processes of internal democracy occur (or not) notwithstanding the rules that define the electoral system. For example, in systems that define closed lists for the election of politicians, party leaders have a lot of power in nomination processes. They name and rank candidates on their lists. This does not imply however, that the party lacks internal elections to choose the candidates that integrate the lists. In systems where the lists are open, individual candidates, more than party leaders, promote their own candidacy. These rules limit the power of the

Following the previous discussion, the argument in this study posits that a party's internal structure and its level of democratization are factors that directly affect the level of electoral success. In particular, when environmental changes take place – institutional and structural reforms – parties that rely on centralized structures and where leadership turnover is low, suffer more than parties that have higher rates of leadership mobility. Also, decentralized or horizontal structures help parties to survive given the enhanced possibilities that electors have to vote for candidates that respond more directly to their demands. Similarly, when parties lack processes of internal democracy, possibilities for replacing old-guard leaders reluctant to modify their behavior is lower than when they have democratic procedures to nominate and elect candidates. As other studies have shown, leadership renovation facilitates programmatic adaptation, in particular when environmental alterations require the adoption of new strategies (Kitschelt 1994; Levitsky 2003; Roberts 1998). Under stable conditions, the internal structure of parties mediates their electoral performance. However, given the fact that it is easier for leaders to know the future context, incentives to adopt internal reforms, renovate leaderships, and modify strategies are less pronounced.

Summing up the previous discussion, this dissertation's argument states that the internal organization of parties mediates their responses to environmental challenges and, more generally, shapes their electoral performance. Specifically, parties with horizontal structures and higher levels of internal democracy are more likely to be electorally adaptable than parties with vertical (or hierarchical) structures and an absence of democratic procedures. This is particularly important when environmental challenges, structural crises, institutional changes, occur.

party's leaders, but this does not imply that party leaders at the central level lack power to influence the selection of candidates.

In the next section, I explain how party variables are operationalized and how different parties in this study are classified.

3.2.2 Operationalization of the Internal Characteristics of Parties

In this section I explain how parties' internal characteristics are operationalized. The two main features that I propose that are theoretically and substantively relevant are party's *internal structure* and its level of *internal democracy*. In addition, I consider two other dimensions that might also influence party's electoral performance: leadership mobility or renovation and party ideology. In the empirical analysis performed in Chapter 5, I introduce these two variables as controls.

Two clarifications are in order. The variables that measure internal structure and internal democracy are ordinal variables rather than dichotomous. That is, each party occupies a position in a scale that ranks between centralized or hierarchical to decentralized or horizontal, and to non-internally democratic to highly democratic (the two characteristics are operationalized in the next section). Second, although hierarchical parties are more likely to have low levels of democratization, while horizontal parties are more likely to have high levels, other scenarios are also possible, though, uncommon. For example, a party with a decentralized or horizontal structure can have relatively low levels of democratization (the Argentine PJ); or a party with a structure that is vertical, might have processes of internal democracy (AD in Venezuela). For this reason, it is more convenient to consider each of these dimensions separately, and state different hypotheses for each of them.

3.2.2.1 Internal Structure

As was already explained, political parties can be classified in terms of the structure of their internal organizations. In this study, that dimension is operationalized as an ordinal variable that has five different values (0-4). The lowest value (0) is for parties that are hierarchical, and the highest (4) for parties that are horizontal in their structure.⁵⁶ In the next paragraphs I explain how this variable is operationalized.

In order to measure a *party's internal structure*, as defined in section 3.2.1.1., I gathered quantitative and qualitative information from both primary and secondary sources. First, I used a series of works developed by a group of researchers at the “Instituto Interuniversitario de Estudios de Iberoamérica y Portugal” at the University of Salamanca in Spain. The studies, coordinated by Manuel Alcántara Sáez, examine the origins, functioning and electoral trajectories of Latin American political parties (Alcántara Sáez 1991-2001; Alcántara Sáez and Freidenberg 2003; Alcántara Sáez 2004b). The three volumes edited in 2003 include historical analyses of fifty six individual parties in countries across the region. Each chapter, written by one expert, corresponds to one party in one country. Each chapter follows a common guideline: each is organized in a similar way and covers the same partisan issues.⁵⁷ This strategy facilitates comparisons across cases, thus contributing to filling an existing gap in the study of Latin American parties. Complementary to this, the study edited in 2004 is the outcome of an ambitious enterprise coordinated from Salamanca and developed between 1999 and 2000 in all Latin American countries. Its main purpose is to contribute to the measurement of various

⁵⁶ The other values are: 1 for semi-hierarchical parties; 2 for parties with a mixed structure and 3 for semi-horizontal parties.

⁵⁷ Each chapter has the following content: 1) Historical review of the party (origin, programmatic agenda; ideological position); 2) The party as a complex organization (electoral trajectories, the party in the presidency, the party in the legislature, the party's bureaucratic organization, the party's membership).

aspects of the region's parties: their organizational characteristics; ideological positions; programmatic agenda, among others. To do this, a survey with more than three hundred structured questions was applied to a representative number of leaders, members and politicians of sixty two parties. More than six hundred individuals answered the survey, and all the responses were systematically coded in a data set. The set of questions about the internal organization or structure were of particular interest for the present study. I analyzed these questions to see how party members classify their organization.⁵⁸ Finally, I used case-by-case historical sources to verify information provided in the above studies, and to design a short survey that experts in different countries answered (see the questionnaire in appendix 1).⁵⁹ Different research approaches and the use of alternative but complementary sources were useful to develop a measure of the internal structure of parties. Various sources revealed that definition of this dimension is not uncontroversial. First, when historical and official documents are analyzed, the former suggest that formal regulations that define the structure of relations within the organizations are not always followed by their members, or do not always reveal the real situation of the parties. For this reason, use of official documents to determine how parties are organized is insufficient. Historical studies and empirical data are necessary to validate that

⁵⁸ The particular questions that were helpful for the operationalization of the variables were the following: 1) The party is a "highly integrated organization, where a strong leadership at the national level governs and controls local activities"; 2) It is an organization "where regional leaders have autonomy to take decisions"; 3) It is an organization that has different leaderships, each of which belongs to alternative intra-party factions; 4) The internal structure of the party privileges vertical relationships (1); less vertical (2); mixed (3); horizontal (4) or very horizontal relationships (5); 5) The internal democracy within the party is very low (1); low (2); intermediate (3); high (4); very high (5).

⁵⁹ I am thankful to the following countries' experts that responded the survey: in Colombia, Felipe Botero and Camilo Castañeda; in Venezuela, Margarita Lopez Maya; in Ecuador, Flavia Freidenberg, Agustin Grijalva and Andres Mejia Acosta; in Peru, Roisida Aguilar; in Argentina, Andres Malamud, Ana Maria Mustapic and Juan Javier Negri; in Uruguay, Fernanda Boidi and Rosario Queirolo; in Paraguay, Diego Abente; in Chile, Ignacio Arana, Alfredo Joinant and Juan Pablo Luna; in Brazil, Denise Pavia, Carlos Pereyra and Lucio Renno; in Panama, Carlos Guevara Mann and Patricia Otero Felipe; in Costa Rica, Ronald Alfaro and Luz Marina Vanegas; in Nicaragua, Salvador Marti; in Honduras, Natalia Ajenjo and Michelle Taylor Robinson; in El Salvador, Patricia Otero Felipe; in Guatemala, Dinorah Azpuru; in Dominican Republic, Leiv Marsteintredet; and in Mexico, Federico Estevez, Juan Antonio Rodriguez Zepeda and Reynaldo Rojo Mendoza.

information. The former help establish how parties were structured when they started to compete in democratic elections once the Third Wave of Democratization began.⁶⁰ The latter help define indicators that measure different dimensions. Empirical and comparative data on this subject are very scant. However, I was able to obtain data that are helpful in creating proxies that measure variables of interests. For example, historical information on all candidates (in all parties) that competed in presidential elections between the late 1970s and 2006 was useful in constructing an indicator about leadership mobility and renovation (Nohlen 1993; Nohlen 2005).⁶¹ Though not ideal, this indicator (control variable) sheds light on a party renovation rates. Below I explain how I constructed this indicator. The second limitation identified when different sources were examined to account for a party internal structure was that the available comparative quantitative data though relevant, is derived largely from politicians' and leaders' opinions. The multiple efforts undertaken at the University of Salamanca use the survey that I already described as the primary data source. Information that these studies accumulate is invaluable and I make use of it. As I mentioned above and will describe below, I analyzed the questions related to the dimensions of interest to me. The problem is that it is highly likely that the answers that parties' members provide are not unbiased. In addition, the survey was designed and applied years after this study begins (in the late 1990s). This is problematic for two reasons. First, some 'traditional parties' are excluded from the sample because they had disappeared or were deeply weakened when the study was developed (e.g. AD and COPEI in Venezuela and AP in Perú). Second, although parties do not change much across time (and when they do, the changes are endogenously

⁶⁰ As I pointed above, this study considers the original conditions of the parties. Measures of internal structure account for the parties' characteristics when they are introduced in this analysis. Each party dimension is constant across time. In Chapter five I explain why these aspects are "level-2" variables.

⁶¹ Historical information on candidates for legislative elections would have been very useful. However, it was impossible to gather it for all the parties and years included in this analysis. I assume that presidential candidates are a good proxy to see parties' leadership mobility. As I will show later, some leaders were candidates several times while some others were candidates just once.

determined as I explained above), answers provided do not necessarily refer to the original conditions of the organizations. To deal with these shortcomings, experts in different countries were consulted. They were asked to assess the internal structure of parties across time. This allowed me to compare historical and recent information and determine where parties are located on the internal structure's scale (from hierarchical to horizontal).⁶² When opinions of the surveyed politicians were consistent with the historical information and the expert analyses, it was easy to determine where to locate a party's structure. However, when differences arose (e.g., when responses of party members were different from those offered by experts and historical information), a rule of thumb was followed: given the fact that experts were asked to answer taking into account the historical development of parties (*how was the party's structure when it started to compete in the late 1970s/early 1980s?*) their responses (validated with historical documents) were decisive defining the location of the party on the mentioned scale. The following table presents descriptive information that summarizes how the forty-eight Latin American traditional parties are classified according to their internal structure.⁶³ From this information, it is possible to conclude that the average Latin American traditional party used to have a hierarchical or semi-hierarchical structure. A single leader or a small group of leaders concentrated the party's power and controlled the decisions from above.

Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics for Parties' Internal Structure (N=286)

Descriptive Statistics	
Mean	.783
St. Deviation	1.01

⁶² Country experts responded to the questionnaire for all the parties in that country (when they said they had the information which was almost always). This was an interesting approach because they had other(s) parties as references for comparison. On some occasions this allowed them to say something like “party X was less hierarchical than party Z”; or “in both parties, leaders are traditional figures that have remained in power for decades”; or, “party Y has (and always has had) a higher level of renovation than party Z”.

⁶³ It is worth to say that the statistical analyses are estimated considering all the election years in which parties have participated (during the period of study). Thus, the total number of observations is calculated multiplying each party for the number of elections in which it competed.

Min. Value	0		
Max. Value	4		
Number of Cases	286		
Frequencies		Percentage	Cumulative
0 Hierarchical	146	51.05	51.05
1 Semi-Hierarchical	89	31.12	82.17
2 Mixed	23	8.04	90.21
3 Semi-Horizontal	23	8.04	98.25
4 Horizontal	5	1.75	100
Total	286	100	

3.2.2.2 Internal Democracy

Parties' internal democracy is measured in two alternative ways. First, it is an ordinal (0-4) variable that has 5 values. Parties that do not have internal democratic procedures are coded 0, and parties with very high levels of internal democracy are coded 4.⁶⁴ The second measure is a dichotomous variable that indicates whether the party had mechanisms of internal democracy when it started to compete in elections once the Third Wave of Democratization began. As I explained above, internal democratic procedures are used to choose candidates within parties that aspire to compete in elections for public office. These procedures include a party's conventions and internal elections. When the former mechanism is used, candidates are elected by a representative assembly. When internal elections take place, they are either closed – only the party's member vote for candidates – or open – all citizens can participate and vote -. This latter procedure is the most democratic of all three. Parties vary in their degree of internal democracy because they have (if any) different procedures to elect their representatives, and because they apply them in one or more elections (presidential; legislative; subnational elections). Those

⁶⁴ The other values are 1 for parties with low levels of internal democracy; 2 for parties with intermediate levels; and 3 for those with high levels of internal democracy.

parties that use open primaries to elect candidates for the different public offices are the more democratic. Parties that lack these kind of mechanisms are non-democratic.

The first measure was created using information accumulated in the studies of Alcántara Sáez and Freidenberg 2003; Alcántara Sáez 2004b; Carey and Polga-Hecimovich 2006; Freidenberg 2006 and Zovatto and Freidenberg 2007, among others. In particular, I used data from the “Proyecto de Partidos Políticos y Gobernabilidad en América Latina, 1991-2001” directed by Manuel Alcántara, where parties’ members are asked to classify their party on a scale that ranges between 1 (‘very low levels of internal democracy’) and 5 (‘very high levels of internal democracy’). I contrasted these responses with the historical and qualitative studies, and if necessary (when discrepancies were found) I asked experts and double checked in formal documents to decide where to rank the party. The second variable was created using information from the work developed by Carey and Polga-Hecimovich (2006), and it was complemented and updated with data provided by Zovatto and Freidenberg (2007). This measure has two problems. First, the data points in the data sets record only ‘formal’ information. In some countries, internal elections to select leaders have taken place despite the fact that they are not established in the law. This is revealed in historical information, and in politicians’ opinions. Second, at the beginning of the period, just a few parties displayed formal processes of internal democracy (13.54%), but this did not necessarily imply that those parties were non democratic. For these reasons, the other measure is considered as well, and both are introduced as alternatives in the empirical analysis. Table 3.2 presents descriptive information for these two variables. Among the forty eight parties included in the sample, none of them is classified as “non-democratic” (0) or as “highly democratic” (4) when the measure is the ordinal variable (0-4). This indicates that all parties did follow (at least once) some type of ‘democratic’ procedure (convention, ‘quasi-

primary'; closed or open primary) to elect their candidates. However, it also reveals that none of the parties chose all of their candidates using these procedures. The study of Carey and Polga-Hecimovich (2006) shows that in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru no democratic procedures have been used to elect candidates within parties. This suggests that the category "non-democratic" has some relevance. When internal elections different from presidential primaries these scholars study are considered, and when party members are asked to classify their organizations on a "democratic scale", all cases classify at least as having "low levels of internal democracy", either because they applied some procedure sometime during the first years in which they participated in democratic elections, or because the party's members classify their organization as such. Most parties have "mixed levels of internal democracy" (62.75%). The dichotomous variable reveals another reality. In that case, most parties classify as "non-democratic" (mean=.135). This variable was coded using information gathered in the study of Carey and Polga-Hecimovich (2006). The authors study internal procedures for electing presidential candidates (primaries) and they use formal documents to determine where these elections have taken place.

Table 3.2. Descriptive statistics for parties' internal democracy

Descriptive Statistics	Internal democracy (ordinal variable)	Internal Democracy (dichotomous variable)	
Mean	2.219	.135	
St. Deviation	.571	.343	
Min. Value	1	0	
Max. Value	3	1	
Number of Cases	247	288	
	N	Percentage	Cumulative
0 Very low levels of democracy	0	0	0
1 Low levels of democracy	19	7.69	7.69
2 Mixed levels of democracy	155	62.75	70.45
3 High levels of democracy	73	29.55	100
4 Very high levels of democracy	0	0	100

3.2.2.3 Leadership Mobility and Renovation

Empirical evidence on leadership mobility indicates that hierarchical parties have lower levels of leaders' renovation. Although information on this variable is precarious, I created two 'proxies' of leadership renovation, using data collected by Nohlen (2005). Assuming that presidential candidates make part of their parties' leadership I observed all the presidential candidates over time (1978-2006), and created a variable called *Effective Number of Candidates (ENC)*, and another variable called *Leadership Renovation*. ENC was created following the same logic as the measure of "Effective Number of Parties" devised by Laakso and Taggepera (1979). This measure (ENP) indicates the degree of fractionalization in the way votes, or seats, are distributed. To calculate ENC, I followed the same formula: $N_{pc} = 1/\sum(C_{pc})^2$, where C_{pc} is the proportion of occasions a candidate was the party's candidate, and p denotes a specific party in a specific country (the index is calculated taking into account the totality of presidential elections in which the party participated). Higher values of this measure indicate a higher number of candidates over time. The lowest value of this measure is 1 (the party's presidential candidate

was the same in all elections) and the highest value is 5.44. Most parties in the sample competed in 5 to 8 presidential elections during the period under consideration. On average, hierarchical parties have 2.93 effective candidates, with a standard deviation of 1.34, while horizontal parties have a mean of 3.28 effective candidates, with a standard deviation of 0.72. These results suggest that leadership mobility is lower in Latin American hierarchical parties.

The other indicator, *Leadership Renovation* was created using the same information. It is calculated as $Rt = \frac{1}{\sum(C)^2 * Ne}$, where N_e is the number of presidential elections that took place over time (1978-2006). The index ranges between 0.21 and 1, where lower values represent lower levels of renovation. When the value is 1 presidential candidates are always 'new'. On average the renovation index for hierarchical parties is 0.62, while for horizontal parties it is 0.72. Some parties that are hierarchical have some renovation levels. This might be a consequence of formal rules, a result of poor performance of incumbent leaders or simply a consequence of generational changes.

3.3 CONCLUSION

Political parties are the major actors of political representation in democracies. They are key actors in the formation and maintenance of governments. However, they can lose their representative capacity and be challenged by disaffected electorates that pursue other alternatives of political involvement. As shown in the first Chapter, Latin American traditional parties followed diverse electoral trajectories since the late 1970s until mid 2000s. While some parties witnessed systematic decrease in their vote share and became marginal actors, others survived

and remained relevant political agents in their countries. This occurred in a regional context where these parties confronted economic, political and social turmoil. In this chapter, I introduced the idea that in order to understand different levels of traditional parties' electoral performance, it is necessary to analyze their internal organization. This influences parties' responses to environmental challenges. In particular, the argument posits that parties that have hierarchical structures where power is concentrated in the hands of few leaders -usually old-guard leaders that are reluctant to modify their strategies and political behavior-, have difficulties reacting to new conditions. On the contrary, horizontal parties that sustain a decentralized power structure and where leaders respond more directly to their constituencies and bases of support - rather than to central or national leaders – are more likely to respond properly to difficult situations. On the other hand, procedures of internal democracy increase the possibilities for parties to recruit new members and confront challenges more effectively. Thus, highly democratized organizations are more likely to survive and adapt than parties that lack procedures for exercising internal democracy. In the former case, larger number of leaders and the possibility that a party's members and voters choose them increase the likelihood for renovation, which is instrumental for confronting difficulties. In times of crises, electors in democratic parties exercise the right to punish incumbents that perform poorly by voting for alternative candidates.

The hypotheses proposed in this and the previous chapter add to prior research by testing the argument that a party's internal conditions necessarily must be considered when structural, contextual and institutional challenges transpire. Similar arguments have been developed in previous studies. In advanced industrial democracies the availability of systematic and comparable information has allowed researchers to do comparative and empirical analyses

(Harmel and Janda 1994; Kitschelt 1994; Koelbe 1991). In Latin America, on the contrary, lack of data has prevented students from advancing questions on this topic. A few case studies have shown that the internal working of parties in fact influences their own performance (Greene 2009; Levitsky 2003). This dissertation advances in the same direction. The next chapter studies the party systems of Colombia and Venezuela and within them the electoral performance of their traditional parties. These cases illustrate how traditional parties progressively lost their electoral share of votes, though at different levels and different rates. The cases also illustrate the general argument presented above. Later, in Chapter five, I present an empirical test in which I analyze the impact of these variables on traditional parties' electoral performance.

4.0 CASE STUDIES: TRADITIONAL PARTIES IN COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA

Traditional parties in Colombia and Venezuela dominated the political arena since the late 1950s when both countries transited from dictatorships to democratic governments. The Liberal (PL) and Conservative (PC) parties in Colombia, and Democratic Action (AD) and the Social Christian Party (COPEI) in Venezuela, signed transition pacts in 1958 and became consolidated as the principal actors that would define both countries' political future. These parties alternated in the presidency and occupied the majority of seats in Congress for several consecutive periods.⁶⁵ However, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, these parties faded, and political outsiders with antiestablishment discourses flourished. In Venezuela, Rafael Caldera from the 'Movimiento Convergencia' won the presidential election in 1993. In Colombia, Alvaro Uribe Vélez from 'Primero Colombia' won in 2002 and defeated the parties that had won every presidential election since the transitions to democratic governance occurred in 1958.⁶⁶ As a consequence of these triumphs and the electoral decline that traditional parties suffered, the party systems in both countries were recomposed.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ It has been argued that elections in Colombia were semi-competitive during the National Front (1958-1974). This was a power sharing pact between the Liberal and the Conservative parties in which they agreed to alternate presidential terms during 16 years (four terms of four years each) and share the bureaucracy in equal parts.

⁶⁶ Rafael Caldera was the founding leader of COPEI. However, in 1993 he decided to withdraw from the party, create "Movimiento Convergencia" and present his candidacy for the presidency as an "outsider". Alvaro Uribe Vélez began his political career in the PL. In 2002 he decided to form a new party to run for the presidency.

⁶⁷ In the mid-1990s Mainwaring and Scully classified the Colombian and Venezuelan party systems as being institutionalized. The share of votes of the component parties was "reasonably stable from one election to the next (...) Parties (had) at least moderately strong roots in society and modestly strong identities. They (were) key

Although all four traditional parties in fact suffered electoral declines during the 1990s and 2000s, not all of them lost political power to the same extent, nor at the same pace. AD and COPEI suffered much more than the PL and the PC. The Venezuelan parties became electorally irrelevant and they practically disappeared from the electoral arena. This led to the collapse of the party system in 1998. In Colombia, the two traditional parties' century-and-a-half dominance loosened in the 1990s. The PL and the PC became minority forces in 2002 for the first time in their existence. However, they remained as active political actors inside the representative institutions. Yet, these two parties did not lose votes at the same rate.

The electoral decline of these four parties illustrates the phenomenon that I analyze in this dissertation, namely, the weakening of traditional parties in Latin America. Moreover, the different levels and rates of these parties' electoral decline reflect the major puzzle that I introduced in the first Chapter: why do some parties suffer more than others under similar contextual conditions? As in other Latin American countries, Colombia and Venezuela confronted economic, political and social challenges in the 1980s and 1990s. Incumbent governments reacted to these crises by introducing economic and institutional reforms. However, not only were they not successful, but unexpected outcomes aggravated existing problems. The population blamed incumbent politicians and began to vote for non-traditional parties. Traditional parties suffered and in some cases (Venezuela) their leaders were unsuccessful in

actors in structuring the electoral process and in determining who governs (...) Party organizations (were) not simply expressions of the political desires of charismatic leaders" (Mainwaring and Scully 1995: 17). Both countries held competitive or semi-competitive elections since 1958, and the two largest parties (AD and COPEI in Venezuela, and the PL and the PC in Colombia) alternated in the presidency and occupied the majority of seats in Congress for several consecutive periods. Shortly after the above mentioned scholars offered this diagnosis, the party system in Venezuela collapsed (1998), when the two major parties that comprised it – Democratic Action (AD) and the Social Christian Party (COPEI) - became electorally irrelevant. In Colombia the traditional parties were threatened when they obtained a diminished share of votes in the legislative elections of 2002 and later on in 2006.

adapting their organizations to the new context. In other cases (Colombia), parties survived and continued as agents of political representation. Thus, the question that I try to answer in this chapter asks for explanations about the ability of the Colombian traditional parties, the PL and the PC, to adapt to difficult environments, and the failure of the Venezuelan traditional parties, AD and COPEI, to do the same.

These four cases are good examples of a “most-similar systems design” (Przeworski and Teune 1970) where different outcomes (i.e., parties’ electoral trajectories) in countries that share many economic, political, and social characteristics are explained by a few variables (i.e., the internal features of political parties). A detailed and comparative analysis of these four cases (small-N study) is useful to validate the argument presented in the previous chapter. Not only did the PL, the PC, AD and COPEI have distinct internal characteristics, but they performed differently. Were the parties’ internal organizations determinants of the various ways in which they performed under challenging contexts? Did other factors – structural, political or social – affect these parties’ electoral behavior? This chapter describes the electoral trajectories of traditional parties in Colombia and Venezuela during the last three decades (1978-2006). It also describes the structural and political crises that these parties confronted in the 1980s and the responses that political leaders offered to confront the challenges (late 1980s and early 1990s). The chapter closes with an analysis about the parties’ internal features and about their impact on their electoral trajectories. Following the case study, the next chapter tests the hypotheses formulated for a larger sample (Latin American traditional parties) using a different methodological strategy, namely, statistical methods. Empirical analyses are useful for validating the argument presented in previous chapters.

In the next section, I provide a brief historical summary about the origins and early electoral trajectories of traditional parties in Colombia and Venezuela. I underline a critical juncture that both countries faced in the late 1950s that shaped the party systems in place by 1978.⁶⁸ In the second section, I present the political and economic challenges that these parties confronted in the 1980s and 1990s, and in the third section, I describe institutional reforms adopted to respond to crises of representation. Finally, I describe the internal characteristics of the PL, the PC, AD and COPEI, and explain why and how it constitutes an intervening variable that mediates responses to environmental changes. The last section offers some conclusions.

4.1 THE ORIGINS AND EARLY TRAJECTORIES OF TRADITIONAL PARTIES

4.1.1 The origins of traditional parties

The Colombian traditional parties, the Liberal Party (PL) and the Conservative Party (PC) are among the world's oldest parties. They emerged in the mid-nineteenth century (1848 and 1849 respectively), and until recently (1998) they controlled the political and electoral arenas by occupying a majority of public posts. The PL and the PC were formed as elite groupings ("*notables*") which differed primarily in their views along the church, centralization of power (federalism versus centralism), and foreign trade versus internal development (Dix 1987). Despite these characteristics as elitist parties, both were capable of mobilizing widespread popular support and creating strong party identities among the electorate. They formed two

⁶⁸ The empirical analysis of this dissertation starts in 1978.

subcultures or sectarian identities with strong emotional appeals (Sánchez and Meertens 1983, Abel 1987, Bejarano forthcoming, Gilhodes 1995, González 1997).

Sectarianism produced strong interparty competition, which eventually became highly conflictual. Mutual hostility between the two organizations, and the efforts by each party to establish and consolidate a political hegemony, produced several civil wars in the nineteenth century, and in the 20th century that was known as *La Violencia* (The Violence), a twelve-year period of confrontations between Liberals and Conservatives (1946-1958) (Boudon 2000, 36; Sánchez 1983).⁶⁹

Long periods of violent conflict between traditional parties often were followed by negotiations between the two parties in which they agreed to distribute political power equally, pacts in which they established rules to transfer power peacefully. Cycles of confrontation and cooperation “constitute the main key for the survival of the two parties throughout the 19th century and it can be said that it continues until today” (Abel 1987, 17). Pacts have allowed parties not only to survive, but also to dominate the electoral arena and constitute the party system as bipartisan. The National Front (*Frente Nacional*), a pact that was signed in 1958 to overthrow a military dictator and complete a transition to a democratic regime is an example of this kind of pacts. In the next section, I explain the aims of this agreement and some of the consequences that it produced for the political system.

In Venezuela, the absence of a democratic regime during the 19th century and the first four decades of the 20th century explains the impossibility of creating viable and long lasting

⁶⁹ The PC was in power as an hegemonic party between 1886 and 1930. Between 1930 and 1946 the PL established the “liberal hegemony”.

political parties for a long period of time.⁷⁰ AD and COPEI were officially founded in 1941 and 1946 respectively, although their leaders had made efforts to form them since 1936 once the dictator Juan Vicente Gómez (1908-1935) died, and the first transition government was installed.⁷¹ Two more parties of lasting influence were formed between 1936 and 1945: the Venezuelan Communist Party (PCV) in 1936 and the Democratic Republican Union (URD) in 1945 (Coppedge 1994, Urbaneja 1992, Rey 1989). These four political parties were successful in capturing different social sectors, and in creating political organizations that would define the country's political life until the last decade of the 20th century.⁷² They filled the vacuum created during consecutive dictatorships and shaped a party system where partisan loyalties were strong (Molina and Pérez 1995, 196).

In 1945 AD led a coup that ousted one of Gómez's successors, President Isaías Medina Angarita, and gave origin to the first democratic attempt in the country's history. The *Trienio* was the name given to a three years period in which four competitive and direct elections took place (1945-1948). In each election, AD consolidated itself as the predominant party. It obtained the majority of votes in the election for a National Constituent Assembly (78.43%), in the presidential election (74.47%), and in legislative and municipal councils' elections (70.83% and 70.09% respectively). The other three parties competed in every election. COPEI won around 20% of the votes in all but one of the elections,⁷³ while URD and PCV did not win more than 4.26% of the share of votes (Molina and Pérez 1996; Martz 1966). In 1948 a new military coup

⁷⁰ Two parties that were formed in the 19th century – the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party – disappeared in the last quarter of the century as a consequence of the omnipotent power that different *caudillos* accumulated.

⁷¹ In 1936, General Eleazar López Contreras assumed power until 1941, when Gen. Isaías Medina Angarita replaced him (until 1945).

⁷² By the time the Third Wave of Democratization began (1978) URD had disappeared. For this reason, this political option is not considered as a traditional party here

⁷³ It won 13.22% in the Constitutional National Assembly, 22.40% in the presidential election, 20.28% and 21.10% in the elections for legislative and municipal councils' respectively.

occurred and AD's President Rómulo Gallegos was ousted from power. The short experiment in which elections took place came to an end and a new dictatorship began.

Marcos Pérez Jiménez, the new dictator, banned AD and the PCV. For an entire decade, these parties were completely excluded from governmental power and were subjected to intense repression. Most of the parties' leaders and members were persecuted, imprisoned and sent into exile. COPEI and URD continued acting in the political scene, but the government strictly controlled their actions. Later, in 1952, the military government dissolved the URD and exiled its leader, Jovito Villalba. COPEI did not become illegal and it was able to retain its organization. However, it played a limited role during the ten years that the dictatorship lasted (Molina and Pérez 1996, 205).

In the years of exile and persecution, leaders of the banned parties united clandestinely and organized against the ruling dictator. They agreed to act together in order to reestablish a democratic regime (Martz 1966). Leaders from AD, COPEI and URD agreed to form a transitional agreement that would restore a democratic regime. This would imply a power sharing pact among political contenders. The result of this agreement was the so called Punto Fijo Pact (*Pacto de Punto Fijo*), and the installment of a democratic regime. This pact was formed a few months later than the National Front (*Frente Nacional*) signed by the Colombian traditional parties, the PL and the PC. These two pacts marked a critical juncture in the two countries. Military dictators were overthrown (1957 in Colombia and 1958 in Venezuela), democratic regimes were re-installed and party systems re-emerged with a 'new character'.

4.1.2 Political Pacts in Colombia and Venezuela and the Consolidation of ‘New’ Party Systems⁷⁴

The National Front in Colombia and the Punto Fijo Pact in Venezuela were similar in many aspects, but at the same time generated different political outcomes in the post-transition period (Bejarano forthcoming). Among other factors, divergent results were explained by a different array of actors that were involved in the negotiations and by the content and duration of the pacts.

Both pacts were designed to avoid the prolongation of the dictatorships – Gustavo Rojas Pinilla in Colombia and Marcos Pérez Jiménez in Venezuela - and allow a transition to democratic governments.⁷⁵ To achieve this, leaders of contending opposition parties came together, formed alliances, compromised and signed pacts in which they decided to form governments of national unity. Coalitional governments would help opposing parties share power in the democratic institutions. In addition, power sharing agreements would help these parties overcome the inter-party conflicts that jeopardized the stability and continuity of the democratic regimes that preceded the dictatorships. The pacts provided mutual guarantees that no party would seek to govern hegemonically, as some had attempted in the past – i.e. the PL and AD (Hartlyn 1998: 111-12).⁷⁶ In both countries negotiations stemmed from above. Pacts

⁷⁴ The transition processes in Colombia and Venezuela, and the design, content, consequences and complexities of the pacts deserve in-depth analyses that other scholars have already undertaken. The purpose here is to mention some factors that shaped the political systems in these countries, i.e., the party systems. I do not pretend to summarize every aspect of these pacts. For detailed analyses see (Bejarano forthcoming; Hartlyn 1988; Karl 1987; Levine 1973)

⁷⁵ Both dictators declared their intentions to remain in power for a longer period than initially expected. They would modify the constitution or convoke a plebiscite, ratifying and prolonging their mandate.

⁷⁶ During the period that preceded the two pacts, the PL (1930-1946) in Colombia and AD in Venezuela (in the *Trienio* years, 1945-1948) attempted to consolidate themselves as hegemonic parties, and controlled the political systems. To avoid this, compromises were negotiated that provided equal or substantive power to opposition parties.

were elite driven and signed by the heads of the political parties. Both pacts were signed almost simultaneously and transitions in both countries took a relatively similar period of time. In Colombia the transition started in July 1956 with the so called *Declaration of Benidorm* and ended in 1959 when Congress approved a constitutional amendment that established the spirit of the pact: party alternation in the presidency for sixteen years. The transition in Venezuela began in August 1957 with the *Manifiesto de la Junta Patriótica* and finished in 1961 when a new Constitution was approved by Congress (Bejarano forthcoming).⁷⁷

Despite these similarities, the actors involved in the negotiations, the duration of the pacts as well as the institutional provisions and restrictions that each pact established were different. First, the negotiations that established the necessity to form coalition governments involved a different array of actors in each case. In Colombia, the unique actors that negotiated and signed the pact were the heads of the PL (Alberto Lleras) and the PC (Laureano Gómez and Mariano Ospina). Other parties - i.e., the Communist Party (PCC) – and significant social actors were excluded from the process. In Venezuela, the signatory actors of the pacts were the main leaders of COPEI (Rafael Caldera), AD (Rómulo Betancourt), and the URD (Jóvito Villalba). In addition, labor organizations and business associations, deeply linked to state agencies and to the parties, exercised influence over what was negotiated among the three leaders.⁷⁸ The Communist Party (PCV) was marginalized from the pact-making process as it also was in Colombia.

Second, the duration of the coalitional governments and the broadness of the power sharing agreements were different in each case. In Colombia, the pact defined that the PL and PC would share power in the executive cabinet, in departmental governorships, in municipal local

⁷⁷ Since the beginning of the processes until the constitutional amendment (Colombia) and the expedition of a new Constitution (Venezuela), other pacts among parties' elites were signed. See Bejarano Forthcoming.

⁷⁸ The Federation of Chambers and Associations of Commerce and Industry (FEDECAMARAS) and the Comité Sindical Unificado represented the main business associations in the country.

governments (mayors), and in deliberative bodies (the National Congress, Departmental Assemblies and Municipal councils). In the executive branch, the presidency would be alternated during four periods (sixteen years) starting in 1958 with a liberal candidate and finishing in 1974 with a conservative candidate.⁷⁹ In deliberative bodies, the PL and the PC would have equal shares in the distribution of seats for the same period (Art. 2). These provisions prevented other parties from gaining political power. The PL and the PC were the only two parties that had ‘the right’ to govern. Although the pact established a sixteen years period to distribute power among the two traditional parties in the executive branch and in deliberative bodies, a constitutional reform adopted in 1968 modified these provisions. The reform established that the distribution of power between the two parties would be prolonged until 1978. In addition, after 1978 the majority party that was not that of the President of the Republic would obtain half of the executive branch’s positions.⁸⁰ Although the reform did not explicit traditional parties’ parity in the cabinet, it prolonged the representative constraints of the political system until a new Constitution was adopted in 1991.

In Venezuela the pact established only one coalitional government (1959-1964). The three pacting parties would form the executive cabinet and each of them would present a presidential candidate. Presidential results were not predetermined as they were in Colombia.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Initially it was established a period of twelve years. However, when no consensus emerged for a conservative candidate, the period was augmented to sixteen years.

⁸⁰ The original text established: “Corresponde al Presidente de la República como jefe del Estado y suprema autoridad administrativa: 1. Nombrar y separar libremente los Ministros del Despacho, los Jefes de Departamento Administrativos y los Directores o Gerentes de los Establecimientos Públicos Nacionales. **Parágrafo.** Los Ministros del Despacho serán de libre nombramiento y remoción del Presidente de la República, pero la paridad de los partidos Conservador y Liberal en los Ministerios, las Gobernaciones, Alcaldías y los demás cargos de la Administración que no pertenezcan a la Carrera Administrativa, se mantendrá hasta el 7 de agosto de 1978. Para preservar, después de la fecha indicada, con **carácter permanente** el espíritu nacional en la Rama Ejecutiva y en la Administración Pública, el nombramiento de los citados funcionarios se hará en forma tal que se dé **participación adecuada y equitativa al partido mayoritario distinto al del Presidente de la República (...)** (Article 41, Constitutional Reform of 1968).

⁸¹ In Colombia, presidential results were predetermined in practice, but not legally.

The winner, elected in a semi-competitive and free election would enjoy the support of the other two parties. This would facilitate approval of programs designed to guarantee a transition in which different actors and interests were incorporated. The pact also recognized the autonomy of political parties and the possibility of an open and legal opposition. In addition, each party had the right to present its own list of candidates for legislative seats, and seats were not to be distributed evenly among the three parties. Although the pact established one coalitional government, a provision offered the possibility of a longer period. The signatory parties agreed to establish a coalitional government “(...) for as long as the factors that threaten the Republican experiment (...) would last” (Bejarano forthcoming, Chapter 3). At the end, the first two governments after the transition to democracy were coalitional governments (Betancourt 1959-1964 and Leoni 1964-1969).

The pacts differed regarding the restrictions placed on political competition. While in Colombia the pact prevented the PCC “from participating in elections and having access to any office (elected or appointed) for the following sixteen years,” the Venezuelan pact did not exclude the PCV and other parties. In fact, the PCV did participate in elections once the democratic regime was installed. In Colombia, the distribution of political power between the PL and the PC blocked access to potentially new parties. Other parties did not find fertile terrain for emerging and consolidating themselves as significant actors. Only party factions that opposed the pact – the most significant the Liberal Revolutionary Movement (MRL), led by Alfonso López Michelsen - and the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO), a movement that was created in 1961 by former dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, found some political space during the National Front. These two forces obtained 32% and 30% of lower chamber seats in 1964 and 1966 respectively. In 1968, the MRL dissolved and absorbed into the PL. Opposition forces (ANAPO)

obtained 18% of the seats. In 1974, this movement obtained 7% of the seats, and became marginalized (Hartlyn 1988). In sum, while in Colombia opposition parties lacked institutional guarantees that allowed them to thrive in Venezuela it was possible to build loyal oppositions.

The differences in the Colombian and Venezuelan pacts explain to some extent different political outcomes over the long term. In both countries transitions to democracy were successful. However, the character of the re-established political and party systems varied. In Colombia, a “restricted democracy” emerged where political competition and political representation were limited (Mainwaring 1999). On the contrary, the ‘new’ regime in Venezuela rapidly became inclusionary and competitive.⁸² Three factors that explain this have been underlined: the array of actors involved in the “pacted transitions”; the competitiveness or restrictiveness of the institutional design in each case; and the duration of each coalitional government. Fewer actors in the negotiations, more restrictions on political competition, and a longer “coalitional government” in which only the signatory parties could participate, explain the more restrictive party system in Colombia. Moreover, the nature and origin of the parties that signed the agreements shaped both the content of the pacts and the character of the nascent party systems. The PL and PC were conceived as oligarchical parties that promoted the interests of the country’s landed elite. Their relationships with the electorate were “based on clientelistic exchanges of votes for patronage” (Archer 1995, cited in Bejarano forthcoming, Chapter 2). The Venezuelan AD, and to a lesser extent COPEI, was a mass-party that mobilized, incorporated and promoted the interests of labor, workers, students, professionals and peasants. These parties also engaged in clientelism at the local level, but at the same time, they were ideological and programmatic (Collier and Collier 1991). They had “a commitment to a distinctive program at

⁸² Still, in the 1960s, the left in Venezuela still posed an armed conflict and was seriously repressed.

the national level and they attempted to socialize their followers into a particular world view, something absent in the purely clientelistic parties” (Huber Stephens 1989: 305, cited in Bejarano forthcoming). Colombian traditional parties did not mobilize the wide range of social interests that the Venezuelan mass-based parties – in particular, AD – did. In that sense, the PL and the PC were less “representative” than AD and COPEI.

Another characteristic that differed between the parties was the structure of their organization.⁸³ Despite the fact that all four parties had a hierarchical structure, and were vertically integrated, AD and COPEI were more centralized than the PL and the PC. The more centralized structure of the Venezuelan parties provided their leadership with enormous power to control party activists at all levels and all the social groups that they encapsulated. In Colombia, the formal structure of the PL and the PC was also hierarchical. However, in practice control of national leaders, among others former presidents, was limited by regional leaders. The latter were autonomous in deciding the conformation of the party’s lists, and in promoting patronage-based initiatives. National party’s leaders were only instrumental when regional leaders needed their support.⁸⁴ The Colombian institutional design provided incentives for the formation of regional leaders. PL and PC had a wide array of regional leaders. As I show later, this party’s feature was important to understand the electoral trajectories of all four parties.

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 describe the electoral trajectories of Colombian and Venezuelan traditional parties in legislative and presidential elections since the return to democracy in 1958 until 2005 (Venezuela) and 2006 (Colombia). In Colombia, the PL and the PC were clearly the dominant parties since 1958 until 1986. In legislative elections they accumulated between 100%

⁸³ I will delve into this later. In this section, I just mention some of the differences.

⁸⁴ The Colombian institutional design (i.e., faction lists) generated incentives for regional leaders to emerge.

and 96.2% of the votes during that period. In 1986 other parties – including the liberal faction ‘New Liberalism’ - obtained an average of 13% of the votes and later on, since 1991 they began to increase their share of votes, challenging the power of the traditional parties. In 2006 these parties obtained the lowest share of votes in all their electoral history: In the Senate and Lower Chamber elections, the PL obtained 16.6% and 19% share of votes respectively and the PC received 17.6% and 19% share of votes.

In Venezuela, AD started the period obtaining 49.5% of the votes, followed by URD with 26.6%, and COPEI with 15.20%. The two following legislative elections (1963 and 1968), COPEI increased its share of votes to 20.8%, and 24% while AD and URD decreased their share.⁸⁵ These data indicate that during the first three democratic elections, the three parties that signed the *Punto Fijo Pact* obtained a dominant share of votes in legislative elections. The PCV and other smaller parties also participated in elections, though they obtained a smaller vote share. From 1973 until 1988, AD and COPEI obtained the majority of votes. Their combined votes ranged between 74.39% and 79.48%. The strength of third parties (in particular URD) decreased substantially during this period and the system consolidated as a two-party system. In the elections of 1993, AD and COPEI obtained 23.3% and 22.62% of the votes respectively. Other parties began to challenge them and a continued process of traditional party electoral decline began. In 1998 AD and COPEI did not present candidates for the presidential elections. Hugo Chávez Frías from the “Movimiento V República” won the election. Later in 2005, the traditional parties decided not to participate in legislative elections.

⁸⁵ In 1963 AD obtained 32.7% of the votes and in 1968 this percentage decreased to 25.5%. URD received 17.4% in 1963 and 9.25% in 1968.

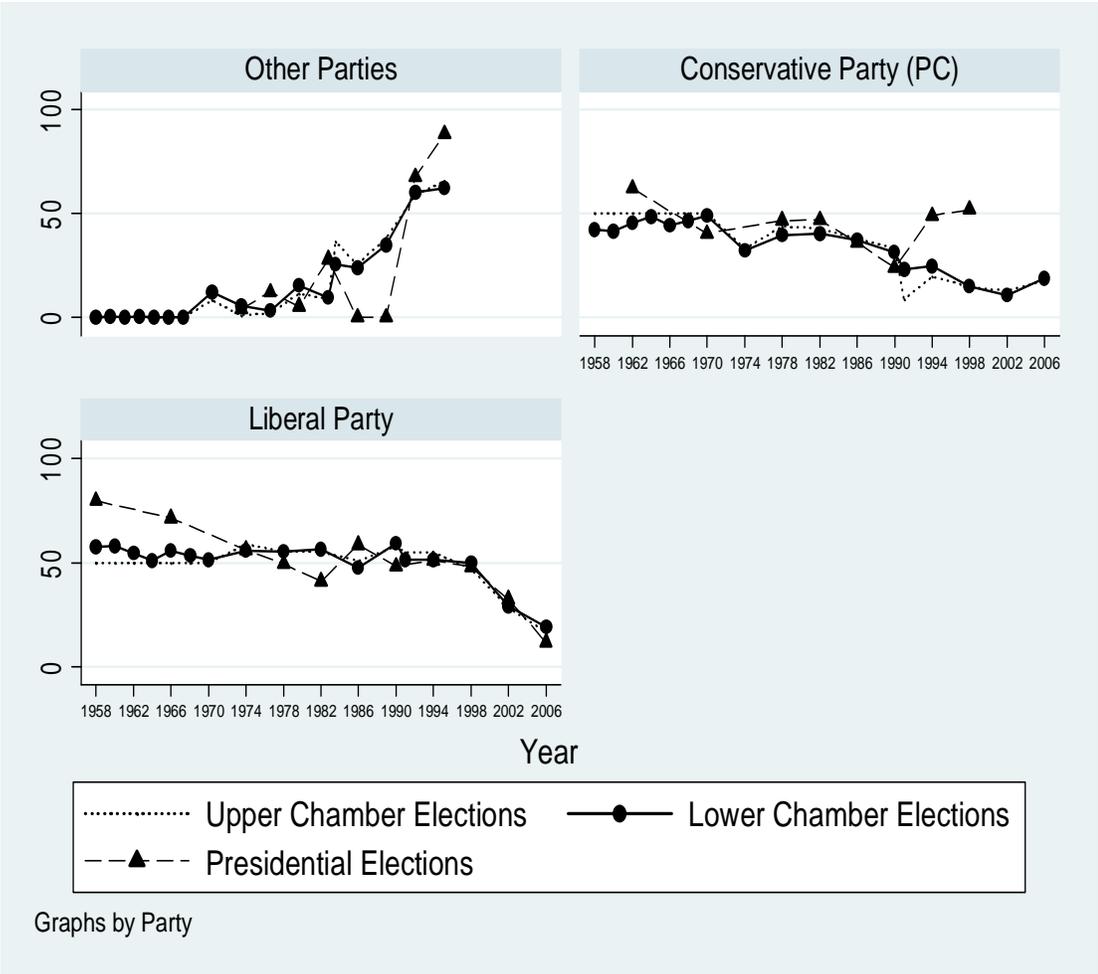


Figure 4.1. Electoral Trajectories of Colombian Traditional Parties, 1978-2006

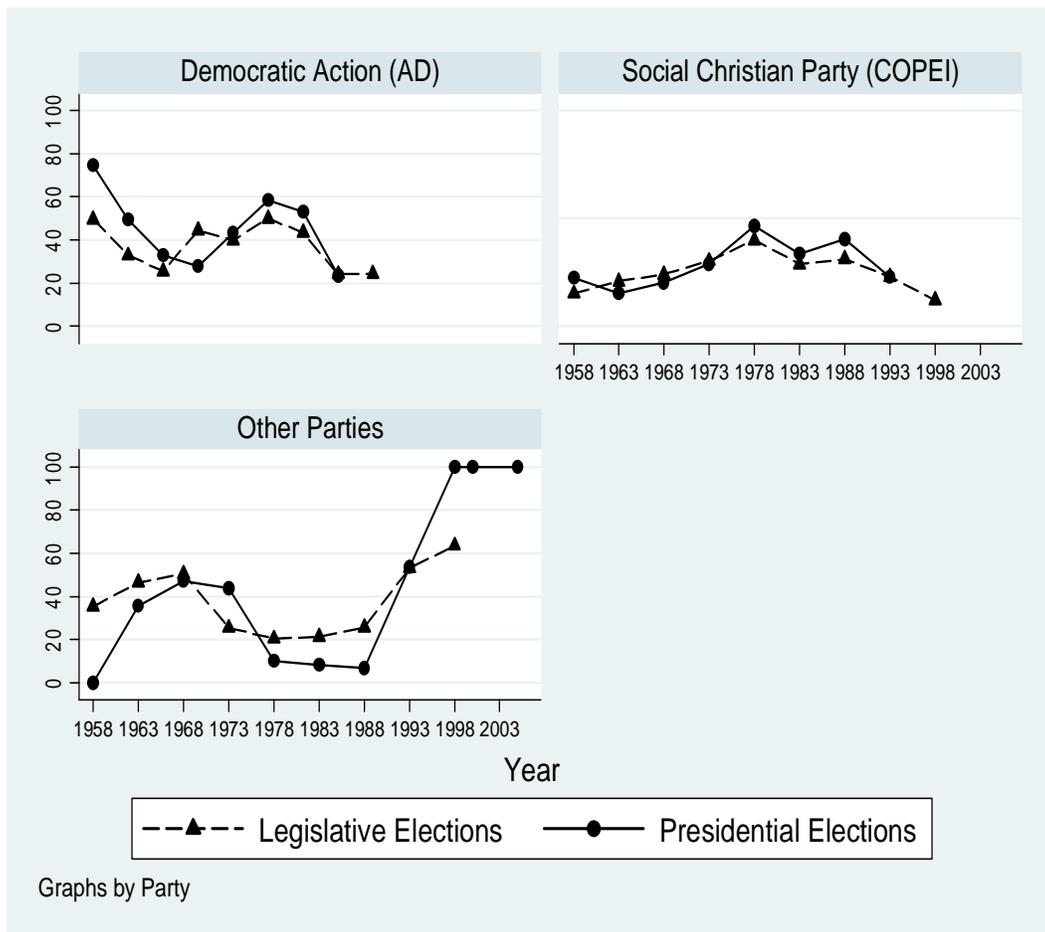


Figure 4.2. Electoral Trajectories of Venezuelan Traditional Parties, 1978-2005

Summing up, Colombia and Venezuela transitioned from dictatorships to democratic governments in similar ways. In both cases a two-party system became consolidated and institutionalized. However, despite the similarities, the political systems that emerged differed significantly. In Colombia, a “restricted democracy” was in place during three decades (from 1958 until 1988),⁸⁶ while in Venezuela a more inclusive and representative system was

⁸⁶ As noted above, the constitutional reform of 1968 prolonged the power sharing pact between the two traditional parties until 1978 and defined a permanent equal distribution of posts in the executive branch. In 1988 the first popular election of mayors took place. This innovation decreased the power of the executive and increased the

configured. The nature and origin of the parties that compose the systems is part of the explanation. Another factor that accounts for these differences is the institutional design in which those actors played.

The two-party systems that emerged in both countries were relatively stable during the first two to three decades of electoral competition. The PL and the PC in Colombia and AD and COPEI in Venezuela alternated in presidential elections and gained the majority of seats in the legislature (in Colombia until 2002 and in Venezuela until 1993). The levels of electoral volatility in these two countries were low, while the party identification of the electorate was strong. In the mid 1990s, when traditional parties were starting to lose electoral strength, 60% to 70% of citizens stated a party preference (Mainwaring and Scully 1995: 11). Survey evidence on party identification before that period is precarious. However, the low levels of electoral volatility and the dominance of two traditional parties in each case are good indicators of high levels of party identification and partisan loyalty. One Venezuelan study shows that until 1992 more than 50% of the population identified with one of the traditional parties. In the mid 1990s, identification with AD decreased to 20% and only 10% identified with COPEI.⁸⁷ These percentages continued decreasing for traditional parties and increasing for other options. In 2001 popular surveys showed that AD and COPEI had 7% and 2% of public support respectively. Those viewing themselves as independents reached 55.4% in 1996 and around 70% in 2002 (Datanalisis, C.A., 1998; 2010; Keller 2001). In Colombia, surveys in 1976 and 1977 revealed that 59% of the population was loyal to one of the two traditional parties. From that percentage,

possibilities for other political parties to participate in elections. Later on, in 1991, a new Constitution was adopted and the article that prolonged the spirit of the National Front pact was abolished.

⁸⁷ In 1996, 17.2% of the population identified with AD and 8.3% with COPEI. Other parties with which people identified were the following: Convergencia Nacional (8.8%); MBR-200 (3.2%); La Causa R (2.2%); MIR (1.7%); Other (1.2); Independents (54.4%). Source: Datanalisis 1998. Interviews with José Antonio Gil Yepes, Executive Director, Datanalisis, and Alfredo Keller, Executive Director, Alfredo Keller y Asociados.

54% supported the PL and 38% supported the PC (8% did not reveal their party preference) (Losada 1982). These numbers changed in the late 1990s when 34% of respondents supported the PL and 13.9% the PC. Later on, in 2002, the percentages decreased to 31.8% (PL) and to 10.69% (PC) (Gutiérrez 2007).

The decrease in the levels of party identification in the Colombian and Venezuelan traditional parties weakened their electoral support. In Venezuela the party system collapsed in 1998 and in Colombia the PL and the PC lost their dominant positions they enjoyed for more than a century (since the late 1840s until 2002). These outcomes challenge the idea of the presence of a stable and institutionalized party system in these two countries (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). The “pacted transitions” were useful to overcome inter-party conflicts and to establish democratic governments. However, in the long run, when a different structural and political context was in place, the institutional design in which these party systems rested found shortcomings that prevented traditional parties from reacting adequately. A deep crisis of the economic model in Venezuela, exacerbation of a representational crisis in Colombia, and popular disenchantment with incumbents who failed to adapt to the new environment, explain to some extent the electoral decline that traditional parties have suffered since the early 1990s. As a reaction to these crises, political elites introduced institutional reforms in the political systems. These reforms produced unexpected results that implied an aggravation of the electoral weakening that parties were experiencing. The next section describes the structural and political challenges that parties have confronted since the 1980s and some of the measures that politicians undertook.

4.2 ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISES

4.2.1 Colombia

In contrast to most Latin American countries, Colombia has generally enjoyed slow but steady economic growth. Even during the region's deep economic crisis in the 1980s, Colombia was able to maintain relatively low levels of inflation and stable economic growth. Moreover, when most countries throughout the region accumulated high levels of external debt, Colombia's foreign debt was considerably lower. The country has long commanded a good credit rating for its debt repayments. As most other countries, structural neoliberal reforms also were implemented in the country during the 1980s and 1990s. However, they were not as profound as in other places (Lora 1997) and consequently their impact, though important, was not as profound as in other countries.⁸⁸

Despite its privileged economic situation, Colombian democracy has confronted several challenges that have undermined its performance. Restrictions on political participation and competition during the National Front along with systematic violations of civil rights and liberties called into question the country's political system as a genuine democracy (Mainwaring, Brinks and Pérez-Liñán 2006).⁸⁹ As described above, the pacts that established the National Front produced a restricted political system where political competition was limited to the PL and the PC. Political power was distributed equally between these two parties in the three

⁸⁸ As I pointed out in Chapter 2, analyses of the effects that neoliberal reforms inflicted upon Latin American economic development suggest that these reforms did not produce the expected economic development (Huber and Solt 2004; Lora and Panizza 2002; Rodrik 2006).

⁸⁹ Mainwaring, Brinks and Pérez-Liñán define the Colombian political system as "semidemocratic" during the period subsequent to the National Front. A semi-democratic government refers to an elected civilian government that has significant restrictions placed upon participation, competition and the observance of civil liberties.

branches of power until 1978. From that year on until 1988, the President of the Republic exercised the power to designate all members of the executive branch.⁹⁰ For this reason, other political alternatives enjoyed no real possibilities of aspiring to electoral posts. In 1988 the first popular election of mayors took place. This allowed parties different from the PL and the PC to participate in elections and obtain some posts in regional elections. The adoption of a new Constitution in 1991 transformed most provisions established in the National Front pact. Since then, new parties were formed and begun to participate in national and regional elections. Despite these changes, control of the state bureaucracy that the PL and the PC exercised during the National Front allowed them to nurture clientelistic practices that helped them to remain as the major parties after 1974 and for some years after the adoption of the new Constitution (Leal and Dávila 1991).

Restrictions associated with Colombian democracy also exist in another dimension. Systematic violation of civil rights and liberties has threatened the stability of the political system for many years. In the 1960s and 1970s leftist guerrilla groups emerged in part as a response to the political restrictions that the National Front regime established. In the late 1980s and early 1990s successful negotiations between five of these groups and the government led to their demobilization and reincorporation into political and civilian life (Palacios 2000).⁹¹ Two groups – the FARC and ELN – did not sign peace accords, which prolonged the armed conflict. In the 1980s paramilitary groups were created to combat the guerrillas. Since then, levels of violence increased dramatically. Later, drug traffickers and death squads complemented to the

⁹⁰ In 1968 Article 120 of the Constitution was modified. It was established that posts in the executive branch would be distributed among the official party (the president's party) and the second majoritarian party. In practice, this implied the distribution of power between the PL and the PC.

⁹¹ These groups were the April 19 Movement (Movimiento 19 de Abril, M-19); the Revolutionary Workers Party (Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores, PRT); the Quintín Lame Movement (Movimiento Quintín Lame); Popular Liberation Army (Ejército Popular de Liberación) and the Socialist Renovation Current (Corriente de Renovación Socialista, CRS). Around 4.000 ex-combatants were demobilized and reincorporated into civilian life.

original violent actors (guerrilla groups and state actors). In addition, the illegal narcotics trade infiltrated, the political and electoral arenas, along with economic and social sectors, state institutions, such as the judiciary, the police and the army, producing more violence and jeopardizing the political system.⁹² Political party activists, members of other political institutions at the national, regional and local levels, along with civil society leaders were all victims of forced displacements, kidnappings and bloodshed caused by fights among illegal actors and the state military forces.⁹³

During the 1990s the armed conflict and violence peaked (García 2009). In addition to civil rights violations, confrontations between different armed actors seeking to capture territorial control at local and regional levels greatly diminished the space for democratic political competition. Political leaders (many from traditional parties) and voters were threatened or influenced by guerrillas or paramilitaries. Electoral participation decreased where these groups exercised military control or where dispute levels between different actors were higher (guerrilla vs. paramilitaries; or guerrilla vs. military forces) (Echandía 1996, 2004; Garcia 2009; Gutierrez 2004, 2006; Lair 2004; Sánchez et al. 2003).

In summary, political restrictions associated with Colombian democracy gave way to the emergence of illegal armed groups that challenged the legitimacy of the system. Both the restricted political system and the appearance of subversive actors produced a deep representational crisis that threatened the system's stability. In this context, incumbent politicians were blamed and pressured to take measures directed toward dealing with the crisis. In this

⁹² In the mid 1990s a political scandal exploded when it was evident that drug cartels had penetrated the electoral campaign of the Liberal presidential candidate, Ernesto Samper Pizano,

⁹³ "Between 1994 and 1998, the annual average number of homicides reached approximately 26,000. During the same period, 7,022 were kidnapped. In addition, approximately 1,350,000 people were forcibly displaced between 1985 and 1998" (Zuluaga, cited in Bejarano and Pizarro 2005: 241).

context, institutional reforms were introduced, whose aim was to eliminate prior restrictions and broaden the space for political participation and competition. In the next section, I analyze the changes that were implemented in the electoral system when the new Constitution was approved in 1991, and a major electoral reform implemented in 2003. I assess the politics behind those changes and the effects that they caused in the political system. Before doing that, I shall describe the challenges that Venezuelan democracy has confronted since the early 1980s and the consequences that they produced in the political system.

4.2.2 Venezuela

In Venezuela, a deep economic crisis that started in the early 1980s challenged the democratic political system that emerged from the Punto Fijo Pact of the late 1950s. During COPEI government of Luis Herrera Campins (1979-1984), the oil-dependent Venezuelan economy was a victim of the fall in the international prices for petroleum in 1982-83. The government's revenues declined and, as a consequence, the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita dropped dramatically.⁹⁴ In 1983, on Black Friday (18 February) the national currency collapsed, and a long period of currency depreciation, economic stagnation, and increasing levels of inflation began. From 1986 to 1988, during the AD presidency of Jaime Lusinchi (1984-1989), inflation reached an unprecedented average of 23% and the balance of payment deficits increased as never before. At the end of 1988, when Lusinchi was finishing his term, the current accounts deficit and the international debt were enormous; half of the country's international reserves had been lost; basic products were scarce, and the poverty levels and inequality had

⁹⁴ By 1985, real GDP was 25 % lower than it had been just seven years earlier. International Monetary Fund. 1997. *International Financial Statistics Yearbook*. Washington, D.C: International Monetary Fund.

increased substantially (Naim 1993).⁹⁵ In sum, during the 1980s the economy shrank. Venezuela's oil based political-economic model and the state-centered scheme collapsed, as the state became insolvent and unable to respond to social demands. The population became disillusioned and dissatisfied with the government.⁹⁶ However, on December 3, 1988 Carlos Andrés Pérez, also from AD, won the presidential elections for the second time.⁹⁷

In February 1989, as soon as the new president assumed power, he broke with the state-centered scheme and launched unpopular economic reforms directed toward moving from a state-led, inward-oriented strategy to a market-based economy that stimulated export growth.⁹⁸ The new policies were initially supported by other governments and multilateral institutions. However, they produced high levels of resistance among the population who did not expect and did not like the reforms.⁹⁹ Three weeks after the inauguration of the new government and the announcement of the reforms, the most violent urban riots in decades erupted. The *Caracazo* consisted of three days of civil turmoil that resulted in 300 deaths (López Maya 1999). People

⁹⁵ By 1989 an estimated 53% of all Venezuelan lived in poverty, up from 32 % in 1982 (Naim 1993: 24).

⁹⁶ Eduardo Fernández, COPEI's presidential candidate in 1988, summarized this situation in more colloquial terms. He stated that in Venezuela presidents and governments are not good or bad; they have either good luck or bad luck, and this luck depends upon oil's prices. When the price of a barrel of oil is high, the president will be very popular because he will have money to distribute. However, when the price of the oil is low, the president will be unpopular. The population will blame him for the cause of all crises (Interview with Eduardo Fernández, June 2010). A former AD member, Simón Alberto Consalvi stated that the crisis of AD and COPEI exploded when oil revenues were not enough to satisfy population demands. According to him, the fall in the oil prices broke the harmony that the Venezuelan society enjoyed since the transition to a democratic system (Interview with Simón Alberto Consalvi, June 2010).

⁹⁷ His first term as president was from 1974 to 1979, a period of prosperity as a consequence of an oil boom. During this administration, Pérez expanded the public sector and nationalized the production of oil and iron (Corrales 2002, Naim 1993).

⁹⁸ The Great Turnaround (Gran Viraje) was the economic reform package that Carlos Andrés Pérez introduced. Some of the measures that he took were the establishment of a single floating exchange rate; the removal of price controls on all private goods and services; reduction of public spending; trade liberalization; deregulation of capital, goods and labor markets; reform of the agricultural, industrial, and financial sectors; foreign investment promotion and privatization. Source: Corrales 2002.

⁹⁹ According to Simón Alberto Consalvi, the population was disenchanted with "Pérez II" ("Pérez I" enjoyed high popularity because he fulfilled many popular demands). The Great Turnaround that Pérez II implemented was perceived as a 'betrayal'. In addition, Pérez underestimated the reaction of his own party in Congress. This was a fatal mistake that affected his reputation (Interview with Simón Alberto Consalvi, June 2010).

protested against some measures that the government had already taken (i.e., an unexpected increase in the bus fares), and against the general situation of declining living standards, corruption and limited governmental responses. A decade of public frustrations bred public protests that were the preamble to two military uprisings in 1992 (February 4 and November 27). Both coups failed and Pérez continued in power. However, these events produced the deepest political crisis since democracy was installed in 1958. Constant calls for the resignation of the president came from all camps, including his own party. This produced political paralysis and a generalized crisis. Criticism focused not only on the unpopular economic reforms, but also on the generalized perception that the President, political parties, the judicial branch, and bureaucrats were all corrupt.¹⁰⁰ The constant accusations of corruption ended up with the unanimous decision by the Senate to suspend Pérez from office on a temporary basis (May 1993). Later in August of the same year, Carlos Andrés Pérez was removed permanently from office by a joint session of Congress, and an interim president, Ramón J. Velásquez was appointed to complete his term (Pérez-Liñán 2007, 21). National elections for a new president and Congress were scheduled for December 1993. This was the first time since 1958 that a candidate from AD or COPEI did not win the presidency. Rafael Caldera, founder of COPEI and President from 1969 to 1974 split from that party, founded *Convergencia*, and won the presidency with the support of MAS and a coalition of small parties (Crisp 2000: 180). In legislative elections, AD and COPEI decreased their share of votes and seats, and became minority parties (see Figure 4.2). These results show that the political turmoil caused by the economic crisis of the 1980s and the removal of Pérez

¹⁰⁰ By this time, the electorate saw the political parties not as representatives of programmatic interests, but as corrupt, clientelistic and popular machines. In this context, a movement composed mainly by intellectuals, started to promote a discourse against politics (“antipolítica”). The media supported this discourse. An example of the impact that it produced was the nomination of a beauty queen (Irene Sáez) as the presidential candidate of COPEI (Interviews with Eduardo Fernández and Carlos Romero, June 2010).

from office in 1993 affected the electoral performance of the parties that had dominated the electoral and political arena until then.

In the midst of the crisis, political and electoral reforms were undertaken. Since the early 1960s, when a new constitution was adopted, AD and COPEI became the central actors in Venezuelan political life, and their leaders emerged as powerful and long lasting figures that would decide the country's destiny.¹⁰¹ These parties permeated every sector of the society, monopolized the electoral process and dominated the legislature (Coppedge 1994). Their power was questioned when the economic crisis exploded and society began to protest. Leaders of the traditional parties were unable to control the situation and respond appropriately to the new challenges. It became evident that they could no longer represent the interests of a diversity of social sectors. Their centralized structure – defined by the institutional design – distanced them from an electorate demanding solutions to the critical situation. In this context, electoral reforms were introduced that were directed toward bringing voters closer to their representatives. The next section describes the reforms in both Colombia and Venezuela and the politics behind that process.

¹⁰¹ This in part was explained by the constitutional regulation that permitted presidential reelection after two periods (ten years). Presidents that finished their first term would try to get reelected ten years later. To achieve this, they remained within the party's leadership.

4.3 ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONAL ENGINEERING

4.3.1 Colombia

From the instauration of the National Front in 1958 until 1991, the Colombian political system sustained a limited two-party system with rules for electing politicians that remained unaltered. First, the formula applied to elect the president of the republic was that of plurality rule. The candidate with the highest number of votes was elected.¹⁰² Second, congressional elections were carried out under a proportional representation system employing closed lists and an allocation formula of quotients and largest remainders commonly known as the Hare quota.¹⁰³ Both senators and lower chamber representatives were elected in multi-member-departmental districts that varied with the size of the districts' population. In practice, party factions, not parties, nominated lists of candidates. Each party could present an unlimited number of faction lists and it was the leader of each list – usually local leaders – who decided who would be included in them and in what order. Those at the top of the list enjoyed the greatest probability of being elected. Moreover, the lists were not required to obtain the number of votes defined by the quotient. Although during the National Front, although inter-party competition was regulated (i.e., political power was distributed between the PL and the PC), intra-party competition was not. The PR faction lists that the electoral system defined produced intra-party competition. A

¹⁰² The most widely accepted hypothesis about the effect of this rule on party systems is that it promotes the creation and maintenance of two-party systems, while other formulas like for example the majority runoff, impose fewer constraints on the number of parties that are allowed to compete and win elections (Cox 1997; Duverger 1963).

¹⁰³ This formula established a very low threshold. An electoral quotient was obtained by dividing the number of all valid votes among the number of seats to be assigned within a given electoral constituency. Parties, or to be more specific, the lists acquired one seat by quotient each time the number of votes established by the mathematical operation was reached. All remaining votes were defined as remainders that competed for the seats that had not been allotted in the first place. The residuals were organized in descending numerical order and seats were thus assigned.

direct consequence of this was the internal fragmentation of the PL and the PC that continued once the National Front ended. In the first post-Front legislative election, 1974, 45% of the representatives and 58% of the senators were elected in faction lists that failed to elect more than one candidate. In subsequent elections this percentage increased dramatically. In 1990, 80% of legislators were elected that way. These percentages indicate that faction lists became tools to develop individual political campaigns, and that politicians were elected with few votes (Archer and Shugart 2002, 147). The presence of faction lists, combined with the Hare allocation formula and no electoral thresholds, allowed factional leaders to concentrate a small percentage of the overall vote in local strongholds and still win seats. This was also a result of the way votes were counted. They were not pooled across the different lists of the same party. All votes within a given list that did not count for the election of seats, either by quotient or by remainder, were wasted since they failed to elect a congressperson. These conditions led to the personalization of politics and intra-party competition: candidates focused their electoral strategies on ensuring their own success rather than that of the party to which they belonged.

Summing up, until 1990 the PL and the PC dominated the electoral arena at the expense of their internal cohesion. Archer and Shugart (2002) show that the multiplication of lists began even before the National Front. In the 1940s it was commonplace that party factions presented their own lists. Later on, during the National Front (1958-1974), party factionalism increased because the parity principle induced intra-party competition between factions (instead of inter-party competition). When restraints on electoral competition ended in 1974, traditional parties had learned that electoral success was feasible with relatively few votes. This led them to magnify their strategy of multiplying the faction lists for legislative elections. Party fragmentation continued after 1974 and reached its highest level in 2002, when the number of

lists that competed for the 100 Senate seats reached 321 (Pizarro-Leongomez 1996). The parties' behavior during electoral periods – internal fragmentation through the presentation of multiple faction lists - was instrumental in achieving political power during a long period of time (1958-2002), but simultaneously impeded the consolidation of cohesive and disciplined parties. Characteristics of the electoral system contributed to the creation of representation crisis in which only two parties each internally fragmented had real possibilities of gaining political power. In addition, given that fragmentation, the PL and the PC did not represent programmatic national interests; they represented particular interests that were supported by clientelistic practices (Gutiérrez 2007, Leal and Dávila 1991).

Initiatives to introduce reforms directed toward opening the political system and organizing the political parties began as soon as the National Front ended. During the first post-pact government of the Liberal Alfonso López Michelsen (1974-1978) a proposal for Constituent Assembly to initiate a process of fiscal and political decentralization was promoted, but failed to materialized, because the Supreme Court declared the initiative unconstitutional. Decentralization would create electoral posts at the local level.¹⁰⁴ Later on, during the following Liberal government of Julio César Turbay Ayala (1978-82), an ambitious project to reform the judicial power and issues related to the functioning of political parties - in particular the regulation of their finances - was presented to the Congress. The reform was approved, but later on, the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional arguing that the project incorporated a diversity of projects that involved constitutional reforms. The following president, the Conservative Belisario Betancur (1982-1986), introduced political reforms directed toward a “Democratic Opening” (*Apertura Democrática*). He presented a project in which previous

¹⁰⁴ Mayors and governors were selected by the country's president until 1988 and 1991 respectively. The project presented by López Michelsen was the “Proyecto de Acto Legislativo 2 de 1977”

proposals towards political decentralization were included. In addition, a reform designed to strengthen the opposition by providing it with political guarantees also was included. More independence and autonomy for the election committee was also considered, as well as more control over funding of electoral campaigns. Many of the proposals failed in Congress because “legislators did not have the will to relinquish their privileges and particular interests” (Murillo, Fajardo and Peña 1993). However, one substantive reform was introduced in 1986: the popular election of mayors as part of a deeper reform towards decentralization of the political system.¹⁰⁵ This initiative found ample support among legislators: political and fiscal decentralization would provide local politicians with resources to increase their electoral strength. The first popular election of mayors occurred in 1988 (Sarabia Better 2003).

During Virgilio Barco’s liberal government (1986-1990) a new project aimed at regulating public funding (total or partial) for political campaigns was presented. The project was supported by his party’s leadership (PL), and it passed the first legislative round. However, the President decided to withdraw it from Congress when a group of legislators wanted to include an amendment that abolished the extradition of delinquents involved in drug-traffic related crimes.¹⁰⁶ Later, in an attempt to forge a peace agreement that guaranteed the demobilization of guerrilla groups, Barco proposed a reform via a political referendum that gave political

¹⁰⁵ “Acto Legislativo No. 1 de 1986”. In the 1980s reforms directed toward political and fiscal decentralization were introduced. The first reforms included the popular election of mayors (the first took place in 1988) and a substantial transfer of the national government’s revenues to subnational levels. Later on, direct election of governors (1991) was introduced and fiscal transfers to regional and local governments were increased. Popular election of mayors and governors, and the fiscal transfers to local levels empowered local leaders of the traditional parties, leaders from alternative and new political movements, and other local actors (e.g., armed actors in some municipalities). These measures explain to some extent electoral outcomes of traditional parties. More competition at the local level implied electoral decreases for traditional parties. At the same time, more resources helped them nourish their electoral machines and empower local leaders. This was helpful for them to respond adequately to the new institutional framework. For an analysis of this process see O’Neill 2005.

¹⁰⁶ The government of Virgilio Barco Vargas confronted a harsh and bloody period of conflict with illegal cartels of narcotraffickers.

representation to those groups that agreed to disarm and to form legal political parties. Given its character as a ‘popular’ initiative (referendum), the measure failed. Legislators argued that this procedure would lack of their necessary ‘supervision’. At the end of this government (1989), the Supreme Court approved the call for a Constituent Assembly that would reform the Constitution. A profound political crisis exacerbated by the assassination of three presidential candidates in 1989 and 1990,¹⁰⁷ reinforced the idea of modifying the institutional foundations of the political system. Under the government of César Gaviria Trujillo (1990-1994) elections for a Constituent Assembly took place in December 1990, after the population voted in favor of a constitutional reform. The Constituent Assembly replaced the Congress that had been elected in 1990. It designed, discussed and approved a new Constitution that came into force in 1991.¹⁰⁸

The Colombian electoral system was reformed within the framework of the new Constitution. The aim of the reforms was to democratize the political system by opening spaces for new forces. The broadening of the system would help to deal with a crisis of representation caused by the dominance of two internally fragmented political parties. Changes were implemented regarding the formula for electing the president, and to the Senate’s electoral districts. First, the formula to elect the president was modified with the introduction of a second electoral round whenever none of the candidates obtained a majority of votes in the first round. The contenders in the second round would be the two candidates who obtained the highest number of votes in the first round. In theory, this formula encourages competition and creates a more inclusive system (Buquet 2007; Jones 1995). It allows more than one candidate to

¹⁰⁷ The three presidential candidates that were assassinated were: Luis Carlos Galán (August 1989) from the liberal faction “Nuevo Liberalismo”; Carlos Pizarro-Leongómez (April 1990) from the AD-M-19; and Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa (March 1990) from the leftist Unión Patriótica (UP).

¹⁰⁸ The Constituent Assembly was composed of 70 members that were elected in a nation-wide district. They represented a variety of interests as they came from a diversity of regions, social sectors, and political movements. (Douglas 1993).

participate in the first round. In addition, this rule discourages strategic voting that the plurality rule promotes: voters cast their ballot for their preferred candidate even though his/her possibilities for winning and running in the second round are minimal. In other words, the two-round majority-plurality system stimulates small parties or candidates to participate and compete with larger parties. With respect to legislative elections, the most substantial electoral reform was related to the Senate of the Republic (Botero 1998). Departmental electoral districts were eliminated, and a single national constituency was introduced.¹⁰⁹ The purpose of this reform was to enhance the system's inclusiveness and amplify representation. The national constituency would allow new parties and movements to compete with traditional ones amassing votes throughout the country without the need for regional political machinery. Furthermore, the reform was instituted in the hope that senators would begin to promote national-level interests, reducing the importance of local or regional interests, a role representatives in the lower chamber would retain. Another hope was that this change would lead to political party cohesion. The need to design a national-program agenda would summon leaders of different regions to consolidate the interests of the party to which they belonged. This, it was expected, would simultaneously generate party discipline because politicians would be guided by national interests rather than by local ones.

Another change incorporated in the 1991 electoral reform was the creation of a special two-seat quota to ensure representation for the constituency of indigenous peoples in the Senate. Finally, the size of the Senate was reduced from 114 to 102 seats.¹¹⁰ The Chamber of

¹⁰⁹ This reform was not approved unanimously. 14 out of 70 constituents did not agree with the elimination of regional district and the introduction of a 100-members national district. Despite this opposition, the reform passed because 43 of constituents approved it (Botero 1998).

¹¹⁰ 100 Senators are elected in the national district and 2 are elected in the special district for indigenous peoples.

Representatives was also reduced from 199 to 162 seats. The number of districts for the lower house increased from 23 to 33 after the administrative division of the country was also modified.¹¹¹ Simultaneous with these reforms, successful negotiations with five guerrilla groups took place between 1989 and 1994. These negotiations were directed toward incorporating illegal armed actors into the political system. The political opening that took place in 1990-1991 when the new Constitution was adopted was in part a consequence of these efforts. Some of these groups (in particular the M-19) were relatively successful in obtaining electoral power.

The above mentioned reforms – in particular the adoption of a national district to elect senators - had been discussed in the past.¹¹² However, the legislators' lack of will to implement these changes prevented their approval. A larger national district to elect senators implied a threat to traditional parties' electoral fortunes because it would lead to an increase in competition and would facilitate minor parties' access to power. Institutional reforms were possible only when a National Assembly was elected that was composed by representatives of the main and minor political parties, social groups, demobilized guerrillas, and ethnic movements. The election of the Assembly was viable when a crisis of representation, corruption and intimidation exacerbated and challenged the legitimacy of the political system and their actors.

The new rules for electing congressmen went into effect in 1991 and operated without further modifications until 2002. Four legislative elections took place during this period: in 1991, 1994, 1998, and 2002. Other studies have evaluated the achievements of the reform, and it is not the aim here to repeat them in detail (for instance, see Botero 1998; Gutiérrez 1998).

¹¹¹ In addition, special districts were created to elect 4 representatives of ethnic and minority groups (this modification was not applied until 2010).

¹¹² During Virgilio Barco Vargas government, liberal senators presented a legislative project that proposed the adoption of a national district (See Barco Vargas 1986). In 1989, the Democratic Alliance M-19 (Alianza Democrática M-19) incorporated this initiative in the Santo Domingo Manifest (“Manifiesto de Santo Domingo”), where they announced their intention to abandon the armed war and to consolidate a legal political party (Sarabia Better 2003: 70).

Nonetheless, it is important to underline the fact that even though the *apertura* of the system was achieved to the extent that new political forces entered the competition,¹¹³ the already existing parties were not strengthened either in electoral or organizational terms. Far from achieving cohesion, their fragmentation increased through the multiplication of lists.¹¹⁴ Increased competition resulting for new parties and movements produced incentives for traditional parties to present even more lists. The purpose was to decrease the chances of losing seats under the new context and win seats with few votes. In addition, traditional party's candidates, who should have been elected to the Senate with votes obtained at the national level gained seats by obtaining the regional votes they used to win under the previous system (Botero 1998). Personalization was thus intensified. In the end practices that had previously been in effect deepened further after 1991. This was partly due to the fact that the list system and the way in which seats were assigned – the largest remainders method - were left intact, which induced candidates to follow the same strategies that had enabled them to achieve electoral success in the past. Many of the new movements reproduced practices characteristic of the traditional parties. They were successful in some cases, but failed in most. Only a few tried successfully to break with the traditional dynamics, for instance by presenting single national lists. However, after the first elections in which they participated (1991), the new parties started to use strategies “learned” from the traditional parties; the multiplication of lists and consequent internal fragmentation that implied their own suicide in the longer run. New parties followed these strategies assuming that they would be useful to win more seats.

¹¹³ The 1991 Constitution defined few requirements for the establishment of new parties and political movements. Article 108 established that in order to create a new party, the only requirement was to obtain 50.000 signatures. This article was modified in 2003.

¹¹⁴ The total number of lists that competed for Senate seats between 1990 and 2002 was the following: 1990 (213); 1994 (251); 1998 (319) and 2002 (321) (Pizarro-Leongómez 1996).

Since 1991, a diversity of new parties began to win political representation in legislative elections, and traditional parties' share of votes and seats diminished. Few of the new parties that won political representation, obtained more than one or two seats.¹¹⁵ Only the Democratic Alliance M-19 (AD-M-19), the New Democratic Force (NFD) and the National Salvation Movement (MSN) were able to win 9, 8 and 5 Senate seats respectively. All three of them presented single party lists in senatorial elections instead of multiple lists as all other parties did. This decision enabled them to obtain the three highest numbers of votes after those obtained by the PL and the PC. These three cases illustrate how the reform introduced in 1991 could be beneficial for strengthening parties as long as they were willing to enter the electoral arena in an organized manner. Nevertheless, in 1994 these parties decided to follow the same strategy of traditional parties. They presented more than one list, hoping to obtain more power. However, they lost seats. The NFD and the MSN obtained 2 and 3 seats respectively, while the AD-M-19 not only suffered a loss of 70% with respect to its previous performance, but actually failed to achieve any political representation in Congress (Pizarro-Leongómez 1996).

The changes introduced in 1991 intensified the fragmentation of traditional parties and did not create incentives for politicians to consolidate cohesive political options. The forces that started to take shape from 1991 onward lacked enough power to consolidate themselves as solid alternatives and in many cases they disappeared. These outcomes in part resulted from the decision not to modify the conditions under which the list system worked. The crisis of representation intensified. Hoping to overcome this crisis, new reform proposals were presented, debated and filed in the Congress of the Republic throughout an entire decade (Pizarro-

¹¹⁵ Given the low proportion of votes and seats obtained by each party, the effective number of parties (ENP) did not increase significantly with respect to the previous period (1978 y 1990). In 1991, 1994 and 1998 the ENP was 3.06, 2.79 and 2.96 respectively. Only in 2002 did the ENP skyrocket (9.22), as a consequence of the increase of political forces and movements that managed to win seats (a total of 43).

Leongómez 1995, 1996a, 1996b). During the government of Ernesto Samper (1994-1998) at least three projects to reform the electoral system were presented by the executive.¹¹⁶ The purpose of these projects was to deal with the crisis of representation by limiting the number of party lists and by implementing mechanisms that disciplined party behavior, among others. The reforms were not approved in the legislature basically because the legislators had no interest in the changes (Ungar 2003). During the following government of Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002), new projects to reform the system were proposed. Some of them came from the executive branch and were not successful. The legislature abandoned them when the President introduced an article that gave him extraordinary power to advance peace processes with insurgent groups. A referendum project that included political reforms – e.g., regulation of roll call votes; elimination of legislators’ replacements; a decrease in the number of legislators – also failed during this government. Another project designed to reduce with the multiplication of party lists was not supported by a majority of legislators. When Pastrana finished his term none of these initiatives was approved as laws. However, they established a precedent that Alvaro Uribe Vélez’s government of took up again. On his possession day, Uribe presented a referendum proposal that included a profound political reform. Parallel to this initiative, legislators presented a project that included most of the points contained in that referendum. Finally, after a long process in which the presidential referendum failed, the Legislative Act 01/2002 was approved in July, 2003 and the electoral system underwent new modifications. This was possible after parties negotiated some aspects that would ‘protect’ them from losing power.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Ernesto Samper called representatives from the traditional parties, from business and labor sectors; from the academia and NGOs to integrate a commission that would discuss and propose measures to deal with the crisis of representation. This body was called the “Comisión para el Estudio de la Reforma de los Partidos Políticos”.

¹¹⁷ Legislators from traditional and minority parties agreed that the reform was approved for two reasons. First, several previous attempts to introduce changes and demands from the population pressed legislators to

The changes introduced affected the list system, voting procedures, and the formula used to allocate seats. First, parties lost the right to present an unlimited number of lists; each of them would be allowed to present a single list in each electoral constituency.¹¹⁸ Second, parties could decide the type of list in which they would present their candidates. On the one hand, there may be closed lists in which the place of each candidate cannot be modified and voters cast their ballots for the party. On the other hand, open lists may also be presented, in which case electors vote for the candidate and/or for the party of their choice. In lists with preferential voting, voters are the ones who determine the order in which the candidates are selected.¹¹⁹ Third, the formula for assigning seats became stricter with the adoption of the D'Hondt formula and the introduction of electoral thresholds.¹²⁰

In addition to these changes in electoral engineering, a complementary provision was adopted which seeks to achieve party discipline with respect to their legislative behavior. The “Party Blocs Law” establishes unified decision-making on the part of the legislators that belong to the same party. The purpose of this law is to control the behavior of legislators. Unlike the reform adopted in 1991, this reform extended beyond electoral rules by defining rules and

implement reforms directed toward dealing a deep crisis of representation. The lack of changes would threaten legislators and could imply a drastic imposition of new rules from outside the Congress. Thus, the reform ended up being a survival strategy. Second, negotiations among parties (not reached before) facilitated the approval of the reforms. In particular, the Conservative Party was able to introduce open lists (preferential vote). This would guarantee individual candidates the possibility to continue the personalistic practices that the previous system promoted (Interviews with Rafael Pardo, Juan Fernando Cristo and Héctor Helí Rojas, from the PL); with Alberto Villamizar from the PC, and with the independent David Luna (June 2006 and July 2007).

¹¹⁸Each party could present one national list for the Senate and one list for each departmental district.

¹¹⁹The PC proposed to include preferential vote within the electoral reform. This initiative was included late in the legislative process that led to the adoption of the changes. Without this measure, the approval of the law would have been difficult. According to legislators, the preferential vote kept the possibility of applying individual strategies (Wilson Borja); it did not reduce the ‘personalism’ (Rafael Pardo) and it ‘killed’ the spirit of the reform (David Luna). Others oppose those opinions and stated that it induces democratic procedures within the party because the elector rather than the party leadership decides the order of the list (Luis Fernando Almario). In the same direction, Jaime Dussán, stated that preferential vote opens the possibility that new persons gain access to power (Interviews, June 2006 and July 2007).

¹²⁰D'Hondt method is a “formula for allocating seats to parties in proportion to their votes, more favourable to large parties than small ones. Sequence of divisors is 1, 2, 3, 4, etc” (Gallagher and Mitchell 208: 632).

regulations that affect the internal dynamics of political parties. However, the effectiveness of the law was quite limited during the first years of its application.

The new rules aimed to improve political representation of the collegiate bodies through the organization of the party system, party unification, and disciplined behavior within the institutions. The new rules of the game were applied for the first time in the elections of local public officials in 2003 (Hoskin and García 2006). In March 2006, these rules were used to elect national legislators. Electoral results show a mixed balance. First, single lists forced different factions to achieve cohesion. Many candidates who would run individually in the past with their own list and in the name of ‘independent’ parties or movements found it necessary to ally themselves with the strongest electoral options. Getting together was necessary for success.¹²¹ Electoral results indicate that the number of parties/movements and lists was reduced considerably, declining from 65 and 319 respectively to only 20 parties and the same number of lists in the Senate of the Republic. The reduction of parties was the principal goal of the reform. In that sense, legislators agreed that the new rules were successful. However, they also emphasized that the cohesion of factions did not necessarily imply more programmatic parties. Ideological conflicts among different tendencies were the more visible threat to party cohesion.¹²²

Second, the mechanism for assigning seats and the thresholds imposed greater demands on the forces running for election because it became necessary to obtain a relatively high vote total in order to win seats. The thresholds left out those lists that did not reach the quotient

¹²¹ Legislators from different parties agreed with this fact. Juan Fernando Cristo from the PL, and Jamie Dussán from the PC, stated that those that acted in group and supported the idea of strengthening political parties were awarded and won seats. On the contrary, those individual politicians that followed an individual strategy failed. Wilson Borja from the Polo Democrático Alternativo said that those who failed did not understand the purpose of the reform and decided to go individual (Interviews, June 2006 and July 2007).

¹²² Interviews with senators Juan Fernando Cristo; Luis Fernando Almarino; Juan Manuel Galán; and with Jairo Clopatofski (Interviews, June 2006 and July 2007).

determined by the d'Hondt allocation formula. Finally, introduction of the preferential vote and a very lax implementation of the "Party Blocs Law", limited the scope of the other two reforms. Preferential voting produced intra-party competition among those who composed the lists, thus reproducing the personalistic ambitions which the previous system encouraged. Most parties that participated in elections opted for opening their lists and permitting electors to vote for candidates of their choice. Only one party that used closed lists obtained seats in both the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. All other movements that opted for this strategy in the Senate failed. On the other hand, the "Party Blocs Law" (*Ley de Bancadas*) left open the possibility for parties to decide when to act together and when party members can vote freely, pre-established by the party leaders (Rodríguez Raga and Botero 2006).¹²³ The lack of coordination and agreement among the members of any given party has impeded the effectiveness of the measures established.

The reforms that were introduced to the Colombian electoral system in 1991 and 2003 altered the distribution of power within democratic institutions. The two-party system that existed until 1990 was transformed into a multi-party system after the first reform was adopted in 1991. In the course of four legislative elections (1991, 1994, 1998 and 2002), the fractioning of political representation became evident, resulting from the multiplication of parties and movements. In 2002, candidates of 43 political forces were elected to the Senate of the Republic. In the legislative elections of 2006, a new transformation of the party system was displayed following the adoption of the reform approved by Congress in 2003. In the Senate, only ten of

¹²³ Article 2 of the law established that members of each voting bloc would act as a coordinated group and would employ democratic mechanisms for decision-making inside public corporations on all topics that the by-laws of their respective party or political movement do not define as questions of conscience. Article 5 of the law developed this resolution by defining a wide range of issues in which members of a partisan voting-bloc could act freely.

the twenty parties running for office were elected. The system contracted, which did not necessarily imply a significant increase in the levels of representation. In cases in which there actually was an increment in the number of votes, the increase is partly explained by the decision of many small movements to unite and form strategic alliances. With said decision, the PL suffered a loss of votes and, for the first time in its history, descended to third place as a political force in the Congress of the Republic. As shown in Figure 4.1, both the PL and the PC began to experience a decline in their level of electoral success in 1994. In 2006, the former obtained the lowest number of votes since the 1991 legislative elections and although the latter recovered with respect to 2002, its level of representativeness remained relatively low: it obtained 17.65% share of seats. When comparing the power that these two parties enjoyed in the past, it is evident that they have lost a great portion of it in the past decade. The above-described reforms are an explanatory factor of this tendency. The *apertura* of the system and, further on, the imposition of barriers to stimulate the formation of coalitions, negatively affected the performance of the PL and the PC.

In spite of their electoral decline, and unlike other parties that never became consolidated, the traditional parties have survived and continue as agents of representation in the Colombian political system. This differs from the situation in Venezuela where traditional parties became marginal actors after 1998. In both countries, the 1980s was a period of structural and political crises that challenged the existence of traditional political parties. In this context of similar contextual situations and different political outcomes, it is pertinent to see if variables at the party level explain, to some extent, different outcomes of their electoral trajectories. After a review of the Venezuelan electoral rules, this question is explored in section 4.4.

4.3.2 Venezuela

The Venezuelan institutional design that guaranteed a successful transition to democracy and the consolidation of the democratic system during the 1960s and 1970s originated with the Punto Fijo Pact (1958). The main feature of that design was the centrality that political parties and their elites acquired. They became the principal actors in the country's political and social life. Parties were policy designers and policy makers; they channeled political participation; they represented a diversity of social interests, and they constituted the linkages between the government and the society. The immense power that parties accumulated, along with an institutional design that defined a centralized and inflexible policy-making process controlled by the parties, resulted from the elites' decision to generate consensus that facilitated the consolidation of the democratic system (Crisp 2000; Rey 1991). Although that purpose was fulfilled during the 1960s and 1970s, the economic, political and social challenges of the 1980s questioned the legitimacy of both the institutional design and the political parties. Party elites were reluctant to reform the rules of the game despite the fact that civil society and the national problems required changes. Because change would dictate additional channels of participation, institutional reforms would imply de-centralization of power as well as a reduction of the political influence of traditional party elites. When the crisis exacerbated, party leaders found no option but to implement some changes to the electoral system. However, the modifications were insufficient or inappropriate to confront and overcome the political limitations that the previous design produced.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ While former party leaders state that reform of the electoral system was just apparent (Interview with Gustavo Tarre, June 2010), analysts note that it was necessary and that it produced an important impact on the distribution of power (Interviews with Luis Lander; José Gregorio Contreras; Carlos Romero, June 2010).

The Constitution of 1961 defined the rules of the electoral system that remained in effect until reforms were introduced in the late 1980s. From 1961 until 1988, voters cast two ballots in concurrent elections every five years. They cast a small-card ballot for legislative elections at all levels (Chamber of Deputies, Senate, state legislative assemblies, and before 1978 city councils) and a large card-ballot for presidential elections (Coppedge 1994: 22). Voters cast their votes for a party rather than for an individual candidate. Presidential elections were first-past-the post: the winning candidate needed a plurality of votes in a single round election. Legislators for a bicameral Congress were elected using a proportional representation system that used closed list and the d'Hondt method to allocate seats. This system gave great power to party leaders, limited the voters' choices, favored traditional parties, promoted a two-party system, and produced high party discipline. The national leadership drew up the lists and decided the order in which candidates would appear. They controlled the selection of candidates, and defined the issues of the political campaigns. The power of national leaders over candidates made the latter accountable to the former and not to their constituents. In addition, this produced "ironclad party discipline" in the legislature. This converted legislators into passive actors – they were not involved in most policy making - merely tools of party leaders that used them to legitimate the political process (Crisp 2000: 11). This design prevented citizens from exercising control over the internal dynamics of parties and elected authorities, thereby limiting effective political participation and representation. Citizens could influence policy-making processes through social organizations. However, these organizations were limited to business and labor groups, the more powerful the Federation of Chambers and Associations of Commerce and Production (FEDECAMARAS), and the Confederations of Venezuelan Workers, (CTV). Social sectors that did not belong to these organizations or that had interests different from those of

FEDECAMARAS and CTV found little representation in the political system. Political parties did not incorporate them or promote their interests.¹²⁵ These limits placed upon participation and representation became apparent in the 1980s when the economic and political crisis exploded. Social groups that saw their living standards decline without an effective governmental response, or new groups that advocated new forms of participation, began to hit the streets to manifest their frustrations through public riots and protests. They abstained from participating in electoral processes and started to vote for parties different from AD and COPEI (see figure 4.2).¹²⁶ Public uprisings and the decline of traditional parties forced party leaders to implement political reforms that dealt with that situation.

Reforms introduced in the late 1970s aimed to increase political participation and representation. Specifically, municipal elections for deliberative bodies were separated from national elections and were held one year after presidential elections (Coppedge 1994: 22). During the government of AD President Jaime Lusinchi (1984-1989) the Presidential Commission for the Reform of the State (COPRE) was created to discuss political decentralization reforms and replacement the PR-closed list electoral system with a system that encouraged greater attachments between voters and legislators, a mixed electoral system. These reforms were introduced in the late 1980s.. An additional initiative that COPRE presented was the reform of political parties' internal procedures. Proposals were directed toward democratizing political parties, opening the nomination procedures, and increasing financial

¹²⁵ Crisp (2000) sheds light on the lack of interest of both parties and business/labor interests to in introducing changes to the dominant policies and to the institutional design. He states that “the powerful entrenchment of AD and COPEI in the electoral arena, and FEDECAMARAS and the CTV in the consultative arena helped those in power to restrict the emergence of new groups and to resist the pressures for policy changes for some time (...) The institutions [the electoral and consultative institutions] remained unaltered. The institutions resisted change and they evolved only episodically”(174).

¹²⁶ The levels of abstention increased in national elections progressively. In 1978 it was 12.4%, in 1988 it rose to 18.3% and in 1993 it jumped dramatically to almost 40%” (CSE, 1990).

accountability, among others. Pronounced centralization inside the parties and excessive political control motivated discussions about the necessity of introducing these reforms. However, they turned out not to be effective (COPRE 1991).

This reform process was complex and drawn out. Some changes were approved (decentralization and a mixed electoral system), but others lacked the necessary support for congressional approval (changes inside parties). The nature of COPRE and its composition was partially explained the difficulties encountered in introducing electoral reforms. First, the commission was created by a presidential decree and defined as a consultative body within the executive branch. In that sense, it lacked independence and autonomy to make decisions. Second, the commission was appointed by the president and legislators most of whom were members of the traditional parties.¹²⁷ Some commission members, especially the most conservative sectors of the traditional parties, did not have the political commitment to introduce changes that could imply their own demise.¹²⁸ More democratization inside parties was a threat to old-guard leaders. Decentralization and the adoption of a mixed system also might imply a reduced vote for traditional parties. These initiatives produced strong debate inside COPRE. Some sectors of AD and COPEI had no interest in changing the electoral system because a closed list-PR with a d'Hondt allocation formula traditionally had favored them. Other parties, such as MAS, URD, and MEP, some independents, and most progressive sectors of AD and COPEI advocated changes that would help them to obtain more representation.¹²⁹ Social organizations associated with the media and neighborhood associations, among others, exercised

¹²⁷ COPRE consisted of 35 members, distributed as follows: AD (9); COPEI (5); MAS (1); URD (1); MEP (9); Independents: 9 and “six Independents leaning towards AD, two Independents leaning toward the left, and one independent leaning toward MAS” (O’Neill, 2005: 184).

¹²⁸ Interview with Carlos Romero, June 2010.

¹²⁹ COPEI’s presidential candidate in 1988 was one of the promoters of this measure (Interview with Eduardo Fernández, June 2010).

considerable pressure on reformers.¹³⁰ They demanded a more participatory system in which they could elect their representatives directly. Initially, some voices asked for the introduction of a majoritarian system. However, COPRE strongly rejected this proposal. At the end, an intermediate solution was adopted with the introduction of a mixed electoral system.¹³¹ Traditional parties agreed to do this change to confront their electoral losses and deal with increasing levels of abstention.¹³²

Adoption of the mixed PR electoral system empowered local governments and opened new spaces for increased political competition. Small parties like MAS and “Causa Radical” began to compete and captured some power. This implied a decrease in votes for traditional parties, and partisan de-alignment. Also it “helped to build the political climate that allowed the success of a presidential nominee not supported by the traditional main parties” (Molina and Pérez 1998: 18).

The reform to decentralize power produced resistance from traditional parties for long time. Both AD and COPEI had alternated presidential power and dominated the legislature since 1958. This provided them with nation-wide bases of support. However, support from regional bases was not guaranteed. These parties delayed decentralization reforms because they perceived that their chances of winning subnational contests were low (in particular COPEI) (O’Neill

¹³⁰ Pressure for changes came principally from neighborhood movements. The “Federation of Civic and Urban Associations” (Federación de Asociaciones Civiles Urbanas, FACUR), and Neighborhood’s Schools (Escuela de Vecinos) claimed “more power for citizens and less power for politicians” (Lucena 2003). Specifically, they demanded the popular election of mayors and the introduction of single-member districts for legislative elections.

¹³¹ According to Crisp and Levine, “this system composed the Chamber of Deputies from two distinct groups of elected representatives. Approximately one half of the deputies are elected through the traditional closed-list, proportional representation method, with the nation constituting the sole electoral district. The other half comes from “first-past-the-post” or plurality elections in more circumscribed single-member districts” (1998: 48). Although most literature on this reform agrees with this explanation, electoral results show that the system did not work in that precise way. The ‘second’ half of deputies was not always elected in single-member districts as proscribed, but in multi-member districts. Parties presented multiple candidates and those individual candidates with the largest numbers of votes were elected. This mechanism favored larger parties over smaller parties. I thank Anibal Pérez-Liñán for this observation.

¹³² Interview with Luis Lander, June 2010.

2005). In addition, decentralization would imply a decrease of national leaders' power they were not willing to cede. When these parties saw their national electoral shares decrease, they decided to back reforms that COPRE proposed. This could be a palliative to vote loss if the parties were able to win large percentages of the newly electable sub-national positions (governors and mayors). In addition, citizen movements exercised strong pressures for effective decentralization. When the campaign for presidential elections started in 1988, this issue was put at the top of the electoral agenda. The winning candidate, Carlos Andrés Pérez, fulfilled his campaign promises by enacting legislation that allowed for the elections of governors and mayors and assured them financial resources (Crisp 2000; Kornblith 1997).

Decentralization of power through the direct election of governors and mayors gave smaller parties greater opportunities to compete and elect politicians. In fact, minor parties like MAS strengthened their share of votes in some regions. However, AD and COPEI continued winning the majority of local posts.¹³³ The changes required leaders of the traditional centralized parties to “begin crafting new relationships with civil society” (Crisp and Levine 1998: 47), and to take into account local criteria in the elaboration of candidate lists for councilors and mayors (...). (This) had led to confrontations (...) between national and local leaders within these parties” (Kornblith and Levine 1993: 25). Decentralization reforms were limited due to the failure to introduce reforms directed toward opening and democratizing the political parties. The national leadership was left with the power to overturn the changes. Another limitation was the fact that national leaders retained an enormous amount of governmental revenue and power (Garman, Hagaard and Willis 2001). During Caldera's second government (1993-1998) transfer

¹³³ AD and COPEI “captured 17 of governorships in 1989, 16 of 22 in 1993, and 15 of 22 in 1995. The total number of mayoralities controlled by AD or COPEI has never fallen below 87 percent. Together they took 256 of a possible 269 in the 1989 vote, 249 of a possible 282 in 1992, and 293 of 330 in 1995 (Crisp and Levine 1998: 35).

of resources to the sub-national level was delayed. In addition, the President started a “campaign to turn public opinion against the decentralization process” (Angulo Perdomo 1997). This call was intensified when Hugo Chávez assumed power in 1998. Local elections continued, but the power of governors and mayors was curtailed (O’Neill 2005). In addition, electoral participation in sub-national elections was quite low.

In summary, Colombian and Venezuelan institutional reforms modified the electoral system and decentralized power as a response to profound crisis of representation. Traditional parties promoted changes in both cases. Contrary to what one would expect – that reformers would benefit from the reforms–, all four traditional parties suffered electoral declines. As I showed in previous sections of this chapter, traditional parties also suffered because their leaders were not able to implement long-term solutions to structural and political challenges of the 1980s and 1990s. All these shortcomings explain to some extent the decline of parties. However, as I described above, not all parties suffered to the same extent. While AD and COPEI became marginal political actors in Venezuela, the PL and the PC in Colombia survived the challenges. This fact reveals that conventional explanations that I presented in the previous sections are not enough to solve the puzzle presented in this dissertation. For this reason, it is necessary to analyze other explanatory variables. The next section studies the internal organization of the parties. It is shown that characteristics of party organizations constitute an intermediary variable that affects electoral performance.

4.4 INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF TRADITIONAL PARTIES

The internal organization differs from one party to another. In this section I describe the formal organization of Colombian and Venezuelan traditional parties, the PL, PC, AD and COPEI. I also ascertain if they function according to their formal rules, or if other informal mechanisms shape their performance. The cases show that internal characteristics influence their behavior and affect their electoral performance. They mediate parties' responses to political, economic and institutional challenges. The following subsections describe each party's organization. I conclude with some hypotheses.

4.4.1 The Liberal Party (PL)¹³⁴

The PL' statutes define the party as a hierarchical organization. The party's organs at the top of that structure (national level bodies) accumulated a lot of powers. However, at the regional, municipal and local levels, party organs enjoyed autonomy to act and make decisions. Leaders at these levels enjoyed discretionary powers to decide the party's strategies independently from the national leadership. Despite the formal hierarchical character of the party, the autonomy of leaders at lower levels curtailed the power of the central leadership. The following paragraphs describe formal party structures and functioning of the organization.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ This section (PL and PC) is based on the parties statutes (PL:1987, PC:1973); on studies by Duque (2006); Lara and Losada (1983) and Roll (2003) and on interviews with former party leaders (June 2006 and July 2007).

¹³⁵ Levitsky and Freidenberg (2007) have developed studies on the informal rules that determine the real working of political parties.

4.4.1.1 National-Level Organization

At the national level, the PL has six organs: the national convention (CNL); the national board of directors (Dirección Nacional, DNL); the central political commission (Comisión Política Central, CPC); the general secretariat (SGL); the general treasury (TGL) and the national tribunal of guarantees (TNG). Formally, these organs perform the party's main political and administrative functions. Four consultative bodies complemented the party's structure at this level: the ideological national council (Consejo Nacional Ideológico, CNI); the national consultative council (Consejo Consultivo Nacional, CCN); sectional guarantee commissions (Comisiones Seccionales de Garantías, CSG) and the ethic council for control (Consejo de Control Ético). These organs serve as secondary organizations that advise the party's leadership on ideological, ethical and programmatic issues.

The national convention (CNL) is the supreme authority (Art. 26). It defines the party's line; discusses and approves the ideological and normative principles as well as the formation of alliances and coalitions; and it elects the members of the national board of directors (DNL), the general secretariat (SGL), and the general treasury (TGL). Until 1989, the convention appointed the party's presidential candidate. The CNL was composed of the 'natural' party's leaders (former presidents and national leaders) and by representatives of other party bodies from national, regional and local levels.¹³⁶ Ordinarily, the convention meets every two years. However, the DNL can call for extraordinary sessions if necessary.

The national board of directors (DNL) is the entity just below the CNL in the party's structure. It consist of a single national leader or a group of leaders elected by the party's

¹³⁶ The CNL included members from the DNL; the TGL; the SGL; ministries; senators; representatives and municipal councils; delegates from departmental and district conventions; labor union leaders, and members from social organizations that represented women, youth and peasants.

supreme authority, the CNL, for a two-year period. Although the DNL is formally below the CNL, it is the body that exercises more power within the organization. It represents the party nationally and internationally; it mediates the party's relations with the different branches of power and with control organs and other political organizations. It directs and guides the central political commission (CPC); delegates functions to the general secretariat (SGL); regulates processes of membership in the party and arbitrates internal conflicts. Finally, the DNL convokes extraordinary CNL's meetings, departmental and district conventions.

The central political commission (CPC) occupies the third level in the party hierarchy. It coordinates the party's legislative functions; it establishes links between national level organs and the party's regional bodies at the regional, the departmental and the local levels, and it appoints Liberal candidates for electoral campaigns. The CPC is composed of legislators – both senators and representatives –elected by a parliamentary board (Junta Parlamentaria). This commission enjoys high levels of autonomy to make decisions at the regional level. The parliamentary board is formally below the DNL, the CNL and the CPC. However, in practice, it has accumulated a lot of power and constrained the power of the national authorities. Members of that board are regional leaders that enjoy high levels of autonomy given their electoral capacity in departments and municipalities. Far from promoting programmatic and ideological national interests, these leaders promote regional and local interests. This has induced the decentralization of the party's structure and produced its internal fragmentation. As a consequence, national bodies are constrained in the exercise of their administrative and political attributes, and in the performance of other functions established in the party's statutes (Duque 2007; Gutiérrez 2002, 2007; Latorre 1974; Roll 2003).

4.4.1.2 Regional-Level Organization

At the regional level, the party replicates the structure at the national level structure. It has legislative (conventions), executive (committees) and judicial (tribunals) bodies that are invested with powers to consolidate their composition and define their own rules. These bodies also supervise the performance of national leaders. Departmental and district conventions are the supreme authorities at the regional level. They are composed of legislators, municipal councils, deputies, and representatives of local assemblies. These bodies define ideological and programmatic issues in every jurisdiction (departments), and elect regional delegates that integrate the national convention (CNL). They also elect members of the political and administrative local bodies (department and municipal boards of directors). These organs watch over the fulfillment of the party's political programs and made sure that all regions are represented in the national level organs. They also convoke departmental and district conventions, and serve as transmission belts between the party's organs and levels. Finally, the municipal assemblies – composed of municipal councils and delegates of the departmental consultative councils – reviewed the formal processes of political and fiscal decentralization. They establish links between bases at the local level and decision making processes at the departmental level. They also guarantee the participation of local communities in deliberative and electoral processes.

As mentioned previously, although regional level party organs are located below national organs (formally), in practice the former exercises a lot of power. Rather than defending and implementing national interests, regional powerful leaders promote local and particular interests. They decide the conformation of party lists at the regional and district levels and act autonomously from the national leadership. These actions are stimulated by the institutional

design that allows the conformation of ‘faction’ lists for different deliberative bodies. The institutional design produces political incentives that are contrary to the party’s formal statutes. The power that regional leaders have accumulated has produced decentralization of the formal vertical structure of the PL. Although the party rules establish a vertical or hierarchical structure, which a small group of leaders at the national level have the formal authority to decide the party’s destiny, the real functioning of the organization is shaped by the decisions of regional and local leaders. The possibilities for sub-national leaders to take autonomous decisions allow the party to respond efficiently to contextual challenges. In addition, the wide array of party leaders (i.e. national and regional leaders) provides voters with a lot of alternatives at the polls. This characteristic of the PL allows it to survive when difficult external conditions challenge its viability.

4.4.2 The Conservative Party (PC)

The PC has a formal structure similar to the PL’s. The party is organized hierarchically. National organs are located at the top of the structure and have the power to define the party’s ideological line and its programmatic agenda. At the regional level, the party reproduces the vertical structure. Despite similar organizational structures of the PC and PL, distribution of power and the performance of national leaders differ in both organizations. The next paragraphs describe the PC’s structure.

4.4.2.1 Party’s National-Level Organization

Despite its similarities to the PL, the PC has a simpler organization. At the national level, it is constituted by the following organs: a national convention (CNC); a national board of

directors (DNC); a parliamentary commission; a commission integrated by regional leaders (Conferencia de Directorios Regionales) and consultative organs. The CNC is the supreme authority (Art. 6). It discharges programmatic and elective roles. Regarding the former, the national convention defines the party's line; reforms the statutes; establishes programmatic guidelines and determines the governmental agenda. It also is in charge of keeping the party's doctrinal coherence, and guaranteeing political discipline across all levels and organs. Regarding the elective capacity of the CNC, it has lesser attributes than its equivalent in the PL, as it only chose the national board of directors and the official candidate for presidential elections. This organ is composed of non-elected and elected delegates. Non-elected members are the following: former presidents; former ministers; former governors and mayors; editors of conservative; senators; representatives; and the main members of the national board of directors. On the other side, departmental directorates elect delegates to represent them at the convention. Deputies; municipal councils; base level representatives; and members of women, youth and workers organizations also have an electoral quota in the CNC. The party's statutes call the convention into session once every two years. Sessions are headed by the DNC's president. Although the CNC occupies a central position within the party's structure, the real power that it exercises is limited. It does not meet on a regular basis and consequently it does not fulfill all the duties that the statutes demanded. Other organs – in particular the DNC – and sometimes the natural leaders ('jefes naturales'), perform those functions informally (Pachón 2002).

The national board of directors (DNC) is located organizationally below the national convention (CNC). It is the supreme political and administrative organ when the convention is not in session (Art. 20). In general, the DNC plays the same roles as the DNL. In addition, the CNC delegates most of its functions to the DNC, This body is in charge of maintaining the

party's doctrine and regulating the statutes. It resolves internal disputes and convokes the national and departmental conventions as well as the conference of regional directorates and the parliamentary committee. It also represents the party before the government and other organizations. The DNC has the power to create and direct consultative organs, as for example, technical committees; secretariats; schools to form political leaders, among others. Members of the DNC are secretly elected for a period of two years. They can be reelected indefinitely.¹³⁷ The parliamentary committee is the main group that integrates the DNC. Instead of a single director, a collegiate board composed of senators and representatives occupy the party's leadership. Different from the DNL, where national leaders play a fundamental role the DNC does not count on a formal presence of national leaders. This is a consequence of internal factional fights among former presidents.¹³⁸

The third level in the hierarchical structure is formed by the parliamentary committee, which is composed of active legislators and meets when the DNC calls it into sessions. This committee was amassed a lot of administrative and political power (more than in the PL) (Duque 2006). It serves as a communication and coordination channel between the party's leaders and legislative bodies at the national and regional levels. It coordinates the party's legislative actions; chooses candidates for legislative elections and supports the DNC in the elaboration of the national policy agenda. The power that the committee's legislators possess and their personal

¹³⁷ The members of the national board of directors in both the PL and the PC could be reelected indefinitely. However, The PL had lower rates of reelection than the PC. In the former, renovation of the party's directors occurred more frequently than in the PL. In his study on traditional parties, Duque (2007) shows, that some PL national leaders were reelected for two consecutive periods, while some PC national leaders were reelected for three, four or five consecutive periods.

¹³⁸ In the DNL the following (former) presidents were fundamental figures: Julio César Turbay, Alberto Lleras Camargo; Carlos Lleras Restrepo; Alfonso López Michelsen and Virgilio Barco. In the DNC, Alvaro Gómez, Misael Pastrana and Belisario Betancur represented each a faction within the organization.

political ambitions are a cause for the party's fragmentation in the late 1960s and thereafter (Latorre 1974).

These organs at the national level are a commission formed by regional leaders, consultative organs and a disciplinary tribunal. The party's statutes are not clear regarding the attributions that these organs possess. In practice, they have low levels of decision-making power. They serve as forums in which administrative, political and regional issues are discussed. The disciplinary tribunal has the role of sanctioning violations of the party's statutes. However, it lacks real power to perform that function.

4.4.2.2 Regional Level Organization

The party's statutes define it as a 'federal' organization that extended administrative and political independence to departmental and local organs (Art. 26). The regional structure replicates the national organization of the party. It has departmental conventions; departmental boards of directors; municipal directories, committees and sub-committees; neighborhood boards and groups, and consultative organs. Despite the formal existence of these bodies, their functions are superficially defined in the party's statutes, which define the attributes and composition of the departmental conventions. The lack of clear rules has decreased the power that regional level organizations possess.

Conventions are called after election of departmental deputies and municipal councils. They coordinate the party's policies at the regional level; elect departmental boards of directors; determine the federal statutes; establish the tribunal of regional guarantees, and create consultative organs. Departmental conventions are composed of national and regional political leaders.

Similar to the PL, the PC suffered internal fragmentation in part as a result of the institutional design that allowed regional politicians to draft electoral lists autonomously (faction lists). This option decentralized the formal centralized and hierarchical party structures, though in different degrees. In both cases, dissident lists threatened the unity of the organizations. The PC found ways to face this. Despite the fact that the organizational structure is permeated by factional divisions, the ‘natural leaders’ are able (more than in the PL) to call and promote cohesion among members at different levels (Duque 2006). In that sense, and in comparison to the PL, where small territorial cells had the capacity to break the party’s discipline, the PC conserved a more vertical structure and is more disciplined than the PL (Gutiérrez Sanín 2007). The superficiality in how the party’s statutes defined attributes of regional level organs helped the national leaders maintain a structure in which the national level was dominant. Thus, the federal and decentralized structure that is defined formally do not correspond to reality. In addition, the lack of internal democracy to elect leaders (a small group of leaders –‘los notables’- made all decisions without much debate), fed the verticality of the PC (Duque 2006; Roll 2003). Conservative legislators agreed that the party’s internal primaries reflected the fact that the national directorate prevailed over departmental directories and over legislators (in particular regional legislators).¹³⁹ This however, did not necessarily imply a more successful electoral performance. In fact, the more decentralized structure and political strategy of the PL was useful in capturing a larger portion of regional and local power (at least until 2002). In the words of a Liberal politician Rafael Pardo Rueda, “those who are elected are people who had political organizations linked to national, departmental, or local power. The PL, for example, won in

¹³⁹ According to focus groups realized with members of the Conservative Party, the national directorate won and leadership at the local level lost importance (“El directorio nacional ganó y aplazó los directorios locales”).

departments in which there were Liberal governors”¹⁴⁰. On this same issue, Senator Luis Guillermo Vélez, a liberal dissident, declared that electoral success is also determined by local and regional electoral machines. Mayors and governors contribute to the electoral mobilization, and this guarantees the success of congressional candidates. Although the electoral performance of traditional parties decreased in the 2000s, they had organizational resources that provided them with an advantage over parties and movements that are at risk of disappearing for lack of similar resources. The existence of more or less lax organizations within parties, and the presence of decentralized structures enabled the two traditional collectivities to adapt and survive in different institutional and contextual environments.

4.4.3 Democratic Action (AD)¹⁴¹

AD was founded as a mass-based party with a hierarchical structure. The party has organs at the national, regional, district and local level. Although all organs played different roles and have some autonomy to act, the party’s decisions flow from the top level (national) to the bottom (local). Thus, organs at the national level, in particular the national board of directors and the national executive committee, have more discretionary power than any other organ within the party. In the next subsections, I describe AD’s formal organizational structure, and the relationships among different levels.

¹⁴⁰ Interview to Rafael Pardo Rueda on June 2007.

¹⁴¹ This section is based on the party’s statutes; on Martz’ study (1966); and on interviews with former party leaders, June 2010.

4.4.3.1 National-Level Organization

At the national level, the party had four organs: the national convention; the national board of directors committee (Comité Directivo Nacional, CDN); the national executive committee (Comité Ejecutivo Nacional, CEN); and the national disciplinary tribunal (Tribunal Disciplinario Nacional, TDN).

Formally, the national convention is the supreme organ. It set the political line of the party and defined its programmatic agenda. Another of its attributes is the designation of the members of the national executive committee's and the national disciplinary tribunal's (TDN). The composition of the national convention is broad and includes representatives of different party organs at both the national and regional level.¹⁴² A majority of delegates are representatives of sectional conventions. Originally, the convention met yearly or extraordinarily when their leaders considered it necessary. Later on, it is established that conventions would be held only once every four or five years. Despite their formal position at the top of the structure, in practice, the national convention does not lead the party. Its size, heterogeneity, and infrequent meetings make it difficult for this convention to become the most important organ. The party line that it outlines is susceptible to modification by bodies at lower levels, in particular the CEN and CDN. These two organs provide national leadership and define more decisively party's policies.

The national board of directors committee (CDN) follows the national committee in the party's structure. Formally, this committee is the maximum party authority when the national convention is not in session. It can modify or introduce changes to the party lines, as well as regulate or enforce decisions undertaken in other party organs (conventions). The CDN is

¹⁴² Statutes define around 700 delegates for the national convention.

composed of the CEN; the TDN' president; two labor and youth groups, and regional leaders.¹⁴³ Party leaders and the party president can attend meetings and have the right to speak but not to vote. This organ is smaller than the convention and more representative than the CEN – it convokes members from different levels, and includes all significant party leaders -. This facilitates the CDN's to discussion and resolution of the party's internal problems. It is usual that the national convention decides to delegate major decisions to the CDN.

The national executive committee (CEN) follows the CDN in the party's hierarchical structure. It is a permanent organ is elected by the national convention each time th latter meets. This organ has several administrative tasks, for example, to call into session the convention and the CDN; or publish and distribute party communications to all levels. The permanent character of this organ provides it with a lot of influence. It is empowered "to fix the position of the party on national, international or local occurrences in which the party has an interest, adjusting said position to the resolutions of higher organs" (Martz 1966: 154). The CEN is smaller than the national convention and the CDN and it meets more frequently.¹⁴⁴ It has two additional sub-units: the national political committee and the national secretariat. The former has eleven voting members, including the party president, two vice-presidents and the secretary-general. It is a policy-making unit that embraces the most important and powerful AD leaders. The latter is the center of the party's bureaucratic structure (administrative tasks) composed of fourteen members. In addition, the CEN includes a labor, agrarian and youth bureaus. Given its permanent nature, this organ makes decisions for the party when neither the national convention nor the CDN is in sessions (Coppedge 1994: 11).

¹⁴³ These are the National Labor and Agrarian Committee (Comité Sindical y Agrario Nacional) and the National Youth Committee (Comité Juvenil Nacional).

¹⁴⁴ The number of CEN's members ranged between 11 (1958) and 35 (1989), and meetings were organized at least once a week.

Finally, the national disciplinary tribunal (TDN), composed of ten members, is charged with task of assuring that party members are loyal to the organization. In case they are not, or when they violate party discipline, the TDN applies sanctions, including temporary suspensions and permanent expulsions.

4.4.3.2 Regional-Level Organization

AD has a presence at the regional and local levels in all states (20); in the federal district; and in two federal territories (2).¹⁴⁵ At the state level, the party has three organs that are organized hierarchically: the sectional convention (Convención Seccional, CS); the sectional executive committee (Comité Ejecutivo Seccional, CES); and the sectional disciplinary tribunal (Tribunal Disciplinario Seccional, TDS). The supreme body is the CS. Among its functions, the CS elects the CES, the TDS and a delegate to the CDN and defines “the party line on regional matters, in accord with decisions and directives issued by national bodies” (Martz 1966: 162). The CES is the state-level executive organ. It controls the party organization in the state when the SC is not in sessions, and it informs the CES about party activities and political, economic, and social problems in the region. This committee includes a sectional political committee and a sectional political bureau. The CES is directly supervised by the CEN. Finally, the TDS is empowered to apply sanctions to party members that deviate from the party line.

At the district level, the party also has legislative, executive and judicial bodies. The attributes of these organs are similar to those performed by conventions, committees and tribunals at the regional and national levels. At the municipal and local levels the presence of

¹⁴⁵ “In 1992 the federal territories became states. For the 1998 election the number of states was increased to 23. With the capital district, there is a total of 24 constituencies for national parliamentary elections” (Molina in Nohlen 2005, 550). The party is present throughout the country. This was something that Rómulo Betancourt, founder of AD, achieved. National leaders had their own political bases at the regional level, and Betancourt helped them to consolidate their power (Interview with the former AD leader, Carmelo Lauría, June 2010).

party organs depends upon the population size. A deliberative body (municipal assemblies) and an executive body (municipal committee) are in charge of discussing party issues. Finally, at the bottom of the party structure are the base units ('grupos de base'), which organize themselves in deliberative and executive bodies. The local assembly is the supreme authority at that level followed by the local committee and local board ('junta'). These organs establish the party line at that level (locality), distribute information and propaganda, help strengthen the party, and divulge reports to higher level bodies. Other party's bodies are the Parliamentary Fraction and the labor fraction. The former convokes AD deputies and senators from both the regions and national level, and the latter is composed of workers from the labor wing.

The Venezuelan Constitution (1961) established, in Article 114, citizens' right to associate voluntarily in political parties in order to participate in the country's democratic life. Likewise, the law required parties to establish democratic procedures in their political activities, and guarantee their members the right to direct participation and representation in a party's deliberation. Direct participation was promoted in both AD and COPEI since these parties penetrated social organizations that have members participating in different party organs. Despite this, processes of internal democracy for electing party's leaders, delegates and candidates for different electoral posts were often undercut by other leaders. Nominations of candidates were highly centralized in the national leadership. For example, the CEN had the right to choose all the party's candidates for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. It also evaluated and approved candidates for state legislative assemblies and intervened in the nomination of city council candidates. In addition, only a small portion of the electorate participated in internal party politics (Coppedge 1994).

Despite the high degree of centralization in nomination procedures, AD suffered frequent internal divisions as a consequence of struggles among party leaders for control of the organization. Factionalism emerged during periods in which party's nominees for electoral posts (especially, the presidency) competed in internal elections. Internal fights resulted in defeats for the party in presidential elections on three occasions (1968; 1979 and 1993). In 1968, two candidates – Gonzalo Barrios and Luis Beltrán Prieto – competed in primaries, but ended up holding separate conventions. Both candidates ran separately in the general election . This confrontation led the party to an internal split.¹⁴⁶ As a consequence of this, COPEI's candidate, Rafael Caldera, won the election. The electoral defeat forced party elites to rethink the mechanisms through which candidates were elected.¹⁴⁷ In the 1973 convention Betancourt's candidate, who was his “one-time protégé and leader of the party's second generation” (Martz 1999: 644), Carlos Andrés Pérez discouraged the only serious contender, Gonzalo Barrios, from participating. The convention “rubber-stamped the selection of Pérez, who went on to a smashing electoral victory in December 1973” (Martz 1999, 644). By 1978, the party again faced internal competition between two candidates each of whom had the support of a former president. Betancourt supported the party's Secretary General Luis Piñerua Ordaz, while the President Pérez, supported his confidante David Morales Bello. This time, a direct primary was realized to select the presidential candidate. All party members (1.3 million) were eligible to participate. Political competition within the party produced another defeat in presidential elections. COPEI's candidate won the contest. After this, AD's leadership recognized that

¹⁴⁶ In the opinion of political analysts Fernando Sunianga, this confrontation broke and weakened forever the party.

¹⁴⁷ The analyst Fernando Sunianga argued that this confrontation between Barrios (Betancourt's favorite candidate) and Beltrán Prieto, a historic AD leader, was a milestone in the party's history. Beltrán Prieto won the primary, but the orthodox leadership decided not to recognize the triumph and it declared Barrios the official candidate. Beltrán Prieto abandoned the party and the party suffered a very strong division. According to the analyst, “in 1968 the Venezuelan political parties lost their direction forever” (Interview, June 2010).

internal divisions were strengthening the other party. For the following election (1983) the party's internal circle devised a "kind of electoral college to choose the candidate" (Martz 1999: 645). Eligibility for participation was limited with the purpose of assuring that loyalists would hold key positions. Lusinchi won the nomination over Morales Bello and later on, defeated COPEI's candidate, Rafael Caldera.

Despite the different mechanisms of internal democratic procedures that AD applied to electoral events, the party was not a genuinely democratic organization. Every time it conducted internal elections, those that had more power within the organization, modified the statutes to favor themselves in a way that they could continue holding power. However, those leaders that manipulated the rules of the game were not always successful in keeping power (e.g. internal primaries in 1968). Failure to follow democratic procedures made renovation of the party's leaders impossible. It was only viable when the party was internally divided among different factions. However, instead of strengthening the party, the resulting factionalism weakened it.

4.4.4 Social Christian Party (COPEI)¹⁴⁸

Similar to AD, COPEI has a vertical structure in which a national central committee centralized and concentrated power. The party's organization consists of committees at the national, regional, district, municipal and base levels. Each of these committees plays specific roles and formally, they enjoy autonomy to develop their tasks. However, in practice, this autonomy is limited by the national central committee.

¹⁴⁸ This section is based on party's statutes (COPEI. 1982. *Estatutos*, Caracas); on the study of Combellas Lares (1985); and on interviews with former party's leaders (June 2010).

4.4.4.1 National-Level Organization

At the national level, the party has several governing bodies. They are the national convention; the national board of directors; the national committee; a national disciplinary tribunal; a presidential electoral commission; and a national electoral commission. In addition, the national secretariat, which does not have a formal site within the party hierarchy, plays a relevant role.

The party's rules establish that the national convention is the party's supreme authority (Article 13). It is composed of party militants in the base committees ('comités de base'); by representatives of the different 'functional party organs ('organismos funcionales');¹⁴⁹ by the presidents and secretaries of the sub-national committees; by members of both the national committee and the national disciplinary tribunal; by COPEI's senators and deputies; and by representatives of the National Electoral Commission (Comisión Nacional Electoral, CNE). The national convention defines, approves and modifies the party's program and statutes; it elects the members of both the national committee and the national disciplinary tribunal; and finally, it revises and approves reports of the party's national authorities. The convention can delegate the last two functions to the national board of directors. In practice, this body is not very active. Its role is limited to the ratification of decisions that other party bodies undertake (in particular, the board of directors and the national committee) (Combellas Lares 1985: 130).

The board of directors follows the national convention in the party's hierarchy. It is integrated by fewer members of different national and regional party's organs. Representatives

¹⁴⁹ The 'functional party organs are organizations that represent civil society interests within the party. They serve as links between the party and social sectors that had particular interests. Some of these organs are the following: "Juventud Revolucionaria Copeyana"; "Frente Femenino Copeyano"; "Frente de Trabajadores Copeyanos"; "Movimiento de Profesionales y Técnicos Socialcristianos"; "Movimiento Agrario Socialcristiano"; "Fracción Parlamentaria Copeyana".

from the base committee do not form part of it. Although the board of directors is formally below the convention in the party's hierarchy, their functions are more prominent. It establishes the political line (ideology) of the party; approves the party's electoral platforms and the candidates' lists; defines organizational norms for different party's sections; supervises the performance of COPEI's politicians; and carries out functions that correspond by law to the national convention. The predominance of the board of directors over the national convention implies a concentration of functions and power in a reduced group of leaders and limits the participation of the population, as militants in the base committees are excluded from this party body.

The national committee is the most important organization in the party's structure. Party rules define it as the executive authority at the top of the party hierarchy (Article 32). The committee is a permanent organization that organizes meetings regularly (once a week); it is composed of members elected by the national convention as follows: a national president; four vice-presidents; a general secretary and other seventeen representatives.¹⁵⁰ Those committee members who had been president or candidate for the presidency, or general secretary of the party for more than one year were lifetime members of this committee.¹⁵¹ Some of the committees powers were the following: it often formulated and ratified the political line established by the board of directors; it had the power to regulate most of the party's activities; it designated party officials such as adjunct secretaries and coordinators of functional organs, among others; it had the power to remove undisciplined militants; it could reorganize party's sections; call meetings; and delegate functions.

¹⁵⁰ Rafael Caldera, founder of COPEI, was the general secretary since the creation of the party. He was the most important figure within the organization. He always had the last word. According to Francisco Suniaga, "Caldera was the God of COPEI". (Interview, June 2010).

¹⁵¹ Rafael Caldera was one of the lifetimemembers of the national committee.

4.4.4.2 Regional-Level Organization

At the top of the party's regional structure four bodies have power: 1) a convention; 2) a board of directors; 3) a committee; 4) and a disciplinary tribunal. These bodies involved twenty districts ('estados'), two departments; the federal district and two federal territories. The regional committee is the most important body at this level. It is a permanent body and their members are elected by the regional convention. Regional presidents and general secretaries elected for three periods (not necessarily consecutive periods) become permanent members of the regional committee.¹⁵² This committee defines the course of the party at the regional level by determining policy issues to be followed in deliberative bodies (legislative assembly and municipal councils). It enjoys autonomy in elaborating and implementing regional initiatives (policies). On many occasions, the regional board of directors and the convention delegates their functions to it (i.e., supervision and evaluation of regional authorities). Despite its importance, this committee, as all other sub-national bodies, is limited by the decisions that were taken at the national level.

The following two echelons in the party's pyramidal structure are the municipal and district organizations. At both levels, there is a deliberative body (municipal and district conventions), and a body where decisions at each level are taken and executed (municipal and district committees). The conventions play a marginal role and are dominated by the national committee. They call meetings with party militants with the purpose of strengthening affective ties between them and the organization. However, these conventions do not have the power or capacity to take decisions at these levels. Municipal and district committees have that capacity. With the previous authorization of regional committees, they have the power to organize or re-structure functional organs within their jurisdictions. They also served as information flows of

¹⁵² The regional committee is composed of a regional president; two vice-presidents; one general secretary; and regional secretaries (one for each district).

information within the party structure, from the top to the bottom of the organization and viceversa. Though these committees play an important role in coordinating party politics at the regional level, the national committee limits their autonomy

The basic party structure at the regional level is the base committee ('Comité de Base'), which is located at the bottom of the party hierarchical structure. This committee represents a direct channel of communication between local communities and the party, and between other regional organizations, the national directorate and party militants. It mobilizes people in electoral campaigns through political meetings and propaganda, and exercises control over electoral sites in municipal and national elections.

Summing up, COPEI has a structure at the regional level composed of different organizations that play a variety of roles. All these bodies depend upon the party's national structure, where the national committee and the national secretaries play the most important roles.

COPEI's statutes (Article 1) define it as a democratic party that has internal democratic procedures to develop its political activities. The conventions at different levels are deliberative bodies where party's militants and members at different levels express their opinions and preferences. Despite this, the democratic spirit of the party is constrained by the party's national leadership, especially by the national committee. National leaders, many of whom are 'leaders for life', limit the actions and wills of other party members by deciding internal party procedures, as for example the nomination of candidates. For example, Caldera, the party's founder, controlled the processes of candidate selection. He himself was the party's nominee on five

occasions since the democratic period began in 1958 (1958, 1963, 1968, 1983 and 1993).¹⁵³ In 1968 he won the presidency (1968-1973), and once it was constitutionally possible for him to aspire for reelection (1983), he decided to present his candidacy again. This possibility (in the case of COPEI, Caldera was the only president that could seek reelection). In addition a the party norm provided central leaders the right to become permanent members in the party's structure, which blocked the possibility for leadership renovation within the party and prevented democratic procedures from becoming effective. Leaders at the top of the organization controlled everything within the party. In the long term, when national conditions changed, the absence of new leaders contributed to the party's demise as a major political party. The country changed and evolved, but parties remained stagnant failed to adapt their structures and leaders to the new challenges.¹⁵⁴ In the case of COPEI, the accumulation of power in one single person (Caldera) and his decision leave the party (1993) and create a new political option, *Convergencia*, explained to a large extent its disappearance from the political and electoral arenas.

4.4.5 Recapitulating

In summary, the internal organization of traditional parties in Colombia and Venezuela differed in their structure and in the mechanisms they employed to recruit leaders. Formally, all four parties had vertical structures where national-level organs accumulated massive power and

¹⁵³ In 1987 Caldera aspired to be the party's presidential candidate for the 1988 national elections. Eduardo Fernández' Caldera's pupil had the same aspiration. That year (1987) COPEI's national committee decided to hold a congress in which Caldera, Fernández and Aguilar (another party leader) competed for the candidacy (this competition was known as the "poliedro"). Fernández won and became the party's candidate. Caldera decided not to support him during the campaign, and later on, in 1993 he split from the party and founded *Convergencia*, which elected him president for the second time. The internal fight between COPEI's leaders, and later on, Caldera's split, annihilated the party (Interviews with Eduardo Fernández and Carlos Romero, June 2010). Martz (1999) stated that COPEI was "an organization controlled by the personal rule of one man" (646).

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Agustín Berríos, June 2010.

controlled regional bodies. Despite this commonality, the Venezuelan AD and COPEI were much more centralized or vertical than the Colombian PL and the PC. Traditional leaders that belonged to the national board of directors and to the national executive committees in AD and COPEI, monopolized power and exercised control over all other party organs. They defined the party line; established party discipline and controlled members at all levels (regional, departmental, municipal and local). In addition, national leaders influenced recruitment processes inside the organizations. Although democratic procedures were established as formal mechanisms to elect party leaders and candidates for presidential and congressional elections, traditional politicians at the central level made the final decisions. Sometimes they manipulated official results, ignored them, and decided candidacies unilaterally.

Traditional parties in Colombia were formally hierarchical. In practice, they were highly decentralized (more the PL than the PC). Organs at the regional level had real power to take decisions and to follow constituency demands. Although the central leadership was influential and amassed considerable power, politicians (legislators) at the sub-national were relatively autonomous in deciding the conformation of party lists and in developing patronage-based policies. Decentralization of party structures was promoted, in part, by the institutional design. Electoral rules defined that parties could present as many closed lists as they wanted in every electoral district. This possibility provided incentives for regional and local leaders to form party lists independently from the control of the central leaderships. Another effect that this produced was a constant leadership renovation. Voters had many options (individual candidates) for whom to vote. If they did not like certain candidates, other possibilities existed within the electoral arena.

Different organizational structures and functions of these four parties explain, to some extent, their capacity to adapt to environmental challenges. As I showed above, all four parties confronted political and structural crises in the 1980s and 1990s, and all four parties participated in the design of and were affected by institutional reforms implemented to deal with those crises. Reforms did not suffice to solve the challenges and all four parties were weakened electorally, though at different rates and degrees. AD and COPEI collapsed, while the PL and the PC survived. Their share of votes declined significantly, but the PC suffered more than the PL (see Figures 4.1. and 4.2.). What explains different party outcomes in countries that confronted similar challenges and were similar in most political, structural and institutional features? This chapter shows that the internal features of political parties matter. The internal organization of the parties mediates the effects of external economic and political challenges on their electoral performance. The hypotheses that I present here state that those parties that displays a hierarchical structure where the central leadership controls the functioning of the organization, are less likely to respond to environmental challenges than more decentralized parties where leaders at different levels enjoy power to make decisions. In addition, when parties have internal democratic procedures, the possibilities on renovation of their leadership are higher. New leaders might be instrumental in responding to challenges by introducing changes that long-time leaders are not likely to implement.

The four cases that I analyzed here illustrate that argument. In Venezuela, the centralism of AD and COPEI prevented leaders at the regional levels from taking autonomous decisions. In the long run, this condition harmed the parties. Rigid structures where the central level controlled regional bodies and demanded that members comply with party discipline, hindered the possibility that the party would respond adequately to environmental challenges. In addition, the

lack of legitimacy in processes of internal democracy, led to their fragmentation and weakening. Low levels of leadership renovation and resistance of long term traditional leaders in implementing reforms prevented the party from responding properly to environmental challenges. In Colombia, a more decentralized structure of the PL and PC and higher renovation of the leadership permitted these parties to survive to the environmental challenges. More political autonomy at the sub-national level, and a wider supply of leaders at both the national and sub-national levels, provided these parties with more opportunities to respond to external challenges.

The following table summarizes the argument presented in this chapter. As stated in the introductory section, comparisons between the four parties follow a “most similar system design”, where one or few explanatory variables explain most variation in the outcome. The table provides information on the county-level causal conditions that affected the outcome of traditional parties. Similar structural, political and institutional conditions were present in these two countries and affected the parties’ electoral performance. Structural challenges in the 1980s and 1990s stimulated political crises in both countries, and similar strategies were undertaken by parties in power (institutional reforms). These similarities contrast with the differences among political parties, presented in columns 4 and 5. The PL, the PC, AD and COPEI varied in their internal structure and in the internal procedures for leadership selection. These factors, I argue, explain to a great extent the variation in the outcomes in these four parties’ electoral trajectories. While the PL and PC survived, AD became a minority party and COPEI collapsed. Following the table, I conclude this chapter.

Table 4.1. Comparative Table of Colombian and Venezuelan National Conditions, Parties' Features

and Electoral Outcomes

Political Party	Structural Crisis	Political Scandal	Electoral Reforms	Internal Structure	Internal Democracy	Outcome
PL	Yes Armed conflict	Yes	Yes 1. Multi-member districts to one national district 2. Closed (Faction) List PR to Preferential vote PR	Hierarchic (formally) Highly decentralized (in practice)	Yes	Survived
PC	Yes Armed conflict	Yes	Yes 1. Multi-member districts to one national district 2. Closed (Faction) List PR to Preferential vote PR	Hierarchic (formally) Decentralized (in practice)	Some	Survived
AD	Yes Economic crisis	Yes	Yes Closed List PR to MMP	Semi-Hierarchical (formally and in practice)	Yes	Became a minority (practically disappeared)
COPEI	Yes Economic crisis	Yes	Yes Closed List PR to MMP	Hierarchical (formally and in practice)	No	Collapsed

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a comparative study of four Latin American traditional parties that confronted environmental challenges during the 1980s and 1990s. As other parties in the region, the Colombian – PL and PC – and Venezuelan – AD and COPEI – traditional parties declining their share of votes during the 1990s. However, not all four parties suffered to the same extent. The PL and the PC survived while AD and COPEI became marginal political actors. The Venezuelan party system collapsed in 1998, while in Colombia the two-party system was recomposed as new parties began to compete with the traditional PL and PC. As Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show, the internal characteristics of different parties are factors that deeply influence a party's electoral performance.

In the following chapter I test the hypotheses presented in the previous section and in Chapter three. Empirical analyses show the effects of political, economic, institutional and party structures upon the electoral performance of all Latin American traditional parties (as described in Chapter one). The empirical chapter will offer at least two contributions. First, it will shed new light on factors that explain decreasing levels of electoral performance of traditional parties. In particular, it will analyze the impact of 'typical' variables that are included in models of electoral performance (economic and contextual predictors), and the effect of other variables not previously considered in a systematic way in these studies (institutional reforms). Second, and more importantly, the chapter will show whether internal conditions of parties in fact affect their performance, especially when challenging situations arise in the context.

5.0 THE EFFECTS OF PARTIES INTERNAL ORGANIZATION ON THEIR ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE, 1978-2006

The internal characteristics of political parties mediate their electoral performance. The case studies presented in the previous chapter showed that this hypothesis applies to the Colombian and Venezuelan traditional parties. Venezuelan parties (AD and COPEI) rely on vertical structures. Their leaders at the central level concentrate power and control the party's direction. In changing contexts, these parties confronted difficulties and were unable to react rapidly and appropriately. They lost an impressive share of votes and became marginal in the country's political life. The Colombian PL and PC, formally rely on hierarchical structures. However, in practice they operate as decentralized organizations where leaders at different levels have autonomy to take decisions. This characteristic and a higher rate of leaders' mobilization allow the parties to react rapidly when environmental conditions challenge their stability. Although all four parties lost electoral power during the 1990s and 2000s, the Colombian PL and PC survived while the Venezuelan AD and COPEI practically disappeared from the electoral arena.

In this chapter, I extend this argument to all Latin American traditional parties. The questions that I address are the following. What is the effect of internal characteristics of political parties on their electoral performance? Do parties' internal features condition their responses to environmental challenges? This chapter attempts to answer these questions by developing empirical tests of the relationship between structural (economic), contextual (i.e., political

scandals) and institutional conditions and the mediating role of parties' internal features on their electoral performance. Previous studies have tested the impact that economic conditions have on the electoral performance of parties. Other studies (in particular, case studies) analyze the effect that parties' internal characteristics have on their own electoral performance. The present analysis is the first effort that combines both explanations. Empirical tests show the extent to which different variables affect the phenomenon that is observed: the electoral performance of Latin American traditional parties.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I argued that the performance of parties is a function of environmental conditions (economic and political variables), and of characteristics of their internal organization. The latter are intermediate factors that shape responses that parties express in the electoral arena. Following the general argument, I proposed several hypotheses. First, I followed conventional explanations about the declined Latin American parties (structural, contextual and institutional variables) and suggested the desirability of testing them by controlling for other factors that might be also important, especially internal features of parties. Second, I argued that in contexts of environmental challenges, parties that have horizontal or decentralized structures are more likely to adapt to electoral change than parties with vertical (or hierarchical) or centralized structures. In parties where decisions are taken in a decentralized manner and leadership mobility is more likely to occur, the probability surviving and either maintaining or increasing electoral power also is higher. Similarly, parties that have low levels of internal democracy suffer more than those that elect leaders in a democratic way. The latter tend to have a higher number of (new) candidates, which allow voters to choose among more political options. This is instrumental for both parties and voters in particular when contexts changes –

economic, political, and/or social. Starting with the latter argument, the specific hypotheses that I propose are enumerated below.

H1: The more horizontal a party's internal structure, the more electorally adaptable it is likely to be in times of crises.

H2: The more internally democratic a party, the more electorally adaptable it is likely to be in times of crises.

Following economic voting theories I offer the following alternative hypotheses:

H3a: Electoral performances of Latin America's traditional parties decrease with the country's negative economic growth.

H4a: Higher levels of unemployment diminish the electoral performance of Latin America's traditional parties.

H5a: Higher levels of inflation decrease the electoral performance of Latin America's traditional parties.

However, consistent with previous studies, I expect that the president's party experiences more difficulties than other parties in contexts of structural crises. To test this, I interact the economic variables with an 'incumbency variable' that indicates if the president's party is the same as the party that gains votes and seats in the legislature (1) or not (0). Specifically,

H3b: If the president's party is a traditional party and the country's economic growth is sluggish, this party's electoral performance will deteriorate.

H4b: If the president's party is a traditional party and the level of unemployment increases this party electoral performance diminish.

H5b: If the president's party is a traditional party and the inflation level increases the electoral performance of this party will decline.

Following research that considers political scandals in the equation that explains a party's electoral performance, I state the following hypothesis:

H6a: Occurrence of political scandals negatively affects the electoral performance of traditional parties negatively.

In particular, I argue that the president's party involved in political scandals suffers more than others.

H6b: Vote share for traditional parties is more likely to decrease when the incumbent is involved in political scandals and she/he belongs to one of these parties.

According to studies of electoral institutions and the expectations that reformers have when they introduce changes to these rules, I state that

H7: Reforms of electoral systems improve the electoral performance of traditional parties

However, I argue that different types of reforms affect parties in different ways. I hypothesize that

H8a: Reforms to close the system are more likely to hurt traditional parties than reforms to open the systems

Or, alternatively

H8b: Incumbents are more likely to benefit from reforms directed to open the political system

In the following sections, I test these propositions using hierarchical regression models. This methodological strategy allows me to evaluate the effect of structural, institutional and contextual factors on political parties' electoral performance, while controlling for the effect of parties' organizational characteristics and the passage of time. I explain the logic of these models in more detail below.

5.1 DATA AND METHODS

To test the hypotheses proposed in Chapters 2 and 3, I use a data set that covers 48 Latin American parties between 1978 and 2006. This set includes all traditional parties as defined in Chapter 1 (see Table 1.1). The analysis starts in 1978 or the year in which democratic elections were inaugurated after periods of authoritarian regimes. The year in which traditional parties within a country enter into the analysis corresponds to the year in which they participate in democratic elections for the first time, once the Third Wave of Democratization began. All traditional parties within a country begin holding democratic elections during the same year, but the initial year varies across countries, since different countries became democratic in different years. The analysis ends in 2006, or the last election in which traditional parties participated before that year. Three clarifications are worth mentioning.

First, not all countries held democratic elections as soon as the Third Wave of Democratization began (1978). In some cases, elections took place, but were non-democratic because they were not competitive or because they were fraudulent. Mexico is a clear example of the former situation and Panama illustrates the latter. To establish when elections started to become legitimate and competitive, I use the classification of Latin American regimes developed by Mainwaring, Brinks and Pérez-Liñán (2006). Political regimes are classified on the basis of a trichotomous ordinal variable where the lowest value (0) corresponds to non-democracies or authoritarian regimes; the intermediate value (1) covers semi-democracies, and the highest value (2) indicates the existence of a democracy (Mainwaring, Brinks, and Pérez-Liñán 2006). In the empirical analysis I include countries that rank as semi-democracies and democracies starting in

1978 when democratic transitions occurred to take place in the region.¹⁵⁵ In Appendix B, I list the countries and years after 1978 when they were ranked in these categories. In some countries, traditional parties disappeared from the electoral arena sometime during the period under consideration (AD and COPEI in Venezuela; AP in Peru; CFP in Ecuador). These parties are included during the years before they collapsed or disappeared.

Second, given the fact that electoral performance of each party is measured every time it participated in democratic legislative elections between 1978 and 2006, the data set has multiple waves. However, since different countries have different electoral schedules (dates), and the intra-electoral periods also vary (e.g., elections in country A take place every three years, while in country B they occur every four years) the years that parties are observed vary from country to country. Moreover, within country differences can also be present. For example, party X might compete in the first and third election but not in the second, while party Y might compete all three elections (and accumulate more data points than party X). Given this variation, the data set is *time-unstructured* and *unbalanced* (Singer and Willet 2003). This is an important consideration to take into account. Given that this analysis is about change over time (of parties' electoral performance), *time* is the fundamental predictor (I explain this later). Thus, it is necessary to use a metric that is valid and reliable. The initial metric for all parties is the same (0) and it corresponds to the year in which traditional parties within a country enter into the analysis (year=0). It is the first election year in which traditional parties within a country started to compete once the Third Wave of Democratization began. All traditional parties within a country

¹⁵⁵ The polity index developed by Marshall and Jaggers (2002) is an alternative variable to define when a country started to have democratic elections. This index is a general measure of democratization with values ranging from -10 (highly authoritarian) to +10 (highly democratic). The scores reflect the competitiveness and openness of executive recruitment, the competitiveness and regulation of political participation, and the constraints on the chief executive. The problem with this index is that it is not always clear when and why a country changes from one value to another (for example, from 0 to 1) and what exactly does that change mean. The alternative trichotomous variable is more precise in that sense.

are entered the same year, but the initial year for parties varies across countries. More specifically, when democracy in country A was inaugurated in 1978, parties in that country start competing that year, which is defined as $y=0$. Similarly, when democracy in country B was inaugurated in 1983, the initial metric for all parties start that year. If the second year in which parties in country A competed in elections was 1982, the metric equals 4 ($1978+4=1982$), while for parties in country B it is 5 since the following election in which it competed was 1988 ($1983+5=1988$).

Third, variation on the year in which parties start to compete in democratic elections has important implications. Depending on that, parties were more or less likely to lose or gain votes. For example, parties that confronted the regional economic crises of the 1980s – those that inaugurated the Third Wave of Democratization in the late 1970s and early 1980s – were more likely to suffer electoral declines than parties that did not confront the crises. To deal with this, I defined 5-years exogenous time shocks according to the following criteria: 1978-1983 corresponds to the first years of observation. Most traditional parties started to compete at some point during this five-year period. 1983-1988: this was a critical period of economic crisis in the region. These years precede neoliberal reforms introduced in most countries. 1988-1993: During this period, incumbent governments implemented neoliberal reforms. 1993-1998: The effects of the reforms were felt by the population. In addition, representation crises were exacerbated and institutional reforms were undertaken in many countries. 1998-2003: Party systems were recomposed as a consequence of electoral reforms. 2003-2006: During these years many non-traditional figures and new parties emerged.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ To deal with this, the ideal solution would be to include year dummies. However, given the fact that elections take place in different years across countries (i.e., the panel is unbalanced), this option is not possible. Instead, I defined 5-years exogenous time shocks.

Finally, country-level factors might operate on all parties in that country over time. Although it is difficult to find country-level factors that could operate in the country over time, I ran robustness checks that include country-fixed effects (dummies for countries) on the party vote intercept and rate of change. Appendix C reports the result and shows that they hold up.

5.1.1 Dependent and Independent Variables

The dependent variable in this study is the vote share that traditional parties obtained in each election for the Lower Chamber of Congress (or for the legislature if the congress is unicameral). Within each country, there are party level variables and contextual variables. The former vary across parties but are constant over time, while the latter change over time but are constant across parties. As I explained in Chapter 2, party level variables (i.e., the characteristics of political parties) are derived from both qualitative (historical documents, case-by-case studies; a survey applied to parties' experts) and quantitative studies (e.g. Alcántara Sáez 1991-2001; Alcántara Sáez 2004b; Freidenberg, Díez, and Valduvico 2008; Greene 2007; Levitsky 2003; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Roberts 1998). The argument is that the *party's structure* and level of *internal democracy* are two features that mediate that party's electoral performance.¹⁵⁷ I control for two additional party features that as party's structure and internal democracy are constant over time: *renovation rate* and *ideology*. The first indicates the degree of a presidential candidate's mobility, or the extent to which party leaders are renovated. I call this variable Effective Number of Candidates (ENC), and it is used as a proxy for *renovation rate*. *Party*

¹⁵⁷ As explained earlier, both are ordinal variables with values that fluctuate between 0 and 4.

ideology is introduced as a control variable assuming that this might be an important factor that shapes electoral success, in particular when structural changes affect the political context. This variable is coded following Coppedge (1997).¹⁵⁸ In this study the variable has three values where left-wing political parties are classified as 0, center of the ideological spectrum as 1, and right-wing parties as 2.

I also use contextual (countries) level data related to structural (economic), political, and institutional factors.¹⁵⁹ The variables that I use to analyze the impact of these factors are the following. To assess the effect of economic conditions on the performance of parties, I utilize three economic variables: inflation, economic growth and unemployment rate. The inflation rate is measured on the basis of changes in the consumer price index. This variable is logged to control for variation produced during hyperinflationary years.¹⁶⁰ Economic growth is the percentage change in GDP based on constant local currency. The unemployment rate is the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment. The data come from World Development Indicators (2007) and BADEINSO-ECLAC (2008). These variables are measured in two different ways: as the lagged value of the year previous to the election (inflation_{t-1} , $\text{change in growth}_{t-1}$, and $\text{change in unemployment}_{t-1}$) and as the mean for the

¹⁵⁸ The original measure has thirteen possible values. Coppedge's ideological indicator considers two dimensions: 1) the Christian-Secular dimension, and 2) the Left-Right dimension. The different categories in the classification are the following: Christian-Right; Christian Center-Right; Christian-Center; Christian Center-Left; Christian Left; Secular Right; Secular Center-Right; Secular-Center; Secular Center-Left; Secular Left. In addition to these ten categories, he classifies parties that do not fit into any of them: He defines a category for "Personalists Parties" and another one for "Other Bloc". Finally, he adds an "Unknown" category for parties that do not fall into any of those categories.

¹⁵⁹ It is worth mentioning that the values of the time-varying variables (country level variables) are the same for all the parties within a country. For example, if economic growth in Argentina equals 3.87 in 1983, the value for the PJ and the UCR is the same that year.

¹⁶⁰ The natural logarithm of this variable was calculated the following way: $1 * \text{LN}(1 + \text{ABS}(\text{inflation}))$. This allows me to control for years with deflation or when no inflation was in place.

previous legislature period (inflation mean, growth mean, and unemployment mean).¹⁶¹ These measures allow me to assess the effect of short and long term economic conditions on electoral performance of traditional parties.

Political variables include a measure of ‘incumbency’ and a measure that indicates the occurrence of political scandals. The former is a dichotomous variable that reveals if the president’s party is the same as the party that gains votes and seats in the legislature (1) or not (0). This information is derived from Nohlen (2005). The latter is the total number of scandals reported in the election year and the previous year.¹⁶² Data comes from the project *Latin American Political Processes: Scandals, Protest, and Institutional Conflicts, 1980-2007* (Lodola et al. 2008).

Institutional variables capture the reforms introduced in the electoral systems. I use different measures. First, I created a dichotomous variable where 1 indicates the occurrence of a reform in the rules for electing legislators, and 0 indicates no reform. This measure does not distinguish among the type of reforms that were implemented. To account for this, several dummy variables were created to measure when and what features of electoral systems were modified (electoral formula; lists and allocation formula). Specifically, PR systems are coded as zero when no reform in this formula takes place and 1 otherwise. For example, if the formula changes from list PR to mixed electoral systems (as was the case in Venezuela in 1989 and Bolivia in 1994), the variable is coded as 1 the year when the change is implemented in legislative elections and the subsequent years (since 1993 in Venezuela and since 1997 in

¹⁶¹ I measured these variables as the election year value (unemployment election year, growth election year, and the LN of inflation election year. However, I did not include these measures in the analyses.

¹⁶² Scandals reported in the election year are counted because it is highly likely that as the election comes closer, opposition candidates and parties denounce scandals that involve the current administration (the incumbent). In order to test the effect of scandals that involve the incumbent, an interaction between these two variables is included in the empirical tests.

Bolivia). A change in characteristics of lists and in allocation formulas is coded the same way. No change equals 0 and 1 indicates adoption of a modification. For example, the Dominican Republic used unblocked lists for the first time in 2002. Since then, this variable is coded 1. Before 2002 it is 0. Or, Colombia employed a Hare allocation formula until 2002, and in 2003 a reform was implemented to change this formula to d'Hondt. From 1978 until the 2002 election, this variable is coded 0 and in 2006 it is 1. When all these variables are included in a model, it is still not clear if the reforms were introduced to open or to close the political system.¹⁶³ Two alternative dummy variables are created to account for this. The first one is coded 1 when a reform to open the system is adopted (the adoption of PR systems; the adoption of mixed PR systems; open and unblocked lists, and allocation formulas with lower thresholds – i.e., Hare) and 0 otherwise. The second is coded 1 when a reform to close the system is introduced (the adoption of closed lists; allocation formulas with higher thresholds –i.e. d'Hondt) and 0 otherwise.¹⁶⁴ To account for regional shocks that could have affected most traditional parties, six dichotomous variables are included. Each variable corresponds to a 'critical period' (see footnote 155) and is coded 1 if country-elections took place during a specific period, and 0 otherwise.¹⁶⁵ Finally, to account for country-level factors that might operate on all parties in one country over time I included dummy variables for each country-year. The logic to include these variables

¹⁶³ I do not include these dummy variables in the final empirical analyses. I only include the variable that accounts for electoral reforms, and alternatively those directed either to open or to close the systems.

¹⁶⁴ In some cases it was difficult to define if the reforms were directed to open or to close the system, because two types of changes were implemented the same year. Specifically, in the 1998 elections the electoral system in Ecuador introduced open lists and a d'Hondt allocation formula. Similarly, unblocked lists and the d'Hondt allocation formula were implemented in the 2006 Colombian legislative elections. In Bolivia, the mixed electoral system adopted in 1997 used the same formula (d'Hondt). Since this allocation formula establishes a high electoral threshold, these reforms were coded as directed toward closing the system. Adoption of a PR system in Paraguay in 1993 was accompanied with a d'Hondt formula too. However, given the fact that the previous electoral formula defined a majoritarian system, the reform was directed toward opening the system.

¹⁶⁵ I estimated several models including the different regional time shocks (i.e., one by one and all together). Only the time shock that corresponds to the latest period (2003-2006) has a significant negative effect on the dependent variables. For this reason, I decided to report these results (Models 9-12).

(Level-3 variables) responds to the necessity to consider unspecified factors at the country level that might influence the party electoral performance. Regressions that include these variables are useful as robustness checks. They are reported in Appendix C. In Table 5.1 I include descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables.

Table 5.1. Summary Statistics of the Dependent and Independent Variables

Variable	Number of Observations ¹⁶⁶	Mean	St. Dev	Min. Value	Max. Value
<i>Dependent Variable</i>					
Share of Votes	287	27.56 4	14.853	.7	74.5
<i>Independent Variables</i>					
<i>Level-1 Variables</i>					
<i>Economic Variables</i>					
GDP Growth _{t-1}	289	3.387	3.999	-13.380	12.278
GDP Growth mean	287	3.018	2.865	-7.652	12.305
Unemployment _{t-1}	264	8.715	4.215	2.00	21.100
Unemployment mean	233	9.030	3.983	2.750	19.933
Inflation _{t-1}	287	2.921	1.561	.180	8.470
Inflation mean	287	3.005	1.393	.336	8.470
<i>Political Variables</i>					
Scandals	287	1.560	2.420	0	17
Incumbent	287	.354	.479	0	1
<i>Institutional Variables</i>					
Electoral Reforms	288	.163	.370	0	1
Adoption of PR System	288	.021	.143	0	1
Adoption of Mixed System	288	.042	.200	0	1
Adoption of Open or Unblocked Lists	288	.087	.283	0	1
Adoption of d'Hondt	286	.087	.283	0	1
Adoption of Saint League	285	.011	.102	0	1
Reforms to open the system	288	.073	.260	0	1
Reforms to close the system	288	.066	.249	0	1
<i>Regional Shocks</i>					
Early Period (1978-1983)	288	.090	.287	0	1
Economic Crisis (1983-1988)	288	.149	.357	0	1
Neo-liberal Reforms (1988-1993)	288	.243	.430	0	1
Post-Economic Reforms (1993-1998)	288	.281	.450	0	1
Post-Electoral Reforms (1998-2003)	288	.253	.436	0	1
Latest Period (2003-2006)	288	.145	.353	0	1
<i>Level-2 Variables</i>					
<i>Party Variables</i>					
Internal Structure	286	.783	1.013	0	4
Internal Democracy	247	2.219	.571	1	3
Ideology	269	1.104	.896	0	2
Renovation (ENC)	286	3.282	1.284	1	5.44

¹⁶⁶ 48 parties are observed every time they competed in legislative elections. This multiplication results in 287 observations.

5.1.2 Analytical Strategy

To analyze the impact of party level variables and contextual factors on the electoral performance of Latin American traditional parties over time, I estimate hierarchical longitudinal growth models also known as “individual growth curves” (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002).¹⁶⁷ This technique allows me to estimate the effect of party level variables on the levels of electoral performance, controlling for the party’s specific electoral trajectory (growth) over time and controlling for other variables that may affect the electoral outcomes and growth trajectories. This statistical method considers processes that take place at two different levels, one corresponding to *intraparty* growth over time (level 1), and the other corresponding to *interparty* differences in level 1 growth parameters (level 2). Level 1 predictors display variance across parties (and countries) and over time, while level 2 predictors vary across parties but are fixed within the same party over time. Before specifying the linear growth models that I estimate in this chapter, it is worth discussing in some detail the dependent variable. This is helpful for clarifying the idea about parties’ growth trajectories over time.

5.1.3 Assessing the Dependent Variable

The electoral performance of parties, measured as the share of votes, is an outcome that changes systematically. As illustrated in Chapter 2, the trajectories of most parties decrease over time.

¹⁶⁷ These models use random effects. I estimate them with an unstructured error covariance matrix. The unstructured error covariance matrix allows all variances and covariances to be distinct. This choice is attractive when the data set has few waves of data for the different groups (panels). An alternative error covariance structure is the autoregressive error covariance matrix (ar1). However, given the characteristics of my panel, where different countries have different electoral schedules or dates, and where data are taken for electoral periods and not years (with an average distance of four years between one period and the next), this option is inadequate. The ar1 is tightly constrained because “the identical covariances in any band must be the same fraction of an entry in the previous band as are the entries in the following band of them.” (Singer and Willet 2003: 262)

However, some of them increase and, even more, sometimes they exhibit fluctuating trajectories (ups and downs). These differences were shown in Figure 1.1. In order to be more precise in the exploratory analysis, a party's growth trajectory can also be summarized by fitting a separate parametric model to each party's data. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression is adequate and intuitive for exploratory purposes. Despite the fact that not all parties changed 'linearly' over time, adoption of a common functional form across all parties allows me to compare them using the same set of numerical summaries derived from their fitted trajectories. This also provides unbiased estimates of the intercept (initial status) and slope of individual changes (rate of change).¹⁶⁸ Table 6.2 presents the results of fitting forty eight linear-change OLS regression models for each traditional party included in the analysis.

Table 5.2. Results of fitting separate within-party exploratory OLS regression models for Legislative Share of Votes as a function of linear time

Country, Party	Initial Status		Rate of Change		Residual Variance	R ²
	Estimate	St. Error	Estimate	St. Error		
ARG, PJ	45.185	4.660	-0.799	0.359	8.582	0.331
ARG, UCR	44.950	4.760	-1.366	0.367	8.767	0.581
BOL, ADN	33.221	3.759	-1.495	0.371	4.935	0.844
BOL, MIR	15.948	3.981	0.158	0.393	5.226	0.051
BOL, MNR	30.948	5.029	-0.547	0.497	6.602	0.288
BR, PSDB	11.560	2.425	0.255	0.247	3.130	0.261
BR, PDS	7.900	0.000	0.250	0.000	0.000	1.000
BR, PT	8.071	1.476	0.468	0.122	2.039	0.787
CHL, PDC	26.740	1.737	-0.459	0.182	2.246	0.680
CHL, PD	13.176	3.814	0.383	0.399	4.932	0.235
CHL, PSCh	11.718	0.320	-0.181	0.044	0.388	0.894
CHL, RN	17.959	0.796	-0.266	0.083	1.029	0.774
CHL, UDI	9.387	2.847	0.953	0.298	3.681	0.773

¹⁶⁸ The OLS regression method is useful only for exploratory analysis. However, assumptions about the independence and homoscedasticity of the residuals are violated when longitudinal data are used. In this case, residuals tend to be autocorrelated and heteroscedastic over time within subjects (parties). I account for this below.

COL, PC	40.613	3.839	-1.074	0.235	6.088	0.749
COL, PL	62.858	5.530	-1.169	0.338	8.768	0.631
CR, PL	48.933	4.518	-0.578	0.270	6.999	0.433
CR, PUSC	45.450	7.142	-0.754	0.427	11.065	0.342
DR, PL	3.925	6.645	1.288	0.397	10.295	0.637
DR, PRD	45.833	6.898	-0.438	0.412	10.686	0.158
DR, PRSC	43.500	2.570	-0.688	0.154	3.981	0.770
ECU, CFP	21.753	4.454	-1.179	0.322	6.067	0.728
ECU, UDC	9.809	3.418	-0.155	0.275	5.724	0.050
ECU, ID	20.745	3.090	-0.561	0.195	4.482	0.580
ECU, PSC	14.834	5.754	0.192	0.363	8.346	0.045
GUA, DCG	29.629	5.956	-1.424	0.462	8.145	0.760
GUA, FRG	37.170	12.794	-1.251	2.152	13.725	0.252
GUA, PAN	22.578	7.179	-0.385	0.880	8.670	0.087
GUA, UCN	24.832	5.987	-1.519	0.689	7.094	0.708
HND, PL	53.387	2.706	-0.475	0.185	4.013	0.570
HND, PN	44.974	2.982	-0.041	0.203	4.422	0.008
MEX, PAN	17.857	2.766	1.071	0.256	4.060	0.778
MEX, PRD	11.447	4.032	0.976	0.407	5.353	0.590
MEX, PRI	57.261	3.854	-1.518	0.356	5.655	0.784
NIC, PLC	51.628	5.694	-0.105	0.787	6.130	0.017
NIC, FSLN	49.575	5.645	-0.852	0.556	6.591	0.540
PAN, PA	13.733	5.924	0.470	0.548	3.878	0.423
PAN, PRD	17.960	1.208	1.322	0.129	1.443	0.981
PER, AP	38.900	0.000	-6.100	0.000	0.000	1.000
PER, APRA	34.830	10.659	-0.985	0.691	14.882	0.337
PRY, ANR-PC	66.698	10.271	-2.214	1.200	12.629	0.630
PRY, PLRA	28.628	9.939	0.407	1.161	12.221	0.058
SLV, ARENA	40.708	4.502	-0.189	0.359	6.974	0.044
SLV, PDC	42.475	4.612	-2.104	0.367	7.144	0.845
URY, FA	20.830	0.684	2.016	0.073	0.818	0.997
URY, PC	41.180	5.812	-1.174	0.475	7.503	0.671
URY, PN	35.760	5.159	-0.328	0.421	6.660	0.168
VEN, AD	48.580	5.892	-1.321	0.411	7.903	0.721
VEN COPEI	40.273	3.210	-1.421	0.224	4.305	0.910

Table 5.2 displays OLS-estimated intercepts and slopes for each party along with associated standard errors, residual variance and R^2 statistics. The data reveal several things.

First, it shows that the fitted intercepts vary considerably across parties. Some parties initiate the period with a high share of votes (e.g., PL, PL, PRI, UNO-AL, ANR-PC) and others start with low levels (PDS, PT, UDI, PLD, DP-UDC). Second, the table also shows that the rate of change among parties also varies. Comparing the estimated slopes to their associated standard errors, the slopes of some parties are indistinguishable from zero (for example MIR, PSD, PPD among others). These statistics also reveal that some parties decrease or increase at a faster rate than others. Third, the residual variance and the R-squared statistic quantify the quality of the fit for each party. The R-squared ranges from a low 1% for the PLRA in Paraguay (its trajectory is essentially flat), to 100% for the PDS in Brazil. Finally, the negative signs in the third column indicate that several parties in fact decreased their share of votes across time. Figure 6.1 illustrates this trend.

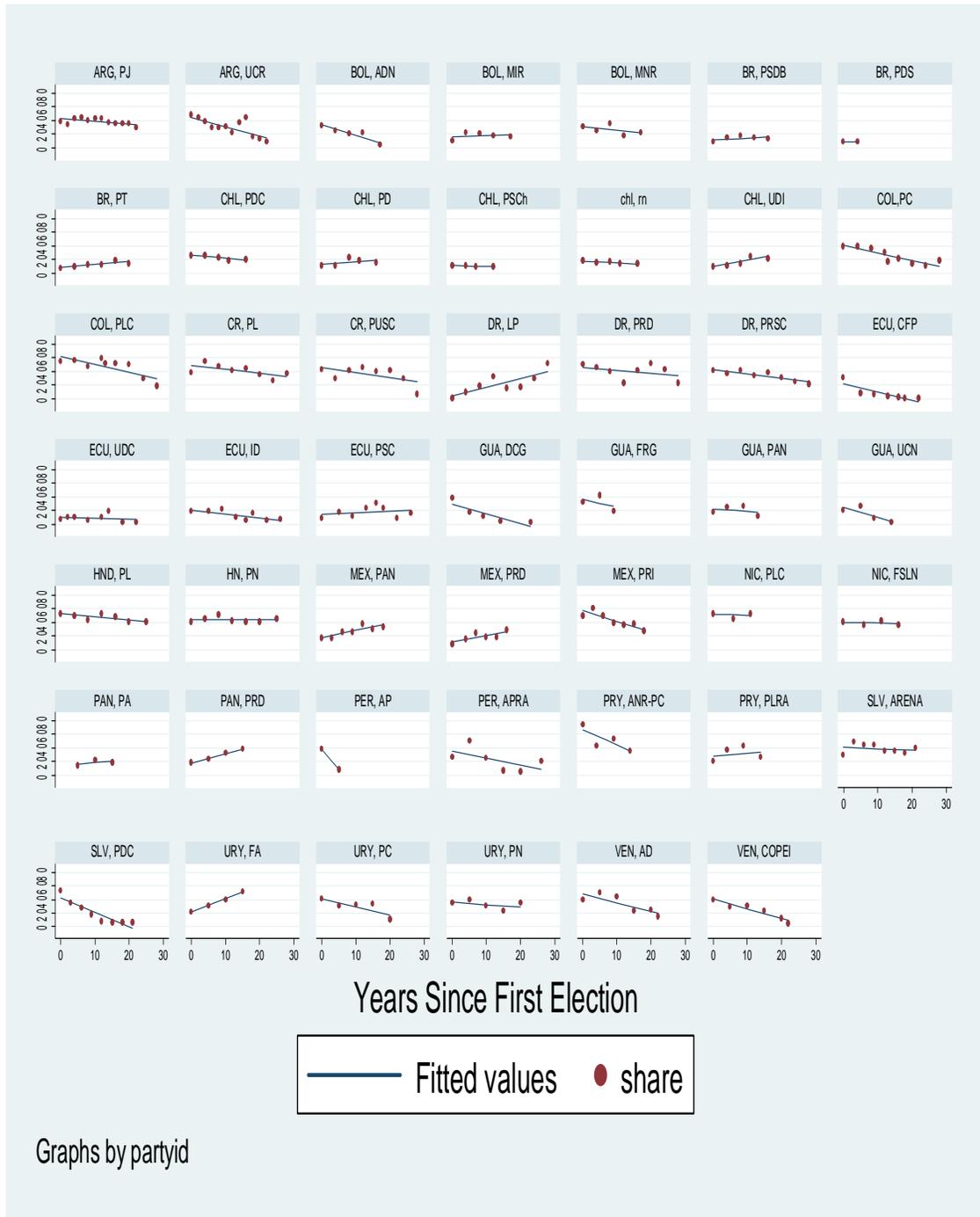


Figure 5.1. OLS Summaries of How Parties Change over Time

Useful statistics to describe the sample as a whole (average pattern of change) are the means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients. These descriptive statistics can be

obtained using data that describe the separate fitted regression results presented in Table 5.2. The following table shows these estimates.

Table 5.3. Descriptive Statistics for the Individual Growth Parameters Obtained by Fixing Separate within-party OLS Regression Models for Legislative Share of Votes as a Function of Linear Time (N=48)

	Initial Status (intercept)	Rate of Change (slope)
Mean	31.373	-.519
Standard Deviation	16.365	1.235
Bivariate Correlation		-0.544

Across the sample, the average estimated intercept is 31.373 and the average estimated slope is -.519. That means that the average party has an observed level of 31.373 percent of legislative votes when it competes in democratic elections for the first time, and that it decreases by an estimated -.519 points per election. In comparison to their means, the magnitude of the sample standard deviations suggests that parties are scattered widely around both these averages. This confirms the fact that parties differ considerably in their fitted initial status and fitted rates of change. Finally, the correlation indicates a negative relationship between the fitted initial status and fitted rate of change, suggesting that parties with greater initial share of votes tend to become less powerful more rapidly over time.

This exploratory analysis is useful for describing the data. However, it is not enough to analyze within-party and between-party questions of change simultaneously. Multilevel models for change represent a more propitious strategy for performing that kind of analysis. Moreover, these models are adequate here because first level time-varying variables for each party in each country at each election are nested within second level time-invariant variables for each party in every election. The multilevel model for change allows me to estimate the effects of economic,

contextual and institutional variables measured in each election year, while controlling for characteristics of parties.

As said before, level 1 predictors display variance across parties, countries and over time. The values of the time-varying variables (country-level variables) are the same for all the parties within a country in a specific year. For example, economic growth, the level of inflation and the number of scandals in 1986 are the same for the Costa Rican PL and PUSC. In the next electoral period (1990) the values of these variables change. Level 2 predictors vary across countries and parties but are fixed within the same party over time. For example, the internal structure of the Paraguayan Colored Party (ANR-PC) is hierarchical, while the Authentic Liberal Radical Party (PLRA) has a semi-hierarchical structure. In Panamá the Arnulfista Party has a hierarchical structure, and the Democratic Revolutionary Party has a mixed structure. Each party in the sample has certain internal characteristics that classify it as one of these types. These characteristics are assumed to be present when the party initiates its participation in elections, and are expected to affect the party's electoral performance over time. In other words, it is expected that different types of parties experience different patterns of change in their electoral performance over time. Some parties decrease their share of votes more than others given their internal characteristics (time-invariant covariates) when they start competing in democratic elections. In Chapter 3, I hypothesized that the internal conditions of parties affect their electoral performance in general, and particularly when environmental changes occur. It is expected that parties' internal characteristics have effects on the intercepts of parties' growth trajectories (electoral performance) and on the rate of change in the share of votes that they obtain. In the next section, I explain the logic of multi level models for change or growth models, and then I

introduce two simple models: an unconditional means model, and an unconditional growth model. The logic and relevance of these models is explained below.

5.1.4 Multilevel Models for Change

Multilevel models for change or growth models are a statistical strategy that considers different levels of analysis. For example, the argument that I introduce in this dissertation states that time-varying variables at the country level (e.g., economic growth, inflation, unemployment) and time invariant variables at the party level (e.g., internal structure and internal democracy) affect a specific outcome: the electoral performance of parties over time.

These models are expressed in two equations, one at Level 1 predicting party growth (decline) in electoral performance over time, and the other at Level 2 predicting the magnitude of Level 1 coefficients with time-invariant party level characteristics. The different equations are expressed in the following forms.

Level 1: Party Growth

$$y_{ti} = \pi_{0i} + \pi_{1i}a_{ti} + \pi_{ti}v_{kti} + \varepsilon_{ti}$$

where, a is a time-related variable: the year of observation (starting in 1978 for countries that had democratic elections that year); π_0 and π_{1i} are regression coefficients that represent the individual party's (linear) growth (decline) trajectory. Specifically, π_0 is the "intercept" of the growth model, that is, individual party i 's starting point on its electoral performance at the first wave of data collection (it is different for each country). π_{1i} is the linear slope of the growth trajectory such that the individual party changes by π_{1i} units on electoral performance for every change in one unit of a in this case one electoral year. v_{kti} represents time-varying "covariates,"

i.e., factors that have potentially different values for a given party at each electoral period (it could be the same value for all the parties within a country in the same year, as in the case of economic indicators), and which may influence a given electoral performance outcome at a specific time; π_{ti} represents regression coefficients linking k^{th} time-varying covariate to y_{ti} .

The second component of the growth model explains why certain parties have higher or lower π_k coefficients, i.e., why some parties change more rapidly than others, and why some parties may have higher or lower effects on electoral performance from particular time-varying covariates. In equation form, I estimate:

Level 2: Inter-Party Differences

$$(2a) \pi_{0i} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{0m}X_{mi} + \zeta_{0i}$$

$$(2b) \pi_{1i} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{1m}X_{mi} + \zeta_{1i}$$

$$(2c) \pi_{ki} = \gamma_{k0}$$

where, γ_{00} is the average ('fixed') population intercept or starting point for the growth trajectory; γ_{0m} is the average ('fixed') effect of some party characteristic X_m on the party's intercept π_{0i} ; γ_{10} is the average ('fixed') population slope for the time trend; γ_{1m} is the average ('fixed') effect of some party characteristic (for instance, X_m on the party's growth trajectory slope; γ_{k0} is the average ("fixed") population slope for the k th time-varying covariance v assuming that the effect of this covariate is the same for all parties; ζ_{0i} is the deviation, or residual, of party i 's growth trajectory intercept from the value predicted by the population average γ_{00} and all of the $\gamma_{0m}X_m$; and ζ_{1i} is the deviation, or residual, of country i 's growth trajectory slope from the population average γ_{10} and all of the $\gamma_{1m}X_m$.

Before presenting the models with the substantive predictors at two different levels, I first fit two simple models: an *unconditional means model* and an *unconditional growth model*. These

models describe and partition the variation outcome in two ways: first, across parties without regard of time (unconditional means model) and second, across both parties and time (the unconditional growth model). The former model lacks predictors at every level. The specification of the equations is as follows:

$$Y_{ij} = \pi_{0i} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

$$\pi_{0i} = \gamma_{00} + \zeta_{0i},$$

where it is assumed that,

$$\varepsilon_{ij} \sim N(0, \sigma^2_{\varepsilon}) \text{ and } \zeta_{0i} \sim N(0, \sigma^2_0),$$

and where π_{0i} is the party-specific mean and γ_{00} is the grand mean. This model postulates that the observed value of Y for party i on occasion j is composed of deviations about these means. On occasion j , Y_{ij} deviates from party i 's true mean (π_{0i}) by ε_{ij} . The level-1 residual is thus a 'within-party deviation that assesses the distance between π_{0i} and γ_{00} (Singer and Willet 2003, 93). The unconditional growth model adds *TIME* as a predictor. The equations in this case are:

$$Y_{ij} = \pi_{0i} + \pi_{1i}a_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

$$\pi_{0i} = \gamma_{00} + \zeta_{0i},$$

$$\pi_{1i} = \gamma_{10} + \zeta_{1i},$$

where it is assumed that

$$\varepsilon_{ij} \sim N(0, \sigma^2_{\varepsilon}) \text{ and } \begin{bmatrix} \zeta_{0i} \\ \zeta_{1i} \end{bmatrix} \sim N \left(\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_0 & \sigma_{01} \\ \sigma_{10} & \sigma_1 \end{bmatrix} \right).$$

This model specifies that Y_{ij} deviates by ε_{ij} from his or her true change trajectory. In addition π_{1i} depicts interparty variation in the rates of change. Without substantive predictors, this model stipulates that an individual growth parameter (either π_{0i} or π_{1i}) is the sum of an intercept (either γ_{00} or γ_{10}) and a level-2 residual (ζ_{0i} or ζ_{1i}).

Results for the first models are shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4. Multilevel models for change to the legislative share of votes (N=287)

Dependent Variable	Parameter	Model 1	Model 2
Share of Votes Lower Chamber			
Fixed Effects			
Initial status, π_{0i}			
Average Intercept	γ_{00}	26.826*** (1.701)	31.103*** (2.295)
Rate of change			
Average Slope for Growth Curve	γ_{10}		-.412** (.130)
Variance Components			
Within-party (level 1)	σ^2_{ϵ}	99.260*** (9.078)	51.507*** (5.274)
In initial status (level 2)	σ^2_0	120.769*** (28.533)	224.586*** (51.457)
In rate of change (level 2)	σ^2_1		.568*** (.168)
Covariance (level 2)	σ_{01}		-7.330*** (2.472)

* $p < .1$ ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$ (two tailed test)

Model 1 in Table 5.4 presents the results of the unconditional means model. The one fixed effects, γ_{00} , estimates the outcome's grand mean across all occasions and parties. Rejection of its associated null hypothesis ($p < .001$) confirms that the average electoral performance of the average party is non-zero. The statistically significant 26.826 indicates that the average party initiates its trajectory at that point. The estimated within-party variance is 99.260 and the estimated between-party variance is 120.769. Both coefficients are statistically significant which indicates that the share of votes varies over time, and that it also differs from party to party. This model also serves to evaluate the relative magnitude of the within-party and between-party variance components. The intra-class correlation coefficient (ρ), which equals 0.549, indicates

that half the total variation in the share of votes is attributable to differences among parties.¹⁶⁹ Model 2 (*unconditional growth model*) introduces *time* as the unique predictor in the level 1 sub-model (Singer and Willet 2003: 97). The fixed effects γ_{00} and γ_{10} estimate the starting point and slope of the population average change trajectory. The statistically significant coefficients indicate that the median party initial status (intercept) equals 31.133, and that it decreases at a rate of -.412 every year.

5.1.5 The Effects of Party's Internal Characteristics

The previous section was useful to show that electoral performance varies across parties and that a significant portion of this variation is explained by differences among them. It also reveals that the passage of time is also a significant predictor of this phenomenon. In this subsection, I explore this in more detail by testing the effects of the parties' features that I defined in Chapter 3. Models 3 to 6 in Table 6.5 include these variables as predictors of both initial status and change.

¹⁶⁹ This coefficient is calculated as follows: $p = \sigma^2_{\gamma_{00}} / (\sigma^2_{\gamma_{00}} + \sigma^2_{\epsilon_{00}})$ or $p = 120.769 / (120.769 + 99.2600) = .549$.

Table 5.5. Effects of Party's Characteristics on the Initial Status and Rate of Change of their

Electoral Performance

Dependent Variable	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Share of Votes Lower Chamber				
Effect on (Level-1) Intercept				
Average Intercept	32.184*** (2.910)	48.022*** (10.142)	25.206*** (3.640)	13.188** (5.407)
Internal Structure (Vertical-Horizontal)	-1.330 (2.330)			
Internal Democracy (V. low levels-V. high levels)		-7.545* (4.415)		
Ideology (Left-Right)			5.233** (2.526)	
Effective Number of Candidates				5.902*** (1.602)
Effect on (Level-1) Slope				
Baseline Slope for Growth Curve	-.616*** (.160)	-1.361** (.503)	-.041 (.201)	.062 (.345)
Internal Structure (Vertical-Horizontal)	.280* (.127)			
Internal Democracy (V. low levels-V. high levels)		.496** (.218)		
Ideology (Left-Right)			-.324* (.143)	
Effective Number of Candidates				-.157 (.099)
Variance Components				
Within-party (level 1)	48.761*** (4.957)	50.752*** (5.539)	53.785*** (5.718)	51.721*** (5.311)
In initial status (level 2)	228.695** * (52.508)	226.567*** (56.558)	207.736*** (49.403)	163.091*** (39.544)
In rate of change (level 2)	.547*** (.158)	.377*** (.132)	.500*** (.157)	.524*** (.160)
Covariance (level 2)	-7.292*** (2.455)	-6.776*** (2.351)	-6.500*** (2.343)	-5.631*** (2.119)
Number of observations	285	247	268	285
Wald Chi2 (d.f)	16.17 (3)	9.45 (3)	15.26(3)	26.02(3)
Prob.Chi2	.001	.024	.002	.000

p*<.1 *p*<.05; ****p*<.001 (two tailed test)

Each of the models presented above includes one party's characteristic as a predictor of both initial status and change. The top panel in the table displays the effect of party attributes

(level 2 variables) on the initial level of electoral performance (intercept). The middle panel displays the effect of the same variables on the rate of electoral performance between 1978 and 2006 (slope). The panel at the bottom reveals variance components. Some differences in these coefficients are noted, but in general, they are very similar. Model 3 includes internal structure as a predictor of both initial status and change. The estimated initial electoral performance for the average party is 32.184 ($p < .01$). The results also indicate that the structure of the party does not matter at the beginning of the period (-1.330, n.s.). However, over time, hierarchical or vertical parties decrease their share of votes at a faster rate than horizontal parties. When the structure of the party is hierarchical (0), it loses -.616 of the share of votes each year. When the party is semi-hierarchical (1), it loses less than that yearly (-.336).¹⁷⁰ The model also indicates that, on average, parties experienced a negative rate of change in their electoral performance over time (-.616 and $p < .01$). Figure 5.4 illustrates the effect of this variable on the rate of change in electoral performance. The conditional coefficient is only significant when the party is hierarchical (vertical) or semi-hierarchical (semi-vertical).¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰This number results from the following operation: $-.616 + .280$

¹⁷¹ I estimated conditional coefficients using Lincom in Stata 10.

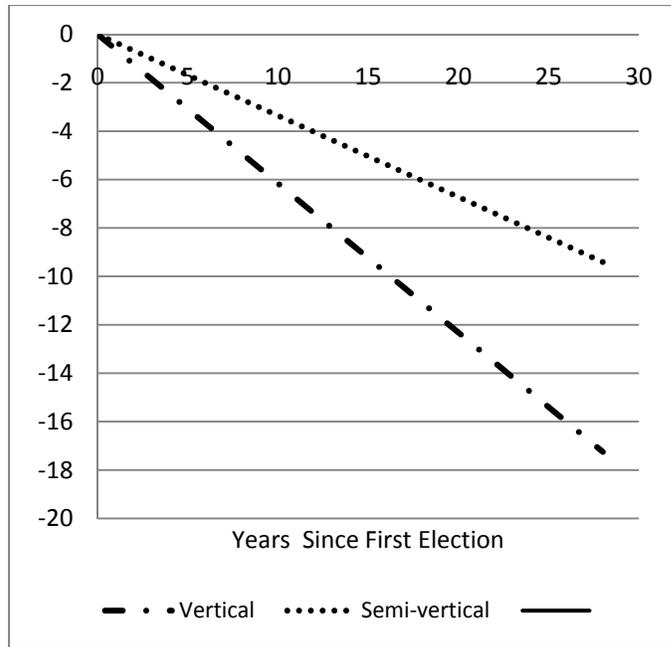


Figure 5.2. The Effect of Internal Structure of Parties on the Rate of Change of their Electoral Performance (estimation based on Model 3)

Model 4 introduces parties' internal democracy as the level-2 variable.¹⁷² The estimated initial electoral performance for the average party is 48.022 ($p < .01$). The negative and statistically significant coefficient of internal democracy indicates that this characteristic matters at the beginning of the period: more democratic parties initiate the period -7.545 points lower than non-democratic parties. However, it seems that parties that are more democratic are more likely to lose fewer votes over time than parties that are not democratic. For example, parties without internal democracy (0) lose -1.361 yearly, while parties with low levels of democracy (1) lose -.865. Parties that have intermediate levels of democracy (2) lose -.369 and parties that are

¹⁷² I estimated the model with the alternative measure of internal democracy. The coefficients of this variable were no significant.

democratic (3) end up winning .127 yearly.¹⁷³ Figure 5.5 shows this effect. The conditional coefficients are significant for all but parties that have high levels of democracy.

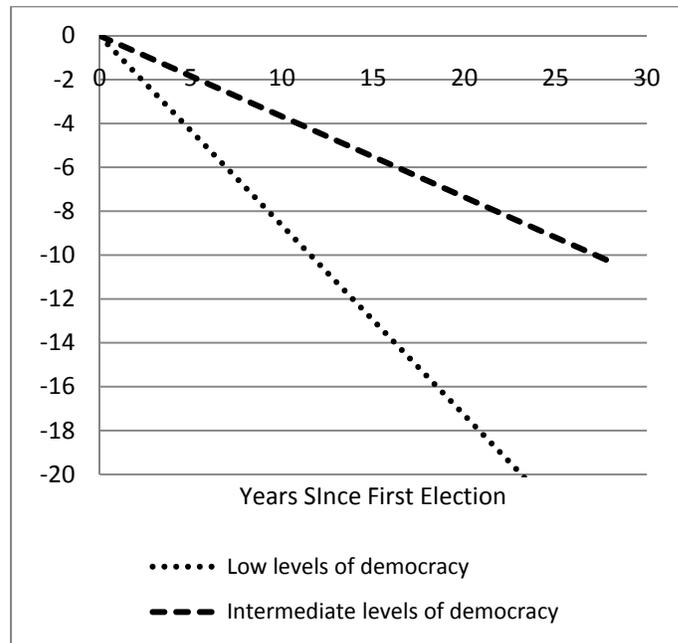


Figure 5.3. The Effect of Parties' Internal Democracy on the Rate of Change on their Electoral Performance (estimation based on Model 4)

Models 5 and 6 include other party characteristics that are hypothesized to have an effect on both the initial level of electoral performance among parties and on their rate of change. The results in model 5 and Figure 5.5 indicate that rightist parties manifested better performances when they started to compete in the late 1980s, but they lost votes in a faster rate than parties at the center and at the left of the ideological spectrum. The conditional coefficient for leftist parties is smaller than those for the other two categories (i.e., rightist and centrist parties) though it is statistically insignificant. For this reason, it is not showed in the figure.

¹⁷³ Parties that are very democratic would gain .623 share of votes yearly. However, in the sample analyzed here those parties do not exist.

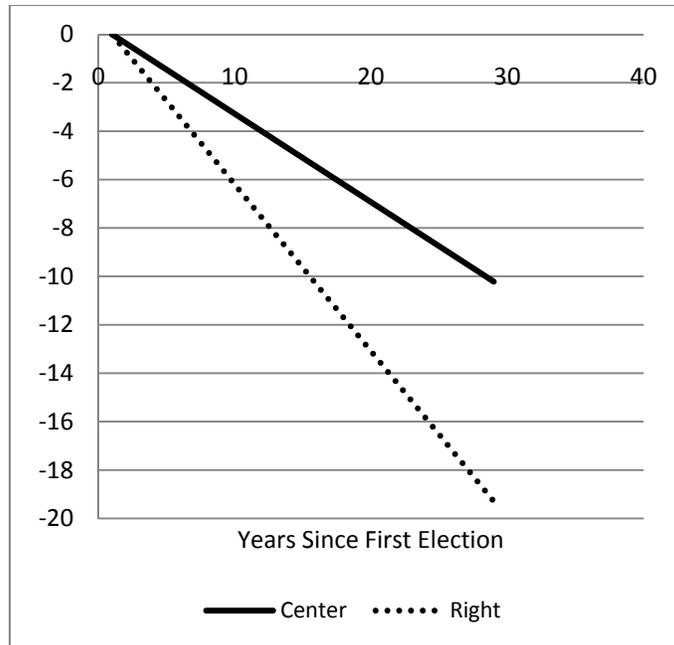


Figure 5.4. The Effect of Parties' Ideology on the Rate of Change of their Electoral Performance (estimation based on Model 6)

Finally, parties that possessed a greater number of leaders when elections were inaugurated performed better than parties with lower number of candidates. However, over time, an additional candidate reduces the size of the growth curve, but the coefficient is not statistically significant. Models 7 and 8 include more than one party-level variable as predictors of electoral performance in terms of initial status and rate of change. Model 7 includes the two variables that are thought to be more theoretically relevant: internal structure and levels of democracy. Model 8 adds the two other controls, ideology and effective number of candidates.

Table 5.6. Effects of Different Party's Characteristics on the Initial Status and Rate of Change of their Electoral Performance

Dependent Variable	Model 7	Model 8
Share of Votes Lower Chamber		
Effect on (Level-1) Intercept		
Average Intercept	48.882*** (10.098)	26.102** (11.268)
Internal Structure (Vertical-Horizontal)	-1.516 (2.426)	-1.043 (2.441)
Internal Democracy (V. low levels-V. high levels)	-7.398* (4.414)	-6.100 (4.265)
Ideology (Left-Right)		4.310* (2.601)
Effective Number of Candidates		4.700** (1.733)
Effect on (Level-1) Slope		
Baseline Slope for Growth Curve	-1.516** (.493)	-.864 (.627)
Internal Structure (Vertical-Horizontal)	.256** (.115)	.221* (.130)
Internal Democracy (V. low levels-V. high levels)	.476** .212	.456* (.234)
Ideology (Left-Right)		-.177 (.136)
Effective Number of Candidates		-.125 (.089)
Variance Components		
Within-party (level 1)	49.398*** (5.343)	51.400*** (5.737)
In initial status (level 2)	223.708*** (55.716)	163.200*** (43.261)
In rate of change (level 2)	.351*** (.121)	.298* (.109)
Covariance (level 2)	-6.462*** (2.255)	-4.591*** (1.890)
Number of observations	247	235
Wald Chi2 (d.f)	16.88 (5)	30.67 (9)
Prob.Chi2	.005	.000

* $p < .1$ ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$ (two tailed test)

The results are similar to those of the previous models. In model 7 parties that are more democratic begin the period with a lower level of electoral performance than parties that are less democratic (-7.398). Over time, the average party experiences a negative rate of change in its performance (-1.516). However, less hierarchical and more democratic parties lose fewer votes. Over time, these organizations are better equipped than parties that lack or have low levels of internal democracy. Figure 5.6 illustrates these results.

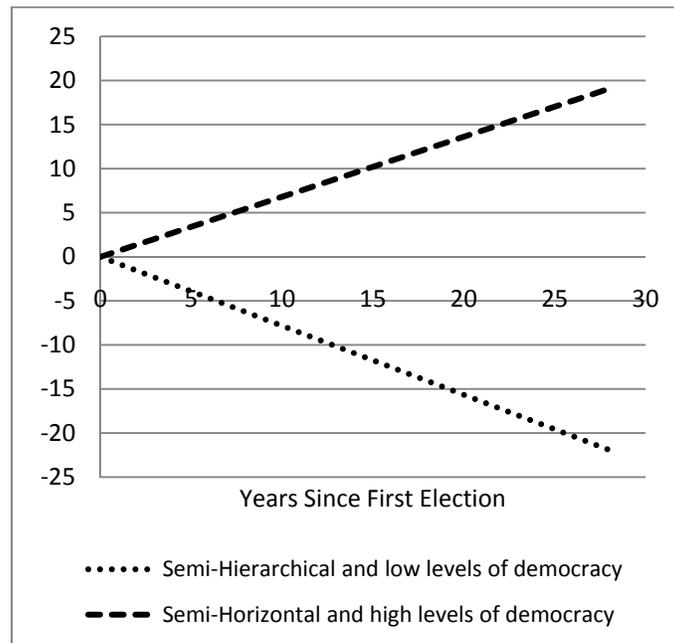


Figure 5.5. The effect of parties' internal structure and democracy on the rate of change of their electoral performance (estimation based on Model 7)

In Model 8 internal structure and levels of democracy have an effect on the electoral performance over time but not at the beginning of the period. As in the previous model, more horizontal and democratic parties are more successful than hierarchical and non-democratic parties (they lose fewer votes over time). In this model, ideology and the effective number of candidates have an impact (positive) on the initial level of electoral performance but not over time.

In summary, the previous models support the theoretical expectations that state that internal characteristics of parties are factors that need to be taken into consideration when electoral performance is analyzed. In the next section, I introduce structural, contextual and institutional factors (time-varying covariates, or level-1 variables) that have been included in previous models related to electoral performance of parties. The difference here is that these variables are controlled by the passage of time, and party level variables (level 2). This analysis has not been performed before.

5.1.6 The Effects of Contextual and Institutional Variables on Parties' Electoral Performance¹⁷⁴

In previous studies, scholars have concluded that economic factors are significant determinants of the electoral performance of parties. Economic voting theories (retrospective vs. prospective and pocketbook vs. sociotropic) have been tested and some evidence has emerged about the significant effects of economic indicators. In general, bad economic performance of incumbent parties explains lower levels of electoral performance (Remmer 2003). Controversy exists about the specific economic indicators that have such an impact. Going beyond these analyses, the argument here states that economic, institutional and other conditions (i.e., political scandals) that are expected to have an impact on the dependent variable (electoral performance), should be analyzed controlling for other variables, in this case for party level variables in both at an initial

¹⁷⁴ Additional models that include country-fixed effects on the party vote intercept and rate of change (dummy variables) are reported in Appendix C. Coefficients do not change much. In some countries' internal characteristics seem to affect the outcome (intercept and rate of change).

moment, and over time. Models 9 and 10 in Table 5.7 add to the previous models (1-8) by introducing these variables.¹⁷⁵

Table 5.7. Hierarchical Growth Models Predicting the Electoral Performance of Traditional Parties

Dependent Variable	Model 9	Model 10
Share of Votes Lower Chamber		
Level 1		
Unemployment _{t-1}	-.220 (.216)	
Unemployment mean		-.278 (.264)
GDP Growth _{t-1}	.078 (.175)	
GDP Growth mean		.027 (.246)
Inflation _{t-1}	-1.068** (.504)	
Inflation mean		-1.329** (.636)
Scandals	.455* (.241)	.588** (.245)
Electoral Reforms	-2.228 (2.072)	-2.229 (2.083)
Presidential Incumbent	4.670 (4.182)	6.358 (5.139)
Latest Period	-3.240** (1.459)	-2.116 (1.573)
Unemployment _{t-1} *Presidential Incumbent	.079 (.253)	
Unemployment mean*Presidential Incumbent		-.046 (.279)
GDP Growth _{t-1} *Presidential Incumbent	-.110 (.280)	
GDP Growth mean*Presidential Incumbent		.037 (.366)
Inflation _{t-1} *Presidential Incumbent	.867 (.694)	
Inflation mean*Presidential Incumbent		.617 (.819)
Scandals*Presidential Incumbent	-.661* (.344)	-.768** (.349)
Electoral Reforms*Presidential Incumbent	3.163 (2.795)	3.245 (2.762)

¹⁷⁵ These models include party variables that are theoretically more important (internal structure and internal democracy).

Level 2		
<i>Effect (on Level 1) Intercept</i>		
Average Intercept	51.059*** (10.199)	57.030*** (12.381)
Internal Structure (Vertical-Horizontal)	-0.864 (2.354)	-0.973 (2.521)
Internal Democracy (V. low levels-V. high levels)	-7.576* (4.391)	-9.605* (5.255)
<i>Effect on (Level-1) Slope</i>		
Baseline Slope for Growth Curve	-1.430*** (.479)	-1.737*** (.558)
Internal Structure (Vertical-Horizontal)	.241** (.111)	.260** (.119)
Internal Democracy (V. low levels-V. high levels)	.451** (.210)	.553** (.245)
Variance Components		
Within-party (level 1)	34.817*** (4.278)	33.926*** (4.501)
In initial status (level 2)	207.565*** (57.500)	234.442*** (68.199)
In rate of change (level 2)	.328*** (.130)	.380*** (.149)
Covariance (level 2)	-5.753*** (2.381)	-6.964*** (2.828)
Number of observations	228	204
Wald Chi2 (d.f)	90.57(17)	86.19 (17)
Prob.Chi2	.000	.000

[^]p<.15; *p<.1 **p<.05; ***p<.001 (two tailed test)

These results confirm the theoretical argument about the importance that a party's internal characteristics have on their electoral performance. The similarity in the direction, size and statistical significance of level two variables (in comparison to the previous models), reflects the robustness of the argument. Over time, the share of votes of Latin American traditional parties declines. In all models, the baseline slope for the growth curve is negative and statistically significant. However, not all parties suffer vote losses to or at the same rate. Parties that have hierarchical structures and that are non-democratic suffer steeper electoral declines over time than parties with horizontal structures and high levels of democracy. Regarding the economic variables, the impact that they have on the dependent variable is not as strong as

previous studies have argued. Inflation is the only economic variable that seems to have a strong and systematic effect on parties' electoral performance. In all scenarios – inflation_{t-1} and $\text{inflation}_{\text{mean}}$ –, higher levels of inflation affect the outcome negatively. It affects all parties and not only those that are incumbent.¹⁷⁶ Strangely, unemployment and economic growth do not have any impact. These outcomes challenge previous studies that find a strong relationship between economic conditions and the performance of the incumbent. In particular, empirical tests show that the incumbent party suffers more than other parties when it performs poorly. The results here indicate that this is not necessarily true. First, traditional parties suffer electoral declines indistinctively when national economic conditions are bad. Second, economic variables do not have the strong effect that other studies have shown. As I argue and test in this dissertation, other predictors – in this case, party-level variables – need to be included in models of parties' electoral performance. The contextual variable included in these models – political scandals – has a significant effect on the performance of parties. Different than other expectations, in this case, the incumbent party suffers more than other parties when it is involved in scandals. The greater the number of scandals he or she is blamed for, the more votes his/her party loses. Regarding electoral reforms, the coefficient is negative when it does not interact with the incumbent party. It is positive when the two variables are multiplied. However, none of these coefficients is statistically significant. An additional test is performed in models 11 and 12 where the hypotheses about the impact of these reforms on different types of parties are tested. The results indicate that reforms to open the system as well as those directed to close the systems are harmful. In the long run, less hierarchical and more democratic parties lose to a lesser extent than more hierarchical and less democratic parties. Table 5.8 shows these results.

¹⁷⁶ All interactions among incumbency and economic indicators are insignificant.

Table 5.8. Effects of Economic, Contextual, Institutional variables and Party's Characteristics on the

Initial Status and Rate of Change of their Electoral Performance

Dependent Variable	Model 11	Model 12
Share of Votes Lower Chamber		
Level 1		
Unemployment _{t-1}	-.157 (.213)	-.179 (.213)
GDP Growth _{t-1}	.040 (.174)	.158 (.175)
Inflation _{t-1}	-.817[^] (.518)	-1.005^{**} (.505)
Scandals	.448[*] (.238)	.386[^] (.246)
Reform to open the system	-7.587[*] (4.187)	
Reform to close the system		-4.290[^] (2.644)
Presidential Incumbent	6.696 (4.181)	4.937 (4.257)
Latest Period	-3.688^{**} (1.447)	-3.372^{**} (1.483)
Unemployment _{t-1} *Presidential Incumbent	-.067 (.258)	.125 (.254)
GDP Growth _{t-1} *Presidential Incumbent	-.140 (.276)	-.124 (.282)
Inflation _{t-1} *Presidential Incumbent	.580 (.697)	.904 (.670)
Scandals*Presidential Incumbent	-.614[*] (.339)	-.704[*] (.348)
Reform to open the system*Presidential Incumbent	9.366^{**} (4.376)	
Reform to close the system*Presidential Incumbent		-2.010 (4.242)
Level 2		
<i>Effect (on Level 1) Intercept</i>		
Average Intercept	50.253^{***} (10.140)	50.327^{***} (10.254)
Internal Structure (Vertical-Horizontal)	-.803 (2.336)	-.766 (2.375)
Internal Democracy (V. low levels-V. high levels)	-7.901^{**} (4.376)	-7.790[*] (4.418)
<i>Effect on (Level-1) Slope</i>		
Baseline Slope for Growth Curve	-1.476^{***} (.487)	-1.408^{**} (.466)
Internal Structure (Vertical-Horizontal)	.240^{**} (.113)	.206[*] (.109)
Internal Democracy	.486^{**}	.468^{**}

(V. low levels-V. high levels)	(.215)	(.205)
Variance Components		
Within-party (level 1)	33.585*** (4.118)	36.092*** (4.476)
In initial status (level 2)	204.365*** (56.302)	211.061*** (58.993)
In rate of change (level 2)	.352*** (.136)	.301*** (.123)
Covariance (level 2)	-5.748*** (4.118)	-6.138*** (2.423)
Number of observations	228	228
Wald Chi2 (d.f)	95.30 (17)	92.79
Prob.Chi2	.000	.000

^p<.15; *p<.1 **p<.05; ***p<.01 (two tailed test)

When reforms to open the system are introduced (Model 11), only incumbent parties benefit. The conditional coefficient is positive and statistically significant. Similar to other models, more democratic parties begin the period with lower levels of electoral performance, but over time, and when these reforms are introduced, these parties suffer less than more hierarchical and less democratic parties. When reforms to close the systems are introduced (Model 12) all parties (regardless of an incumbency condition) lose votes (-4.290), but parties with more horizontal structures and more internal democracy lose fewer votes than more hierarchical and less democratic parties. In this latter scenario, parties are less adaptable than when other types of reform are introduced. Party level coefficients in the model 12 are lower than the coefficients in model 11.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The empirical analysis presented in this chapter tests the theoretical argument summarized in the introduction and developed in Chapter 3. I find empirical support for the hypotheses that state that internal features of parties have a significant effect on electoral performance. Results of the hierarchical growth models show that over time the average Latin American traditional party suffers a loss of votes. The electoral weakening of these parties is a function of time but also a function of party level variables, structural, political and contextual predictors. In the final chapter I summarize the substantive and empirical findings of this dissertation and establish a research agenda for future studies.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study has explained patterns of traditional political parties' electoral performance in eighteen Latin American countries during three decades (1978-2006). In particular, it seeks to answer the following research question: Why do some parties suffer more than others under similar contextual conditions? Or why are some parties able to weather difficult external environments while others fail? In answering these questions, the analysis develops, explores and tests a general argument about the importance that parties' internal characteristics have on their own electoral performance, in particular when they confront environmental challenges, such as economic crises and institutional reforms. Several authors have shown that structural and political conditions affect the performance of political parties. A general finding is that when parties, particularly the incumbent, perform poorly in the economic realm, the electorate votes for another one. Or, when incumbent parties introduce reforms to the electoral systems, they increase or at least maintain the electoral power. This research debates these conclusions by showing that the effect of environmental conditions on parties' performance is not direct but rather it is mediated by their internal characteristics.

This research contributes to filling an existent gap in the literature on Latin American political parties. This is important for at least three reasons. First, knowledge about how parties function expands our understanding of politics in these countries. Parties remain central actors in virtually all democracies in the region, and as such, their comprehension as complex

organizations is very important. Although more information on this aspect is still needed, the accumulation of data here made it possible to undertake a previously non-existing comparative and empirical analysis on Latin American traditional parties. Second, the results of this research confirm previous findings that show that parties' internal characteristics are intervening variables that mediate their own performance and responses in normal and challenging contexts (Kitschelt 1994; Koelble 1991). However, the evidence in this study suggests that Latin American parties' internal characteristics shape their performance differently from those parties in other regions, i.e., institutionalized parties in advanced democracies. This finding is important because it helps to refine existing theories about the effect that parties' internal features have on different outcomes. Third, this research adds to previous studies on Latin American political parties that state that parties' internal conditions are important in understanding their capacity to adapt to changing electoral and economic environments. In particular, the argument of this study states that beyond the levels of a party's institutionalization considered by Levitsky (2003), the structure of relations among leaders and members, and the levels of internal democracy within the organization are determinants of party behavior. Variation in these characteristics across parties explains different outcomes: while some parties with certain internal characteristics suffer and decrease their share of votes, in particular when environmental conditions challenge them, others survive and still other increase their power. Both a small-N study and a large-N study that include several types of parties from different countries indicate that empirical evidence supports the suggested hypothesis. This evidence challenges conclusions of single cases (Levitsky 2003; Greene 2007). Different types of parties and several internal dimensions are analyzed, adding this variation to both explanatory variables and outcomes.

Results of this study suggest some implications for future research. First, they challenge some assumptions about party leadership centralization. The scant literature that exists on the internal structure of Latin American parties and party systems associates higher levels of power centralization in the hands of one or few leaders with a positive or better performance of the organization. The idea is that when power is concentrated, one or few leaders decide the destiny of the party. These leaders have enough power to make decisions that are propitious to respond to the context, in both normal and critical times. The evidence in this dissertation shows that a party structure that is hierarchical is harmful, in particular old guard politicians who are reluctant to introduce reforms. When the context changes and uncertainty increases, parties have more difficulties responding to new challenges when structures are hierarchical. When a party organization is horizontal and different levels of power are filled with a wider number of leaders, possibilities for voters to withdraw their support from leader who did not perform as expected and give it to another person within the party, are higher than in hierarchical parties where leaders are scant and where renovations are few or do not take place. Another finding that calls into question the thesis that internal democratic procedures weaken candidates in spite of strengthening them (Atkeson 1998; Kenney and Rice 1987), is the confirmation that in Latin American countries candidates that are chosen through democratic mechanisms are stronger than those selected by non-democratic procedures. In these countries, these mechanisms are “an electoral asset by providing a stamp of democratic legitimacy” (Carey and Polga-Hecimovich 2006). The implication of these findings is that the concepts and theories that are based on studies of parties in advanced democracies need to be rethought or at least refined.

A second implication is that there is a clear need for more systematic research on Latin American party organizations. Empirically grounded research of parties as organizations is

limited, mostly because of a lack of data and difficulties in measuring its potential impact. Although the present research advances this purpose, it is necessary to accumulate more data that account for other party dimensions and that include non-traditional parties.

Third, results of this study suggest the need to consider other challenges that might affect political parties' electoral performance. In this research, structural crises and reforms of electoral systems were included as explanatory variables that shape the outcomes. Other contextual challenges and reforms would likely shed more light about factors that explain the electoral trajectories of different types and kinds of political parties. National conditions in different countries might explain differences in parties' electoral trajectories. For example, case studies suggest that the presence of a violent conflict in Colombia is a determinant of political outcomes. Or processes of fiscal and political decentralization in the Andean region explain changing patterns in electoral trajectories of traditional parties.

Finally, the study of parties' internal characteristics and their impact on political outcomes is completely open to investigation. This dissertation attempted to put the topic under scrutiny and to discuss that relationship in the Latin American context. Much more research about this topic is necessary in this region where other political phenomena have occupied the research agendas. Political parties remain the central actors in democratic governments. This is a sufficient reason to explore in more detail the internal dynamics that shape their responses to external stimuli.

This research concludes that parties that are more horizontal and decentralized are better suited to respond to environmental challenges than hierarchical and non-democratic parties. This finding suggests that institutional designers and parties leaders and members should consider moving their organizations in the direction that help them to better adapt and survive. Similarly,

parties that emerge as new political options require organizations that structure the internal relations among leaders and members. Without identifiable structures, it is difficult for these parties to consolidate as organizations that shape political processes. As evidence in Latin American countries show, many “new” political options emerge as groups of persons leaded by some popular figure. In general, this options lack both political and material resources and are unable to survive more than a reduced number of elections. Decentralized and democratic party structures as defined in this dissertation are propitious in a region where political and fiscal decentralization processes have taken place in the last decades (1980-2000), and where links between politicians and voters are tight and close.

APPENDIX A

THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF LATIN AMERICAN TRADITIONAL PARTIES: QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED TO EXPERTS

Note: I'm interested in knowing the current situation and if significant changes have occurred since the beginning of the third wave of democratization. Thank you! (*Nota: Me interesa saber la situación actual de los partidos, y si ha habido cambios significativos a lo largo del tiempo – desde la transición a la democracia. Gracias!*)

Name (*Name*)

Party/Country (*Partido/País*)

Date (*Fecha*)

1. Leadership (*Liderazgo*)

- a) How much power do national leaders have recruiting candidates for elected office? (*Qué tanto poder ejercen los líderes nacionales en el proceso de nominación de candidatos para cargos a elección popular?*)

- b) And, how much power do regional/local leaders have? (*Y qué tanto poder ejercen líderes regionales/locales?*)
- c) Who has more power within the party: the party's director; a group of leaders; the country's president; local leaders; elected politicians; others? (*Dentro del partido, quién(es) tiene(n) mayor poder: el director del partido/una cúpula colegiada/el presidente del país/ líderes locales/políticos elegidos en cargos populares/otros?*)
- d) According to the previous questions, is the structure of the party hierarchical or horizontal? (*Según las preguntas anteriores, la estructura del partido es jerárquica (vertical) o es horizontal?*)

2. Factions (*Facciones*)

- a) Does the party have internal factions? (*Hay facciones dentro del partido?*)
- b) If the answer to the previous question was positive, which are the more significant factions? (*En caso afirmativo, cuáles son las facciones más significativas?*)
- c) In case that factions in fact exist, do they have power to recruit candidates? (*En caso de existir, tienen poder esas facciones para reclutar/imponer candidatos?*)

3. Leadership Renovation (*Renovación de líderes*)

- a) Does the party have the capacity to renovate its leaders? (*Tiene el partido capacidad de renovación?*)

- b) Is renovation of leaders within the party frequent? (*Es frecuente la renovación de líderes dentro del partido?*)

- c) Are the party's leaders traditional figures that have lasted long periods of time? (*Son los líderes del partido figuras tradicionales que han perdurado largos periodos de tiempo?*)

Thank you very much for your time!!

(Muchas gracias por su tiempo!!)

APPENDIX B

CLASSIFICATION OF LATIN AMERICAN REGIMES, 1978-2006

Table 7.1 Classification of Latin American Regimes, 1978-2006

Country	From	To	Regime
Argentina	1983	2006	Democracy
Bolivia	1982	2006	Democracy
Brazil	1985	2006	Democracy
Chile	1990	2006	Democracy
Colombia	1974	1989	Democracy
	1990	2006	Semi-democracy
Costa Rica	1958	2006	Democracy
Dominican Republic	1978	1993	Democracy
	1994	1995	Semi-democracy
	1996	2006	Democracy
Ecuador	1979	1999	Democracy
	2000	2000	Semi-democracy
	2001	2003	Democracy
	2004	2006	Semi-democracy
El Salvador	1984	1993	Semi-democracy
	1994	2004	Democracy
Guatemala	1986	1999	Semi-democracy
	2000	2001	Democracy
	2002	2006	Semi-democracy
Honduras	1982	1998	Semi-democracy
	1999	2006	Democracy
Mexico	1988	1999	Semi-democracy
	2000	2006	Democracy
Nicaragua	1984	1995	Semi-democracy
	1996	2006	Democracy
Panama	1990	1993	Semi-democracy

	1994	2006	Democracy
Peru	1980	1982	Democracy
	1983	1984	Semi-democracy
	1985	1987	Democracy
	1986	1991	Semi-democracy
	1992	1994	Authoritarian
	1995	1999	Semi-democracy
	2000	2000	Authoritarian
	2001	2006	Democracy
Paraguay	1989	2006	Semi-democracy
Uruguay	1985	2006	Democracy
Venezuela	1958	1998	Democracy
	1999	1999	Semi-democracy
	2000	2001	Democracy
	2002	2006	Semidemocracy

Source: Mainwaring, Brinks and Pérez-Liñán, 2006

APPENDIX C

**Table 7.2 Effects of Country-Level Factors on the Electoral Performance of Traditional Parties,
1978-2006**

Dependent Variable Share of Votes Lower Chamber	Model 9A	Model 9B
Level 1		
Unemployment _{t-1}	-446* (.236)	-.374[^] (.261)
GDP Growth _{t-1}	.016 (.177)	-.128 (.196)
Inflation _{t-1}	-1.339** (.511)	-1.686** (.584)
Scandals	.549** (.246)	.607** (.257)
Electoral Reforms	-1.856 (2.165)	-1.670 (2.655)
Presidential Incumbent	3.871 (4.098)	5.365 (4.052)
Latest Period	-3.078** (1.493)	-3.477 (1.567)
Unemployment _{t-1} *Presidential Incumbent	.087 (.246)	-.010 (.240)
GDP Growth _{t-1} *Presidential Incumbent	-.151 (.278)	-.021 (.278)
Inflation _{t-1} *Presidential Incumbent	1.086 (.682)	.953 (.679)
Scandals*Presidential Incumbent	-.621* (.342)	-.690** (.341)
Electoral Reforms*Presidential Incumbent	3.813 (2.695)	3.122 (2.691)
Level 2		
<i>Effect (on Level 1) Intercept</i>		
Average Intercept	52.536*** (8.719)	51.452*** (13.451)
Internal Structure (Vertical-Horizontal)	-.706 (1.485)	-.524 (1.383)
Internal Democracy	-7.044**	-4.506*

(V. low levels-V. high levels) Country-Level Factors*	(2.799) ***	(2.599)
<i>Effect on (Level-1) Slope</i>		
Baseline Slope for Growth Curve	-1.208** (.437)	-1.198* (.665)
Internal Structure (Vertical-Horizontal)	.291** (.102)	.259** (.090)
Internal Democracy (V. low levels-V. high levels)	.309^ (.191)	.072 (.167)
Country-Level Factors**		
Variance Components		
Within-party (level 1)	35.933*** (4.285)	37.281*** (4.588)
In initial status (level 2)	55.204*** (22.145)	26.180*** (13.863)
In rate of change (level 2)	.248 (.103)	.042 (.060)
Covariance (level 2)	-3.231 (1.353)	-.518 (.842)
Number of observations	228	228
Wald Chi2 (d.f)	297.14 (33)	384.72 (49)
Prob.Chi2	.000	.000

***Model 9A: Country-Level Significant Coefficients. Effects on (Level 1) Intercept: Colombia (+); Costa Rica (+); Dominican Republic (+); Honduras (+); Nicaragua (+); Ecuador (-);Brazil (-); Chile (-).

** Model 9B: Country-Level Significant Coefficients. Effects on Level 1 Intercept: Brazil (-); Ecuador (-); Panama (-). Effects on(Level -1) Slope: Panama (+).

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