

# ELECTORAL LAWS, PARTIES, AND PARTY SYSTEMS IN LATIN AMERICA

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■ **Abstract** With a focus on Latin America, this literature review considers the extent to which electoral systems affect different aspects of parties and party systems. We find that standard electoral system variables fail many empirical tests that try to tie them to any facet of parties or party systems. Still, methodological considerations regarding interactions with party strategies, party organization, and many contextual variables loom large, so we cannot reject the hypothesis that electoral systems are influential. Analyses, therefore, must go far beyond formal electoral rules generally or a simple focus on single aspects of electoral rules (such as the district magnitude) when trying to explain political behaviors.

## INTRODUCTION

How much and in what ways do electoral systems shape parties and party systems in Latin America? Institutions generally affect political outcomes by defining a system of incentives that influences the strategic decisions and general behavior of politicians. Electoral systems, therefore, affect parties and party systems (PaPSs) by influencing partisan actors whose behavior shapes political parties. Defining and measuring the impact of electoral systems on PaPSs, however, is a complicated task. Among other theoretical problems engendering methodological complications, evaluations of this relationship must contend with the wide range of strategic options that electoral systems leave politicians. Like the rules of chess, electoral laws constrain the range of options open to a player without predetermining the strategy. The rules create an environment under which some strategies are much more likely to be successful than others, but past experience, capacity for learning, the context of competition, creativity, and other factors interact to determine a particular player's moves. In short, electoral rules create bounds within which politicians make decisions, but they seldom force particular actions. As in chess, this bounding is crucial to the decision process.

Defining the relationship between electoral rules and PaPSs is further complicated by the nature of electoral systems themselves. Electoral rules are not as easily defined as chess rules. Electoral rules combine complex components

with sometimes potentially contradictory effects, and they operate within a wider institutional and social context. Thus, although electoral rules probably have a significant direct impact on partisan strategies, they are only one factor working to define partisan decisions.

Studies attempting to establish the relationship—or lack thereof—between electoral systems and PaPSs face difficult methodological challenges. Finding consistency among parties within a given country, or among parties or party systems in different countries operating under similar electoral rules, could validate claims about the importance of a common institutional framework. But within or among countries, finding different types of PaPSs would be insufficient to disclaim the role of the electoral system because parties may respond to the incentive structure through alternative strategies to fit their specific needs and interests. For example, it is conceivable that one party could see advantages in a decentralized party structure in pursuit of electoral victory whereas another could prefer tighter centralization. These strategies may not be equally likely to yield electoral success, but parties may trade off different goals and time horizons. A nationally oriented party, for example, may see the costs of short-term electoral results as secondary to the potential gains from the maintenance of control by the leadership and long-term electoral positioning. Further, following Strom (1985), some parties may prefer maintenance of ideological purity or other goals (e.g., office seeking) even at the cost of potential electoral success. In sum, even if they, like chess players, share similar goals, parties may see different paths to their goals and may organize themselves in very different forms despite common electoral incentives. Tests, then, must account for nonuniform responses and should not discount the importance of rules even when political context, politicians' abilities, or other factors appear to swamp the effect of those rules.

With a focus on Latin America, this essay reviews the advances of political science in addressing this theoretical problem within the context of the difficult methodological issues. We begin by defining electoral systems and delineating parties and party systems. The main body of the essay reviews some of the principal literature that considers the relation between specific aspects of electoral systems, on the one hand, and the number of parties and several party or party system characteristics on the other.

Our review of the Latin American literature yields several conclusions. First, although most literature on the electoral system is tied to the number of parties, electoral systems are multifaceted and are theorized to influence many aspects of the political process. That said, second, the standard electoral system variables fail many empirical tests that try to tie them to any facet of parties or party systems. District magnitude, for example, is insufficient to explain the number of parties in Latin America (even when controlling for sociological variables). Latin Americanists have added new variables to the debate, most importantly the concurrence of executive and legislative elections. This variable proved consequential in early tests, but recent trends challenge that thesis too. Latin Americanists have also contributed theories about the role of federalism and gubernatorial elections, but

these have not yet received thorough testing. Tests on other dependent variables, including party discipline, party nationalization, and programmatic structuration all fail to provide clear evidence of electoral system effects. Our third conclusion is methodological and calls into question the negative finding of the second conclusion. Although the data could support rejecting a thesis about the importance of electoral systems to many party or party system attributes, our chess analogy suggests that electoral systems may be influential even if this system-level variable fails to produce consistent patterns across parties within a given system. The frustrating conclusion, then, is that although institutional designers will generate changes in PaPSs by implementing electoral reforms, the magnitude or even direction of change may not be as expected, because parties' varying goals and organizational forms will lead them to respond in dissimilar ways. This conclusion also suggests that the effects of electoral systems may be difficult to uncover because of the complicated interaction of that variable with contextual factors, such as the nature of political competition, societal divisions, and party organizational formats. Analysis, therefore, must go far beyond the formal electoral rules when trying to explain political behaviors. A fourth and related conclusion is that electoral systems are complex entities, combining multiple types of rules that are interactive and sometimes contradictory. In consequence, tests that focus on single rules, such as the many studies that emphasize the role of district magnitude, will be unlikely to provide solid evidence of an electoral system effect.

This review has no pretension of exhaustive coverage of the components of electoral systems or of all the relevant dimensions of PaPSs. Instead, we have picked literature that makes clear theoretical and empirical links between electoral rules and particular aspects of PaPSs. Our goal, then, is not to query all relevant dimensions of electoral systems and political parties' functions but rather to use these examples to discuss theoretical advances, methodological issues, and positive and negative empirical findings.

## DEFINING THE VARIABLES: ELECTORAL SYSTEMS, PARTIES, AND PARTY SYSTEMS

An electoral system is defined as the set of rules that regulates access to electoral competition, defines the conditions under which candidates compete, and provides a method for the translation of votes into governmental positions. One of the implications of such a definition is that the list of the components of an electoral system is almost unending, as is the variety of potential rules that creative institutional designers could devise. We should also note the possibility that rules primarily designed with intentions other than the direct regulation of electoral competition may eventually have an impact on its configuration, as is the case with legislation aimed to control the financing of politics originally nurtured by a basic concern with political corruption.

Although the theme is potentially very broad, most of the research developed throughout the last 50 years has focused on the impact of one or more of the following electoral system components: the ballot structure and ballot control, the electoral threshold, vote pooling, the types of votes, the electoral formula, and the district magnitude (Norris 2004, Carey & Shugart 1995). Carey & Shugart define ballot control as the degree of control party leaders have in determining the order of the candidates on a list. The ballot variable thus dictates whether voters must choose from a “closed” party list or if their votes help determine the order of candidates within an “open” list. Vote pooling refers to whether votes for a candidate within a party (or faction or coalition) are aggregated to determine the group’s seat allocation. By vote type, Carey & Shugart refer to whether voters cast a single vote for a party, a single vote for a candidate, or multiple votes to rank candidates (usually within a party). The growing use of two-tiered systems where voters choose both district candidates and regional or national representatives is a fourth component of electoral systems. The electoral threshold is simply the minimum percent of the vote a party must achieve to win a legislative seat. District magnitude defines the number of candidates elected in a given district, thus directly affecting proportionality.

Another set of rules comprise the executive electoral system. The most common distinction is between systems of plurality and those that require a majority (or near majority) to win office. Of course the U.S. electoral college is an alternative system, and Uruguay’s system, which not only fused (until 1996) the legislative and executive offices but also, in effect, fused the primary and general elections, shows that creativity is the only limitation to the number of possibilities in designing an electoral system.

In addition to the diversity in terms of these “standard” variables, many other facets of an electoral system have a clear impact on party development and other aspects of politics. Campaign finance, for example, is crucial to political outcomes and can be construed as part of the electoral system. The vote allocation systems (e.g. D’hondt, Hare St. Lague) have a direct impact on the distribution of seats among the parties, and the electoral threshold prevents small parties from winning (and perhaps running for) office. Shugart (1995) has shown that the concurrence of legislative and presidential elections, another electoral-system variable, affects the number of parties and the president’s legislative support. Other issues, such as registration requirements, term limits, rules governing absentee voting, placement of ballot booths, media access for candidates, candidate registration requirements, rules for drawing district boundaries, and rules about independent candidacies, are also part of a country’s electoral system.

In this essay, we do not attempt to address all of these aspects of electoral systems. Instead, we focus on the basic elements of legislative electoral rules, while acknowledging that these other aspects of electoral systems could be at least as influential as the variables that we do investigate.

The second part of our concern is delineating parties from party systems. Sartori (1976, pp. 43–44) explains that a system is defined by “patterned interactions of

its component parts,” and thus we can characterize a party system by the factors that define the interactions, such as the number of parties, coalition patterns among the parties, the degree of ideological separation (polarization) among the parties, and the stability of competition among the members of the system. Perhaps more loosely than implied by Sartori, we could also characterize a party system by common traits among the parties; if all or most parties are disciplined, old, nationalized, volatile, clientelistic, rooted in society, or institutionalized, then the party system can be said to encompass that quality.

If the electoral system affects a party, does it also affect the party system? If it affects the system, does it also affect all parties? Some of the dependent variables of interest are clearly linked to party systems, such as the number of parties. Most variables, however, identify characteristics of individual parties—but common patterns lead analysts to consider them as party system traits. In our review, therefore, it is necessary to identify these common traits, because these are situations in which a system variable is presumably at work. We will continue to maintain, however, that the absence of common traits does not imply the irrelevance of system-level influences. It may be, in contrast, that the system variable (here the electoral rules) is permissive (to use Cox’s 1997 terminology), thus allowing a divergence of outcomes within one system.

In addressing these themes, we first focus on the one clear system-level outcome, the number of parties. The rich literature on this variable began with theories based on expectations about the role of a single electoral rule variable, the district magnitude. Our review shows the development of empirical tests of the increasingly complex theory. We then consider the effect of electoral system on three party variables: adaptability, linkages with voters, and nationalization. In most cases, we find that these traits are not consistent across all parties in any country. This does not imply, again, that electoral rules or other system-level variables are unimportant; it does imply, however, that the rules are not strictly constraining. It also suggests a great challenge for empirical tests of the impact of electoral rules on PaPs.

## THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Although at their base, electoral systems translate votes into seats, Norris (2004) and Sartori (1997) link them to three larger tasks—representation, government formation, and constituency service—and other theorists find other roles as well. These electoral system functions overlap considerably, though imperfectly, with those of political parties, so differences in how different electoral systems perform their functions translate into or are conflated with differences in how parties perform theirs. As Jones (1995) states, the effect of electoral systems is seen through their impact on parties. Identifying the independent impact of electoral systems is greatly complicated by the tangling of other forces.

This section reviews the part of the literature on Latin American polities that explicitly theorizes an effect of electoral rules on some aspect of PaPSs. We therefore review extant hypotheses and their research results in order to identify some theoretical and methodological flaws present in much of the literature. Our purpose is not to answer the question of how much electoral rules matter for PaPSs, but to identify some problems affecting some of the answers so far provided.

Our overall view is that electoral laws are influential but by themselves not determinant. As the chess analogy implies, social context is greatly influential and even with the same rules and context not all politicians will choose a similar strategy. Further, in contrast to a chess match, parties do not always have the same short-term goals and the rules themselves are endogenous to the game. By themselves, then, electoral systems will generate very imprecise predictions about political behaviors. Careful consideration of the interactions of electoral systems with these other factors will reduce the margin of error, but the multiple and countervailing influences will always yield doubts about the independent influences of electoral systems on PaPSs.

As an example, consider the effect of electoral systems on a party's hierarchical organization and discipline. Multiple authors have argued that Brazil's electoral incentives strongly encourage parties to organize as weak and decentralized organizations (Ames 2001, Mainwaring 1999, Samuels 1997). For a variety of reasons, however, Brazil's Workers' Party (PT) has eschewed those incentives and created an alternative party structure, leaving it with stronger social roots, ideological cohesiveness, and institutional consolidation. Thus, even if it were correct that the electoral system mattered—moving most parties in one direction and encouraging the PT to create structures to counteract the system's forces—a test correlating the electoral system with organizational forms would not yield strong results. In short, probabilistic social outcomes produce multiple exceptions, and analysts should refine models to account for the exceptions rather than discounting the theory completely. This accounting should first explain the degree to which the electoral system is restrictive and therefore discouraging to exceptions, and only then search for variables that explain the direction taken by the exceptional cases.

This specific reasoning is applicable to other issue areas, as we develop in this section. We begin with the relation of electoral systems to the number of parties, the issue that has attracted the bulk of theoretical attention from a systemic perspective. We then move to other dependent variables that focus on the party level. A first issue is the adaptability and volatility of parties or party systems. These issues are typically not as closely tied to electoral systems in the literature, but there are implied relations. They also lead to the issue of party discipline, which is a traditional dependent variable for electoral systems studies. We group that issue under a heading of linkages between voters and PaPSs because it is related to general issues of representation. Here we also discuss the relation between electoral systems and the degree to which legislators pursued a personal vote, an issue raised by Carey & Shugart (1995), which leads to the literature on whether personal vote systems foster clientelism. Kitschelt and others have expanded this theme to discuss linkages between voters and their representatives and the degree of

“programmatic structuration” within a party system (H. Kitschelt, K.A. Hawkins, J.P. Luna, G. Rosas, E.J. Zechmeister, unpublished manuscript). And finally, Jones & Mainwaring (2003) have picked up a relatively new theme, the degree to which a party or party system is nationalized. Following a literature based on the U.S. and European traditions, these authors argue that party system nationalization is indicative of critical issues in party politics. Few authors, however, have tied this issue to electoral systems, although unpublished work by Morgenstern et al. shows that single-member districts have a strong effect on one aspect of nationalization.

## Electoral Systems and the Number of Parties

Although “students of politics have asked how electoral laws affect the formation and survival of political parties since mass elections first became common in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century” (Cox 1997, p. 13), the “classic starting point” for any contemporary analysis of the effects of electoral systems on party competition is a pair of basic claims stated by Duverger more than half a century ago: (a) “the plurality single-ballot rule tends to party dualism” and (b) “the double-ballot system and proportional representation tend to multipartyism” (Duverger 1954, 1986).

Since their initial formulation, Duverger’s laws have been the target of many theoretical and empirical criticisms (Cox 1997, pp. 14–26; Sartori 2001, pp. 91–92). In addition to the critique about the legitimacy of attempts to generalize patterns of social causation in the form of law-like statements, the theory has been attacked for its simplicity. Although parsimony is a virtue, studies that focus entirely on simple views of the electoral system sacrifice a broader understanding of the complex interactions that explain why different countries generate varying numbers of parties. Addressing these interactions is crucial, because as we show below, not only simple correlations but even some more sophisticated tests have led institutionalist scholars to conclude that the electoral system—or more specifically the district magnitude—has a “surprising insignificance” in explaining the number of parties (Mainwaring & Shugart 1997, p. 417). Coppedge’s (1997) exploration of the psychological and mechanical effects of district magnitude on the number of parties supports a similar conclusion. He finds both effects significant and approximately equal; however, “neither effect is very large in comparison to underlying patterns of politicization, which are argued to be reflections of the number of political cleavages in society.”

Still, the doubt expressed by Amorim Neto & Cox (1997, p. 151) remains: “Does anyone believe the United States would remain a two-party system even if it adopted the Israeli electoral system?” Latin Americanists, therefore, have not discarded the role of the electoral system in their analyses; rather, as we argue below, they have added nuance to the theory, arguing about how the electoral system interacts with other variables and identifying new variables (such as electoral timing and state electoral effects) in their pursuit of understanding.

On the empirical level, the problem with simple tests of Duverger’s laws was the poor fit of the data. Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and most spectacularly

TABLE 1 Effective number of parties<sup>a</sup>

Country	Average	Max.	Min.	Difference	Average district magnitude <sup>b</sup>	Max. year	Min. year
Argentina	2.7	3.0	2.2	0.8	5.4	2001	1983
Bolivia	4.4	5.4	3.7	1.7	14.4	1997	1994
Brazil	8.0	8.7	7.1	1.6	19.0	1990	1998
Chile	5.0	5.1	5.0	0.2	2.0	1997	1994
Colombia	2.5	3.5	2.0	1.5	4.9	2002	1982
Ecuador	5.8	7.6	3.9	3.7	5.5	2002	1979
Mexico	2.8	2.9	2.8	0.1	1.0/40 <sup>c</sup>	1997	2000
Paraguay	2.3	3.2	1.8	1.5	4.4	2003	1988
Peru	3.5	5.8	2.3	3.5	120.0	1990	1985
Uruguay	3.0	3.3	2.4	1.0	5.2	1989	2004
Venezuela	3.6	5.0	2.4	2.6	6.1	1998	1983

<sup>a</sup>Years included vary according to democratic instauration. Sources: Payne et al. 2002; Schiavon, [http://www.cide.edu/investigadores/jorge\\_schiavon/parties\\_in\\_lower\\_house.htm](http://www.cide.edu/investigadores/jorge_schiavon/parties_in_lower_house.htm).

<sup>b</sup>Several countries, including Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, have adopted two-tier systems during the included time period. The reported numbers reflect averages prior to these changes. Peru returned to a system with average district magnitude of 4.8 for 2001.

<sup>c</sup>Mexico has a two-tiered system.

India (especially at the state level) fail to meet the expectations of plurality systems tending toward bipartisan systems. Latin America lacks pure single-member district systems (the lone exception being the Senate in the Dominican Republic), but neither intracountry nor cross-country tests support the idea that higher district magnitude alone yields more parties. Table 1 displays the basic data on the effective number of parties (based on votes) across Mexico and the South American countries. There is significant variance among the countries in terms of district magnitude and the average number of effective parties, but almost no correlation between these statistics ( $r = -0.06$ ). Considering particular pairs of cases that highlight differences in numbers of parties (e.g., Paraguay and Mexico on the low end and Brazil and Chile on the high end) also fails to show a clear effect of the district magnitude. In sum, the data again suggest that district magnitude, at least without controls, fails to explain the intercountry distinctions.

Given the need to take account of control variables, it is useful to consider the effect of electoral systems on changes in the number of parties over time within a given country. Intra-country tests are valuable in eliminating the possible effect of factors such as the number of ethnic divisions in a society. But although political events and time lags can still muddy the analysis, the general result, again, is little evident relation between the district magnitude and the number of parties.

Peru, Venezuela, and Ecuador experienced the largest change in their effective number of parties. In most years Ecuador had more than five effective parties, but



it had fewer than four in 1979 and only 4.2 in 1988. The low figure for 1979, however, is misleading because that was the first legislative election held in that country after the long dictatorship, and the low value in 1988 is confused by the coup attempt and special election. Ecuador did have multiple electoral reforms, but they seem unrelated to these changes in the number of parties.

In Peru, the number of parties was lowest (2.3) in 1985 and highest (5.8) in the succeeding election of 1990. The important change in the electoral system, however, took place in 1993. The spike in the number of parties, then, seems more the result of Peru's social and political upheaval than of its electoral system. Peru did experiment with several electoral reforms, but these seem to have had little impact on the number of parties. Until 1993, Peru utilized multimember districts with medium district magnitude (around 5), but it changed in that year to a system of a single national district with magnitude of 120 (it also eliminated one of its two legislative chambers). The country then returned to the system of 25 districts with average magnitude of 4.8 in 2000 (Payne et al., p. 114). If the district magnitude were a key variable in determining the number of parties, then Peru should have experienced that increase between 1993 and 2000. The evidence for such an effect is weak at best. Most tellingly, the maximum number of parties occurred before the reform. If we take 1990 as an anomaly, then we do see an increased number of parties postreform. But, once the district magnitude was slashed, the number of parties did not decrease.

Venezuela also experienced important change in the effective number of parties, which rose from about two and a half in the 1980s to 4.7 in 1993 and 5.0 in 1998 before falling back to 3.7 in 2000. Here the rise does correspond with an important shift in the electoral rules, but it also correlates with a crucial political shift. In 1990, Venezuela scrapped its decades-old proportional representation (PR) system of medium-sized districts (average magnitude about 6) in favor of a two-level system. Under the new system, voters choose about half of their deputies in single-member districts and the rest from multiple state-level closed lists (Kulischek & Crisp 2003).<sup>1</sup> The system changed again in 1997, increasing the number of PR seats. Importantly, legislative and presidential elections were no longer concurrent, as the president's term was lengthened.

Venezuela's solid two-party system began to erode long before the electoral system reforms. Between 1978 and 1983 the number of parties fell from 2.6 to 2.4 and then rose to 2.8 in 1988. This period marked the end of Venezuela's long stability. In 1989, riots exploded in the nation's capital. In 1992, claiming that the governmental system was failing, Hugo Chavez led the first of two failed coups within a year. In 1993, President Carlos Pérez was impeached. The elections of that year produced a great change in the party system, as the effective number

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<sup>1</sup>Since 2000, an informal practice known as the *morochas* (duplication) has developed under this new system. In order to avoid losing seats owing to a compensatory mechanism in the law, groups present candidates in the two tiers with different party labels ([http://www.eucomvenezuela.org/pdf/final\\_statement\\_en.pdf](http://www.eucomvenezuela.org/pdf/final_statement_en.pdf)).

of parties jumped to 4.7. The two long-standing parties imploded and even more parties won significant votes in 1998 ( $N = 5.1$ ) as Chavez won the presidency.

Ignoring this background, one would see some evidence that the electoral reform of 1990 led to the increased number of parties in Venezuela. This seems, however, a case in which the system pressure led to the electoral change, rather than one in which the rule change caused the change in the number of parties.

Rather than leading to a conclusion that electoral rules are irrelevant, these empirical challenges have led the undeterred theorists to consider how interactions of the electoral system with other institutional and societal variables affects the number of parties. The current standard has been set by Cox (1997; see also Amorim & Cox 1997, Ordeshook & Shvetsova 1994, Clark & Golder 2006, Rice & Van Cott 2006), who with Amorim Neto argues that “the effective number of parties appears to depend on the product of social heterogeneity and electoral permissiveness, rather than being an additive function of these two factors” (Amorim Neto & Cox 1997, p. 166). Although this is a solid finding, there are still anomalies in the data and much room for continued analysis. First, this type of analysis does not account for changes over time; therefore, it cannot explain why Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Venezuela, and many other countries have seen significant changes in the number of parties without a concomitant change in the electoral system (or presumably the number of ethnic groups). Second, as Amorim Neto & Cox acknowledge, it is not always clear which cleavages will generate partisan politics. Their analysis focuses on ethnic heterogeneity rather than measures considering linguistic or other differences.<sup>2</sup> As Rosas (2005) shows, however, the same cleavages are not active in all countries. Third, Chhibber & Kollman (1998) make the important addendum that the effects of electoral systems and cleavages should affect district-level rather than national party systems. Their analysis thus focuses on the aggregation of the district-level parties into a national system.

Given the ample room for continued refinement of the theories, studies focusing particularly on Latin America have probed other aspects of the electoral system to explain the number of parties. Jones (1995), for example, finds that although the district magnitude has a limited effect on the number of parties, rules requiring presidential candidates to win a majority (i.e., allowing run-offs) are less likely to produce two-party competition at both the presidential and legislative levels than are plurality systems. Another important and novel finding that originated with Latin Americanists (Shugart & Carey 1992, Shugart 1995, Jones 1995, Mainwaring & Shugart 1997) concerns the timing of elections. These studies have shown that tying executive and legislative elections together reduces the number of competing parties. Mainwaring & Shugart's (1997) regression analysis substantiates their claim that the timing of elections and other variables “override the impact of

<sup>2</sup>Note that this yields a score of just 1.7 rather than 9.0 for India, according to the authors' own database. Amorim Neto & Cox also list only 1.7 effective parties in India, a number much lower than that detailed by Chhibber & Kollman (1998), even for the one year under analysis.

magnitude” (p. 418). They do find one exception, however: When they use only cases where the president is elected by plurality and these elections are concurrent with the legislative elections, effective magnitude gains statistical significance—although substantively it still has limited impact.

Jones (1995) is particularly careful in his methodology, using both a cross-national and an intracountry (cross-provincial) dataset in his statistical analysis. This dual test allows him to allay fears about generalizability on one side and intervening variables on the other. He argues that the change to concurrent elections would significantly reduce the number of parties. Recent empirical data, however, might challenge his thesis. Brazil changed to a concurrent system in 1994 just before Jones’s book was published, but although the effective number of parties did fall from 8.1 to 7.1 between 1994 and 1998, it rose to 8.5 for 2002 and 9.3 for 2006 (data from Payne et al. 2002 and <http://www.electionresources.org>). Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Venezuela have modified their timing less drastically, and none has experienced a change in the number of parties in the expected direction. Ecuador, for example, moved in 1998 from a system of partially simultaneous elections to one where presidential and legislative elections are held on the same day. In 2002, they produced their highest-ever number of effective parties (7.6), a number that would be even higher if we had not conjoined all the independents. These few perhaps exceptional cases do not disprove Jones’s theory, but they do call into question the strength of the finding.

A final area where Latin Americanists have entered into the debate about the effect of electoral systems on party systems originated with Sartori (1994, 1997) and Cox (1997), who criticized Duverger because the expected effects should influence results at the district rather than the national level (see also Chhibber & Kollman 1998, 2004). The particular concern is that the reductive effect of single-member districts works at a district level, and thus two-party systems are produced at the national level only if the same two parties compete in all districts. Although Latin America lacks single-member district systems, this theory has had relevance for the region as analyses have focused on variance among a country’s districts. Piñeiro (2006), for example, shows that the Uruguayan districts that elect fewer representatives produce far fewer effective candidates than those with larger district magnitude. Jones (1997) and Samuels (2000) show the effect of district factors through studies of the relation of gubernatorial elections and the number of parties. Jones’s (1997) study of Argentina found that the concurrence of gubernatorial and legislative elections reduced the number of parties, and Samuels (2000) found a similar relationship for Brazil. Perhaps this could help explain why the effective number of parties did not fall as a result of Brazil’s change to concurrent elections.

Overall, the studies in this genre raise several theoretical issues. Most important, although there is little evidence for a simple relation between district magnitude and the number of parties, studies focusing on Latin America and other areas have found ample evidence that the district magnitude matters when it interacts with other political and social variables. What remains, however, is to analyze where and when ethnic and other social divisions, federalism, electoral timing, and

multi-round systems take precedence as they interact with the district magnitude. Which set of factors, for example, explains why Brazil, with its few ethnic divisions (at least according to the accounting of Amorim Neto & Cox), has many parties? Perhaps the change to concurrent elections will reduce Brazil's number of parties over time, but that variable too should interact with other variables. For example, where parties lack deep roots in society, many politicians would see opportunities to win elections under new party labels, thus keeping the number of parties high in spite of concurrent electoral processes. The cases of Peru, Ecuador, or now Venezuela would be similar. Concurrence only works if there is a small number of viable presidential candidates and the very high district magnitude continues to produce adverse incentives.

Second, most of these studies have not accounted for the different ways parties might respond to an electoral system stimulus. The Chilean double-member district system, for example, has not reduced the number of parties to the predicted two or three (considering the  $M+1$  rule), in part because the parties have coalesced into coalitions that dole out the candidacies strategically. If we count coalitions instead of parties as Carey (2002) suggests, then the Chilean system would be consistent with the theory (see also Londregan 2002, Morgenstern 2004). This again shows that electoral systems interact with other factors—here related to the extant party divisions and Pinochet's legacy—to produce particular outcomes.

Finally, the significant changes in the number of parties in virtually every Latin American country that do not correlate with changes in the electoral system suggest that none of these electoral systems is restrictive enough to secure unstable political environments. Perhaps these changes are consistent with a theory that simply predicts multipartism, but that is an imprecise and unsatisfactory conclusion about the forces contributing to the dynamism of the party systems. Further, the Latin American context does not lend itself to a clear test of Duverger's restrictiveness hypothesis, because the only national legislative body that uses a pure single-member district system in Latin America is the Dominican Republic's Senate. There are a few historical cases where single-member districts were in use, including Argentina in 1904, 1948, 1951, and 1954, Mexico until 1961, Nicaragua until 1948, Paraguay until 1912, and Haiti until 1984 (Pérez-Liñán & Wills Otero 2005). Perhaps these cases would allow better testing, but the level of democracy for those cases is questionable. Another possibility would be testing on local or provincial legislatures, but we lack information on the electoral systems used at this level.

In summary, it seems clear that the electoral system does create a context that frames decisions that, in turn, yield a particular number of parties. Myriad factors, however, combine in complex ways to determine that number, so simple bivariate tests of correlations between the number of parties and any particular electoral system variable, such as the district magnitude, fail. Different houses can be built from the same foundation, different chess games develop under the same set of rules, and different party systems result from any electoral system. This does not mean that the rules are unimportant—only that they are one among many influential variables.

## Electoral Systems and Party and Party System Adaptability

In considering the number of parties, we have been considering theoretical developments and findings that assess the impact of electoral rules in terms of systemic properties. The chess analogy suggests, however, important costs for circumscribing our analysis within the systemic level. As long as we consider electoral rules as frameworks with varying levels of permissiveness within which political parties adjust to a socioeconomic and political environment, it appears reasonable to assume that the same rules may pose different challenges and opportunities to differently endowed parties. This assumption triggers the question about the causal relationships eventually existing between electoral rules and degrees of electoral success depending on parties' competitive endowments. In other words: Which attributes—if any—of an individual political party determine its relative capacity to compete within a given set of electoral rules? Do different sets of electoral rules make some endowments more rewarding than others in terms of electoral success? In this subsection we focus on the issue of party adaptability—understood as a party's capacity to adapt to the opportunities and challenges posed by its environment within a given set of rules through a successful competitive strategy—to argue that the literature has not fully developed tests for the impact of electoral rules at the subsystem level.

Party adaptability owes much of its relevance to the centrality attributed to systemic continuity through institutionalization, which Mainwaring & Scully (1995) tie to regime stability. Its theoretical ambiguities notwithstanding, Mainwaring & Scully's influential theoretical framework includes stability of the contours of the party system and stability of party organizations as two of the four dimensions defining institutionalization. Inherent in this definition are contradictions at the party level. For example, a party system (e.g., Ecuador's) could conserve its basic configuration—i.e., degree of fragmentation, structuring cleavages, polarization—despite significant change among its components. Still, Mainwaring & Scully and others (Mainwaring & Torcal 2005, Roberts & Wibbels 1999) have used parties' average age as an indicator of systemic continuity. A related concern is that consistency in the rules of the game (another trait of institutionalized party systems) should better allow parties to improve strategies (i.e., adapt) through learning and to consolidate structures and linkages with constituencies. Adaptation that occurs without a change in the rules, however, implies, again, that the rules are unconstraining.

These concerns are provoked by a quick glance at the evolution of the age of the major Latin American parties during the past 15 years. The growing number of young parties does not seem to reflect changing electoral rules and/or their interaction with a changed cleavage structure, as would be suggested by Amorim Neto & Cox (1997). If electoral rules matter, we are left with the notion that these systems with many new parties are permissive in terms of party formation, rather than determinative of a particular strategy. In short, the Latin American PR systems allow adaptation through the diversification of partisan supply. Further,

this finding suggests that although there are some exceptions (Venezuela and to a lesser extent Bolivia), the impact of electoral rules is not evenly distributed within party systems. In almost all cases we find dramatic drops of the levels of electoral support for one of the key historical actors of the system, but also in almost all cases we find successful strategies of survival for other actors. Consider, for example, the electoral debacles of Radicals in Argentina, Conservatives in Colombia, Social Christians in Costa Rica, and Colorados in Uruguay, on the one hand, and the parallel survival of the Argentine Peronists, Colombian Liberals, Chilean Socialists and Christian Democrats, Costa Rican PLN, and Uruguay's Blancos and Frente Amplio on the other (not to mention the striking resurrection of the Peruvian APRA in 2006). One interactive variable these examples point to is the importance of incumbency during a crisis. Of course this will still not explain which among the existing parties—or a new party—will benefit. In short, some parties (either extant or new) adapt to changing circumstances with more alacrity and success than others.

This variety in responses raises questions about which attributes determine parties' adaptability, and whether different electoral rules increase or reduce the relative value of these attributes. These attributes are not intrinsic conditions but context-dependent qualities contingent on both the socioeconomic environment and electoral rules. The centrality of party organizational structure in explaining a party's adaptability—regardless of electoral incentives—has been convincingly argued and grounded on empirical evidence by Coppedge (2001) and Levitsky (2001, 2003). Coppedge (2001) concluded his assessment of a decade of "political Darwinism" by underlining the heterogeneity of parties' capacities to face the challenge of "environmentally-induced" volatility. Although the challenge was omnipresent, parties' vulnerabilities and adaptabilities were not. Equally variable was the resilience of individual party organizations. Coppedge (2001, p. 199) observed that "party organizations... seem to change very slowly, if at all. In the meantime, it is more likely that the party will be sidelined in the volatile electoral environment. Therefore the primary mechanism of change in parties is replacement by other parties rather than internal reform." Coppedge immediately noticed, however, that, rather than being "passive objects of the project," parties "possess some capacity to adapt." His conclusions regarding the determinants of the unevenness of the distribution of that capacity were nevertheless limited: "[D]uring the 'lost decade' of approximately 1982 to 1995, the environment selected in favor of governing parties of the center-right or right and opposition parties that were either personalist or left of center." That raises a question about which types of structures allow parties to adapt better within a given set of electoral rules. Answering this question would require a systematic accumulation of in-depth research on party structures across multiple electoral environments, data collection that has not yet been undertaken.

Indeed, the best evidence on parties' adaptive potential allowed by different types of organizational structures comes from single-country case studies (Coppedge 1994, Levitsky 2003). Though interesting and useful, this research

design cannot illuminate questions about electoral rules, as they are a constant in these studies.

Following Kitschelt, Levitsky (2003) concurred with Coppedge in finding that party structures decisively mediate responses to environmental change. Not all structures, however, worked in the same direction. His main finding was that "variation in the dimension of party institutionalization may have important implications for party behavior. . . . Lower levels of institutionalization—though often a source of inefficiency, disorder, and ineffective representation—tend to enhance parties' flexibility during periods of crisis" (Levitsky 2003, p. 3; see also Auyero 2000 and Levitsky 2005). Electoral institutions, however, were virtually absent from Levitsky's account of Peronist adaptability; moreover, in a later work that stresses the relevance of that adaptability for the survival of Argentine democracy, he concluded that "the Argentine case also points to the limits of regime analyses that focus on institutional design" (Levitsky 2005, p. 87). Both Coppedge's (1994) work on the experience of Acción Democrática and Crisp's (2000) analysis of the deterioration of Venezuelan democracy suggest that Levitsky's may be too crude a statement. The case of Acción Democrática appears especially relevant here because it is one of the cases in Levitsky's comparative analysis of the failures of adaptation that helps to highlight Peronist success. Coppedge's and Crisp's findings, therefore, call into question Levitsky's dismissal of the impact of electoral institutions. It is clear that the combined effects of candidate selection procedures and a closed-list system were key to the strength of party machines in Venezuela, the progressive erosion of the representative capacity of Congress, and Congress's diminishing capacity to counterbalance executive authority. It is also clear that that very same strength of party elites' power turned into the rigidity that made Acción Democrática incapable of responding to the challenges posed by the transformation of Venezuelan society. It is no less clear, on the other hand, that the very same institutions whose outcomes became at a certain point part of a problem had been for three decades highly functional for the stability of Venezuelan democracy.

Siavelis' (1997, 2000, 2005) analysis of postauthoritarian Chile provides another example of the interplay of electoral systems with party structures and identities on parties' adaptability. In this case, the existence of long-consolidated partisan identities and traditions enabled Socialists and Christian Democrats to overcome the expected reductive effects of the two-member district binominal system introduced by military reformers through the development of coalitional strategies. It is also worth noticing, as Siavelis does, that the feasibility of such a strategy was considerably increased by the relevance of the democratic-authoritarian cleavage during the period of regime transition. Siavelis (1997, p. 662) concludes that the effects of electoral regimes on party systems are, to a large extent, context-dependent and "there is no uni-causal or direct relationship between electoral system change and party system transformation within well-institutionalized party systems." In a recent article, Siavelis (2005, p. 61) adds the further qualification that even when they exist, effects are not necessarily homogeneous across all the elements of the

electoral system; “there are political behaviors and incentive structures generated by the electoral system that can undermine the other real and strong incentives for coalition formation created by the same electoral system.” In this specific case, tensions result from the coexistence of a two-member district binomial election system that provides strong incentives for the formation and maintenance of coalitions, and nonconcurrent presidential and legislative elections that conspire against coalition formation by complicating negotiations for the selection of coalitional candidates among coalition members with unequal electoral support.

In summary, the literature on adaptability suggests at least two observations that imply a need for further development of theory building and testing:

1. The unevenness of the rise and decline of parties suggests that electoral rules, if they have any role, must interact with other factors to determine party adaptability (measured as success in the face of new competitive pressures).
2. We have yet to see a study design sufficient for testing the effect of electoral rules on party adaptability, perhaps because this would require a complex cross-national evaluation of adaptation. As a result, although we can perhaps argue that PR allows system-level adjustment by allowing new entrants to the system, we are unable to answer whether particular electoral rules enhance extant parties' adaptability.

## Electoral Systems and Linkages between Voters and Parties or Party Systems

Perhaps the primary role of PaPSs is representation of constituent interests. The discussion of the role of electoral systems in mediating and establishing more or less resilient linkages with citizens has taken two directions, first focusing on the personal vote and party discipline and more recently focusing on programmatic party competition.

The issue of party discipline is crucial to democratic development because it is tied to executive-legislative relations and the representative process. In general, Mainwaring & Shugart (1997) argue that discipline defines the negotiation process and stability in relations between presidents and legislators with clear implications for democratic functioning. Building on Schattschneider's report for the Committee on Political Parties of the American Political Science Association (1950), which railed against the lack of unity in the U.S. parties, Morgenstern (2004) argues that discipline (or unity resulting from ideological cohesion) is a key component of collective party responsibility. Only when parties are united can voters identify a program and “hold the bums accountable.”

In addressing the impact of electoral systems on party discipline, most have followed Carey & Shugart's (1995) foundational article (which, at the time of this writing, is the most cited article from *Electoral Studies*). With caveats that most ignore, Carey & Shugart argue that the electoral system defined legislators' incentives to “cultivate a personal vote.” By extension, where personal vote seeking incentives are strong, party leaders should be weaker and the parties less disciplined.



In Mainwaring & Shugart's (1997) articulation of the thesis, three components of an electoral system have a causal impact on the levels of party discipline: (a) the possibility to pool votes among a party's candidates, (b) control by party leaders over who runs under the party label, and (c) control over the order in which candidates are ranked in party lists. All three increase the propensity of a party's legislators to vote together. Interestingly, Mainwaring & Shugart ignore an issue central to Carey & Shugart's thesis, the interaction of ballot type with district magnitude. The Carey & Shugart model suggests that although the incentive to seek personal votes grows with district magnitude in open-list systems, those incentives decrease with closed lists as the district magnitude increases (i.e., when district magnitude reaches 1, there is high incentive to seek personal votes).

The accumulated evidence on the levels of legislative discipline in Argentina (Jones 2002), Brazil (Mainwaring & Liñan 1997, Ames 2001, Amorim Neto 2002), Chile (Londregan 2002), Colombia (Moreno 2005), Mexico (Nacif 2002), and Uruguay (Morgenstern 2001) generally concurs with the Carey & Shugart thesis. The thesis, however, has also yielded some strong dissent. Although most argue that the Carey & Shugart scheme explains the low discipline of Brazilian parties, Figueiredo & Limongi (2000) and Lyne (2005) use a different configuration of the data to argue that discipline is relatively high. The implied conclusion is that the electoral system is less important than other studies claim. Lyne (2005) adds a direct attack on the electoral rules thesis, arguing that Brazilian parties have become somewhat more disciplined and ideologically oriented over time despite consistent electoral laws. Other factors, she concludes, must drive the change. Although the change must be attributable to other factors, it still may be the case that the electoral rules created the conditions to promote the initial low level of discipline—a level others contend is still low in a comparative context.

Despite general agreement that electoral rules do influence party discipline, the variation within party systems and even within parties (across time, issues, or legislators) has led scholars to consider the variables that interact with electoral rules. Ames (2001) has persuasively shown that Brazilian party leaders' power to compel cooperation depends on deputies' electoral strength and on the level of geographical concentration of their constituencies. In his cross-national study, Morgenstern (2004) also includes the ideological cohesiveness among a party's legislators as well as federalism and other factors.

Whereas party discipline is relatively easy to measure (especially given the increasing use of electronic voting systems in the Latin American legislatures), personal vote seeking has largely evaded operationalization and thus testing. Carey's (1998) own comparative analysis of the effects of term limits on legislators' behavior in Costa Rica and Venezuela is an exception. Once again, however, the results suggest caution concerning the causal power of electoral laws.

One reason for caution is the finding that despite sharing closed-list PR (which should be expected to generate low levels of constituency service), Costa Rican

legislators showed a higher level of “legislative particularism” than their Venezuelan colleagues. The second observation that shows a limited role of the electoral system comes from the failure of a German-style mixed system to generate differentiation between the strategies of district and list deputies in Venezuela. Carey finds, however, that the possibility of reelection makes Venezuelan legislators more prone to preserve party cohesion in the legislature.

Interestingly, some of the economics literature finds stronger impacts on personalism, as evidenced in studies on government spending and corruption. Milesi-Ferreti et al. (2002), for example, argue that PR systems aid spending on transfers, whereas majoritarian systems favor spending on public goods. Their study, which compares OECD and Latin American countries, is based more on the issues of proportionality than personal vote seeking, but there is a clear link, as their model is based on legislator responses to voter demands. In several works within the economics field, Persson, Tabellini, and coauthors (Persson et al. 2000, 2003; Persson & Tabellini 2003) argue that electoral rules shape policy decisions regarding spending, corruption, and coalitions. The policy effects, however, are not straightforward and the works are more concerned with policy impacts than with the shape of parties or party systems.

Because personal vote seeking does not suggest straightforward operationalization, variations of the Carey & Shugart (1995) system of ranking electoral systems have often been taken as a proxy for the degree to which a system produces personalistic styles of politics (Nielson 2003, Hallerberg & Marier 2004, Seddon Wallack et al. 2003). Crisp & Johnson (2003) are typical in expressing reservations about the Carey & Shugart scale but still using a truncated version of it because they lack alternative measures suitable for a comparative project. In response, Morgenstern et al. (2005) offer a vote-based statistic that they term the local vote, but this is only a cousin of the personal vote. As we explain below when discussing nationalization, they test for the impact of the electoral system on this variable and find, again, only a limited relationship.

Several new and not-yet-published studies take a second tack in addressing the relation of electoral systems to the representation linkage, although in many of these studies the electoral system variables are not central to the analysis. First, Kitschelt & Wilkinson (2007), in a forthcoming volume on the topic without a geographical focus, argue that electoral systems and other democratic institutions have done a poor job in explaining political behavior, and they thus turn to other variables, namely democratic competitiveness, economic structures, and ethno-cultural divides, to build their explanation. With a focus on Brazil, Lyne's contribution to that volume (and her other work) develops an argument about how difficult it is for voters to effectively hold legislators accountable. Importantly, she concludes that candidate-centered electoral rules have little impact on this issue because the degree or at least form of clientelism has changed over time, even though the rules have not. As we noted above, although Lyne does provide a serious challenge to the claim about the role of candidate-centered electoral rules, the conclusion about the effects of electoral rules generally is unsubstantiated.

A related volume, *Latin American Party Systems* (H. Kitschelt, K.A. Hawkins, J.P. Luna, G. Rosas, E.J. Zechmeister, unpublished manuscript), focuses on the degree to which PaPSs in Latin America are structured programmatically rather than along provincial or clientelistic lines. Its authors reach a similar conclusion. The book is focused on the interplay of long- and short-run determinants of "party system structuration," and Kitschelt et al. conclude that "the study of democratic institutions [including electoral systems] yields little explanation of cross-national variance of PPS [programmatic party structuration] throughout the region" (Ch. 7, p. 176). The explanation for this finding is based on (a) the larger implications of "long-term" factors, such as democratic experience and economic structure, and (b) the "ambiguous" or "ambivalent" incentives that electoral systems present to party leaders. The authors conclude, in short, that the electoral rules are insignificant in explanations of structuration because they fail to provide politicians with unambiguous signals (as long-term factors presumably do).

In *Latin American Party Systems*, Kitschelt et al. use several indicators for programmatic structuration based on a survey of legislators across many Latin American countries. One indicator is based on Hawkins & Morgenstern's contribution to that volume, which focuses on "ideological cohesion," or the degree to which a party's legislators agree with various items on the survey. They find very limited average cohesion across the region, although there is some important variation among countries, issues, and parties. The high level of intracountry variance, however, leads one away from system-level variables such as the electoral system.

The Kitschelt et al. explanation, however, ignores the chess analogy. An ambiguous incentive system is not equivalent to an absence of incentives, and thus there is no reason to expect political leaders to ignore electoral rules when making strategic choices. If the incentives were clear, would the rules matter more? Ambiguity means either that there are countervailing incentives or that the players are unable to calculate costs and benefits. Under either definition, rational choice assumes that party leaders would consider the murky costs and benefits and choose accordingly. If players are not choosing in this manner, then either rational choice is incorrect or the players are unable to correctly calculate the costs and benefits. Kitschelt et al.'s conclusion assumes the former, but the latter is also possible. Unfortunately, at least for the scientist, the Latin American systems do not present a case with pure single-member districts, and the PR systems are muddled by federalism, districts of varying magnitudes, and other arcane rules. As a result, leaders may not be able to untangle the incentive system and thus are left with options that include large standard errors around the estimates of implications. In such a case, theory suggests that the politicians will discount the cost-benefit analysis. Further, because party leaders have different goals (short- versus long-term, preservation of ideology versus vote winning, etc.), they will not all evaluate the electoral system's incentive systems equally. A system of ambiguous incentives, then, could be consistent with a rational choice expectation of heterogeneous choices among leaders. Inconsistent party behavior does not allow us to reject the hypothesis that electoral systems matter.

## NATIONALIZATION

Nationalization is the final dependent variable that we consider. An issue at least since Schattschneider's seminal work on the United States (American Political Science Association 1950, Schattschneider 1960), it has only recently caught the attention of Latin Americanists. It is an important topic for the region, however, because it is an important descriptor of the patterns of partisan politics. Depending on its definition (which we discuss below), nationalization can illuminate the degree to which a party successfully gains widespread support or focuses its campaigns on particular regions. Schattschneider, in particular, worried that a focus on local elections (low nationalization) in the U.S. political system had led to skewed and wasteful spending. In the most recent work on other regions, Caramani (2000, 2004) argued that over the past century European parties have widened—i.e., nationalized—their geographic support, thus implying a reduction in regional tensions. Jones & Mainwaring (2003) add other hypotheses, among them that nationalization affects executive-legislative relations, because more nationally-oriented parties are more interested in national political issues.

Most of these works, however, have little to say about electoral systems. Caramani's work is uninterested in this topic, and Chhibber & Kohlman's (1998, 2004) study, which seeks to explain why there are multiple parties at the national level in India but only two in the United States, focuses on federalism and party organizational factors rather than the electoral system (given that both of their cases use single-member districts). Jones & Mainwaring (2003) and Kellam & Alemán (2004) take the notion of nationalization to Latin America, but their purpose is more to measure and describe nationalization than to explain it.

As noted, party nationalization has taken different meanings in different studies. Morgenstern et al. (2006) argue that the term has a static/distributional conception, which implies that the degree to which the level of a party's support is consistent across the nation, and a dynamic component, implying the consistency of change in the parties' support across districts. Under the static/distributional conception, then, a party would be nationalized if it received a relatively consistent share of the vote in all of a country's districts or regions. A party would earn a nationalized label under the dynamic conception, however, if the party's support in all districts or regions rose or fell at roughly the same rate (regardless of the geographic distribution of a party's vote).

In a cross-regional study including about 70 parties in Latin America, Europe, and other regions, Morgenstern et al. argue that the electoral system—namely the use of single-member districts—reduces static/distributional nationalization but has only a limited effect on dynamic nationalization (see also Morgenstern & Swindle 2005). The authors measure the two aspects of nationalization using a components-of-variance model, and Table 2 shows the relative rankings of the Latin American countries in terms of the two conceptualizations of nationalization and their associated electoral systems. No relationship is evident here, and the authors' multivariate negative binomial regression substantiates this finding for dynamic nationalization. The limited database, however, is influential, as the

TABLE 2 Nationalization and electoral systems

	Years	Dynamic nationalization rank	Static/distributional nationalization rank	Electoral system <sup>a</sup>
Argentina	1991–1999	1	2	closed lists
Bolivia	1985–1997	7	7	closed lists
Brazil	1990–1998	3	5	open list PR <sup>b</sup>
Chile	1989–1997	2	8	open list PR
Colombia	1974–1986	6	4	multiple closed lists (akin to SNTV <sup>b</sup> )
Ecuador	1979–1988	4	9	closed lists
Mexico	1997–2000	5	1	SMD <sup>b</sup> with PR tier
Uruguay	1984–1994	9	6	double simultaneous vote
Venezuela	1968–1983	8	3	closed lists

<sup>a</sup>Several of these systems have recently changed. See Table 1.

<sup>b</sup>Abbreviations: PR, proportional representation; SNTV, single non-transferable vote; SMD, single-member district.

broader comparative tests do show that single-member districts—a system that we have noted is not in use in Latin America—do reduce static/distributional nationalization.

The authors’ hypothesis regarding static/distributional nationalization is based on two factors. First, under single-member district systems, districts should be more heterogeneous, simply because they are smaller and similar voters are generally concentrated geographically. Second, there is a political effect resulting from parties’ strategic use of their resources. This should lead parties to forego serious competition in unwinnable single-member districts. In PR systems, however, every extra vote is valuable, and thus parties should compete everywhere. PR systems, then, should help generate more static/distributional nationalization.

Dynamic nationalization is a function of different factors. Morgenstern & Swindle (2005) argue that parliamentarism increases dynamic nationalization (the inverse of what they term the local vote), but candidate-centered electoral rules, which they operationalize by following Carey & Shugart’s (1995) classification system, have no effect, at least among presidential cases. This surprising finding, they argue, occurs because other variables, namely the executive system, ethnic heterogeneity, and federalism, “swamp” the effect of these electoral rules. Perhaps different interactive relations would show an effect, but if the chess analogy applies, it may also be the case that the electoral system fails to show up in the regressions because of its inconsistent impact on different types of parties.

## CONCLUSIONS

Electoral systems presumably affect the core relationship between the governors and the governed, so they should have a direct impact on the prime representational vehicle in a democracy: parties and the systems in which they operate. Academics have analyzed this relationship by looking at how electoral systems affect parties' organizational bases, their local or national orientation, their internal cohesion and discipline, factionalization, institutionalization, and the number of parties, among other links. We have argued, however, that although much of the extant literature does support the notion of electoral systems affecting parties and party systems broadly, serious theoretical concerns complicate the empirical testing of the relationship.

The first challenge is that electoral systems can engender nonuniform changes. As our chess analogy implies, finding dissimilar responses of parties from a single electoral system stimulus does not mean that electoral systems are necessarily irrelevant. Instead, it can imply that electoral systems put bounds on politicians' strategies without determining particular choices. The analyst, therefore, must work to capture the bounds within which parties operate, which may be more or less restrictive under different sets of rules. The concept of permissiveness, however, requires more specification, because simply noting that some systems have greater constraining effects provides only limited theoretical leverage. Theoretical advancement will require defining the degree to which a particular electoral law differs from the most permissive institutions, that is, ones that theoretically have no causal effects.

A related implication of our review is that simple correlations of various aspects of electoral systems (such as district magnitude) with PaPS traits (such as the number of parties) are likely to fail, thus indicating a need for studies to consider how the electoral variables interact with other institutions, social variables, and political context when searching for causal relations. Within these studies, it will be necessary to consider the breadth of the boundaries created by the electoral systems, because wide boundaries could easily lead to mistaken findings that other variables override any electoral system effects. This is challenging both theoretically and methodologically, requiring careful specification of the relationships and perhaps advanced statistical techniques in order to tease out the effects. Of course these tests will be challenged by the limited number of cases, as well as the limited range on some of the key independent variables (we have noted, for example, the lack of single-member district systems in Latin America). This suggests, perhaps, that tests on these relations should extend across regional bounds, although such an extension will add other theoretical complications.

These many theoretical and methodological challenges, however, have not slowed the debate. The literature has moved far beyond Duverger's initial pronouncements, and Latin Americanist scholars have added new variables to the mix. Our review, therefore, seems to suggest the following conclusion: The relationship between electoral systems on one side and parties and party systems on the other is significant but contingent and complicated.

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