Electoral behavior in comparatively young democracies shares significant similarities with that found in older, established Western democratic settings, and yet also differs in fundamental respects. Voters in newer democratic contexts make decisions based on group identities, policy divides, party attachments, and retrospective evaluations. However, in these settings, party systems are more fluid—with identifications, programs, and electoral options all subject to recurrent shifts. The experiences of both Latin America and Eastern Europe testify to the fact that the accumulation of electoral experiences is not sufficient to bring about party system stability and institutionalization. A consequence of high levels of volatility is that voters lack the same heuristic aids for decision-making that facilitate substantive, programmatic voting behavior in other countries. In Latin America and Eastern Europe, party attachments often have shallow roots, and left-right labels are under-utilized and under-supplied with coherent meaning. The complexity of decision-making in these environments has consequences for party behavior, in that it can motivate single-shot and short-sighted maneuvers and investments (such as abrupt program switches and clientelism). As such, it can lead citizens to discount policy promises, to expect material incentives for the vote, and to privilege more easily identifiable factors, such as economic performance and (to varying degrees) identity-based cleavages.

Another difference between younger and older democracies is the extent to which the basic rules of the democratic game remain more contested in the
younger systems. Both Latin America and Eastern Europe demonstrate that classic regime-type cleavages, pitting the authoritarian past against the democratic future, are not necessarily enduring. Some exceptions aside (particularly in Eastern Europe), few parties campaign on a promise to return to the authoritarian past. Yet, in both regions, decades of experience with often mediocre, and sometimes abysmal, outcomes have left key segments of the electorate disenchanted with traditional party politics and open to anti-establishment populists. These populist leaders have galvanized support with accusations (of which many are well founded) of corruption among the traditional political elite and by mobilizing large swaths of the public (“us”) against the privileged classes (“them”).

In Latin America, populism has turned discussion of democracy from ways to avoid returns to an authoritarian past to concerns about the degrading quality of democracy under populist leaders who dismantle checks and balances and undermine media freedom. These same concerns about the implications of populism for democracy can be found among observers of Eastern European politics, where populism is associated with a radical right that espouses leftist economic principles and where populist appeals contain strong links to the politics of identities (particularly, ethnicity and class).

This chapter presents a portrait of the development, dynamics, and key issues in electoral behavior in new (and newly re-emerged) democratic contexts. Each of the following core chapter sections (Latin America and Eastern Europe, respectively) was developed by one of the two chapter co-authors (Zechmeister and Bustikova, respectively) following a common framework. Each of these sections first situates the region within the transitions to democracy that belong to the global third wave (Huntington 1991), and speaks to the regime (and other) cleavages that marked electoral competition in this first post-transition period. Each section then turns to a focus on electoral volatility, a defining feature of party systems in both Latin America and Eastern Europe. We then address economic factors and voter choice, with the Latin American section drawing on a comparatively larger scholarship on the prevalence of economic voting, the factors that condition it, and the rise of class-based voting of late. The Eastern European section focuses on the ways in which voting patterns initially mapped onto cleavages associated with transitional winners and losers, and later shifted to decision-making marked by strong currents of anger and cultural identity.

Finally, each section turns to a discussion of issues that are particularly salient in these regions in recent times, with a focus on crime in Latin America and corruption in Eastern Europe. Cutting across both these discussions of new issues on the agenda is an awareness of the ways in which voter dissatisfaction with the ability of elites to deliver has given fuel to anti-establishment populist options, which in turn have further undermined prospects for the consolidation of coherent programmatic party systems and the regularization of patterns of electoral behavior in these regions.
LATIN AMERICA

Voters in contemporary Latin America are accustomed to going to the polls. In a handful of countries, regular elections have been held consistently since the early to mid twentieth century, whereas in the rest of the region democratic contestation re-emerged over three decades ago. The average fifty-year-old adult in Latin America has had the opportunity to participate in at least nine elections for national office, and many more sub-national elections. Yet, time has not brought stability to the menu of choices confronting voters at the polls. Rather, party systems in Latin America have been characterized by constantly shifting allegiances and options (Lupu and Stokes 2010; Morgan 2011; Roberts 2013, 2014; Lupu 2015a). This unsteadiness, fueled by endogenous and exogenous factors, has had important implications for electoral behavior across the region. For parties, systemic instability shortens time horizons, causing elites to under-invest in efforts that would institutionalize programmatic party structuration (Lupu 2015a; Lupu and Riedl 2013). For voters, instability in electoral politics undermines the development of long-standing party identifications and diminishes the heuristic value of standard short cuts for ideological decision-making, which in turn privileges simple retrospective decision rules while potentially complicating the integration of new issues into a robustly programmatic space.

Traces of an authoritarian-democratic divide in Latin America

Democratic electoral politics came to (re-)characterize the Latin American region during the global third wave (Huntington 1991) of democracy, and elections have become the predominant path to political office. While present to varying degrees in Latin American electoral behavior, the relevance of a regime-type divide pitting once-dominant authoritarian options against standard bearers of democracy has been fading. Yet, the issue of democracy remains germane to the choices citizens make at the polls, as seen in discussions over candidates’ links to the authoritarian past, concern about the diminishing quality of democracy under (elected) populist leaders, and the tendency for anti-democratic interruptions to splinter normal democratic proceedings from time to time in some countries.

The authoritarian regimes that preceded today’s democratic governments in Latin America were a diverse set. They varied in ideological stripes and they ranged from corporatist institutionalized one-party authoritarian rule in Mexico to personalized dictatorships in countries such as Nicaragua and Chile (Jones 2012). Nonetheless, the well-documented tendency displayed by governments throughout the Latin American region to oscillate between democratic and authoritarian forms (Pastor 1989) makes it appropriate to search for a classic
regime-type cleavage in opinions held by the voting public. On the surface, the modern Latin American public strongly endorses democracy in the abstract. Yet, vestiges of a schism over this issue have been detected at times (Moreno 1999), with opinion divides more prevalent in some party systems than others (Hawkins et al. 2010).

One type of regime cleavage appeared among the voting public during Mexico’s slow transition from many decades of one-party dominance to competitive party politics. At the peak of Mexico’s transition, in the 1980s and 1990s, the key distinction voters made was between the dominant party, the PRI, and any opposition party (namely, the PAN and the PRD). Domínguez and McCann (1996) presented this as a ‘two-step’ decision model, in which individuals first decided whether to vote against the dominant party or not, and other considerations were relevant only for those who selected to support the opposition. In 2000, an opposition party (PAN) won the presidency for the first time in over seventy years and, by 2006, the relevance of the Mexican regime divide had faded precipitously (McCann 2012). Voters granted the PRI the presidency again in 2012, yet this reversion to the once-dominant party was not driven by a public longing for the past. Rather, negative retrospective assessments regarding the state of the economy, security, governance (corruption), and public service provision were important determinants of that election in which the victorious candidate, Peña Nieto, painted himself as a new option divorced from his party’s problematic past (Domínguez et al. 2015; McCann 2015).

Chile is another country in which a public opinion cleavage related to regime-type has been detected in elections, but here as well the significance of this divide has faded over time. Attitudes toward Pinochet and his (1973–1990) military regime were quite relevant to the choices made by voters in the first national elections following the transition to democracy (Dow 1998). The economic successes achieved by Pinochet’s team left some reservoir of goodwill toward the authoritarian regime that had taken office via the overthrow of democratically elected President Salvador Allende. Support for the military in contemporary Chile has persistently been higher than in its neighboring Argentina, where the military’s failures sullied the institution’s reputation to a greater and more enduring degree (Huneues 2003; Loveman 1999; AmericasBarometer data [cf. Chapter 41, p. 969, Volume 2, this Handbook by LAPOP]). Ambivalence toward democracy and dissatisfaction with the party system have been detected among the Chilean public even in more recent years (Carlin 2011; Siavelis 2009), yet evidence suggests that the relevance of a democracy-authoritarian divide is on the decline (Bargsted and Somma 2016).

Declining support for an explicitly authoritarian option does not mean that the regime issue is resolved.1 For one, a number of recent politicians who have appeared on the ballot and in national offices have had democratic credentials that can reasonably be questioned as the result, for example, of alleged ties to past human rights violations (e.g. Guatemalan president Otto Pérez Molina), explicit ties to revolutionary guerrilla groups (e.g. Nicaragua’s Daniel Ortega), and
involvement in previous coups (e.g. Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez). Additionally, with the widespread acceptance of elections as just about ‘the only game in town’ (Przeworski 1991), dialogue in the region has recently transitioned to address whether, or the extent to which, the quality of democracy is being eroded by (elected) populist leaders who curb checks and balances, place limits on freedom of the press, attempt to radically alter term limits, and otherwise diminish liberal democracy (see e.g. Coppedge 2003 on the weakening of democracy under Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez).

Finally, a number of countries across the region have experienced brief authoritarian and/or military interventions in the last two decades. For example, in 1992, democratically elected President Alberto Fujimori of Peru oversaw an autogolpe, a ‘self-coup’, in which he shut down Congress. In 2009, the Honduran military removed (without bloodshed) sitting President Manuel Zelaya from office. Public opinion data provide some evidence of a complicit stance among large swaths of the public for such maneuvers. For example, Fujimori successfully won re-election in 1995 (and public support continues for Fujimoristas, as seen via the political successes of the former president’s daughter, Keiko Fujimori, a member of Congress from 2006 to 2011 and a strong competitor for the 2011 and the 2016 Peruvian presidential elections). Survey data from Honduras also points to decreasing satisfaction with the political system prior to the 2009 military coup (Seligson and Booth 2009). Yet, a key difference between the authoritarian and military interventions of the ‘third wave’ era, as opposed to those of early periods, is that such explicit interruptions to democratic proceedings tend to be short-lived. Elections have become widely accepted by the vast majority of the Latin American voting public and, perhaps just as importantly, by trade partners and political allies. This fact has led old regime cleavages to be supplanted by new divisions centered around populist leaders, and has shortened but not eradicated disruptions to democratic party politics.

**Shifting electoral landscapes**

The third wave of democracy diffused allegiance to the formal democratic rules of the game across the world. Beginning in the 1970s, elections became increasingly common and competitive in the Latin American region. As Carlin, Singer, and Zechmeister (2015) count, there have been more than three hundred presidential and legislative contests in the Latin American region since the start of the third wave. Unfortunately, these democratic contests have not all been without flaws or interruptions. Moreover, time has not yet brought about democratic consolidation, party system institutionalization, or stability to the menu of choices confronting voters in many countries across the region. With respect to the latter point, electoral volatility and fragmentation have remained characteristic of Latin American politics, as new parties and movements have emerged while other electoral options and sometimes entire party systems have collapsed
(Lupu and Stokes 2010; Morgan 2011; Roberts 2003, 2013, 2014; Lupu 2015a; Mainwaring and Zoco 2007). As Carlin, Singer, and Zechmeister (2015) note, the ‘flux’ that characterizes electoral competition in Latin America suggests that stable equilibria can remain evasive for long periods of time following a transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

Electoral volatility in contemporary Latin America, though varying significantly across countries, has been higher than that found in regions populated by older democracies (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). Further, electoral volatility increased in the decades following the last global wave of democratization. Electoral volatility is the net change in votes (or seats) won by distinct political parties at the polls from one election to the next. It offers a window into stability and institutionalization in party systems, which matter because these factors both reflect and influence voter decision-making. According to one measure, electoral volatility in Latin America’s presidential elections was 17.4 in the 1980s, 27.2 in the 1990s, and 31.1 in the first decade of the current century, with volatility in legislative elections following this same trend (Roberts 2013, 2014; see also Roberts and Wibbels 1999). Independent of other factors, repeated electoral experiences ought to stabilize partisan attachments and deepen party system institutionalization (Lupu and Stokes 2010; Mainwaring and Scully 1995). Yet, this has not been the case in Latin America due to a host of countervailing factors. Historically weak parties, individual-centric institutions and electoral rules, modern developments such as television and mass media, and exogenous shocks such as economic decline are among the culprits fingered for contributing to varying but high and increasing levels of electoral volatility in the Latin American region (Mainwaring 1999; Lupu 2015a; Remmer 1991; Roberts and Wibbels 1999; Roberts 2013, 2014).

Electoral volatility has been driven by, is reflective of, and has fueled a broad set of ‘interruptions’ to normal democratic processes. Between 1980 and 2007, eighteen presidents saw their terms of office prematurely ‘interrupted’ or saw their administrations ‘break down’ (Pérez-Liñan 2014; see also Valenzuela 2004 and Helmke 2017). Even within ‘normal’ democratic processes, the region has borne frequent witness to the breakdown of parties and party systems. In terms of the disappearance of parties from the electoral menu, Lupu (2014, 2016) calculates the region saw twenty-five percent of its established political parties wither between 1978 and 2007. While many systems have splintered, resulting in increased party system fragmentation over time in a number of Latin American countries, two party systems – Peru and Venezuela – collapsed entirely at the end of the twentieth century (Roberts 2003; Morgan 2011; Seawright 2012). New parties, movements, and political outsiders (see e.g. Carreras 2012) have regularly moved to fill the void, and these in turn have contributed their share of instability with respect to the menu of choices and, as alluded in the earlier reference to populism’s consequences, with respect to institutions and electoral rules.
Przeworski (1991) lauded democracy for its ‘institutionalized uncertainty’, by which he meant that lack of certitude over who will win the next election can motivate losers in any one round to stick to the rules of competition. Yet, Lupu and Riedl (2013) and Lupu (2015a) aptly point out that the particularly high level of uncertainty that characterizes many Latin American party systems with respect to electoral rules, economic developments, the menu of choices, and democracy itself can create what could be considered a vicious cycle in which elites shorten their time horizons and ‘invest less in programmatic appeals, consistent party brands, and institutionalized party organizations’ (Lupu 2015a, p. 135), which in turn ought to fuel even more uncertainty, to the detriment of party system stability in the region. Carlin, Singer, and Zechmeister (2015, p. 3) argue that the lack of a steady equilibrium to party politics in many Latin American countries can ‘encourage a great deal of policy experimentation, as entrepreneurial elites shift their positions to activate dormant and new cleavages, and even pursue radical policy switches’ (e.g., see Stokes 2001). In short, a state of unsteadiness in party politics exacerbates uncertainty and induces future instability.

The implications of this uncertainty and instability for voters are non-trivial because they undercut prospects for programmatic party structuration. Programmatic party structuration is the tendency for electoral competition to center around substantive (policy, ideological) packages offered by coherent teams (parties) (Kitschelt et al. 2010). Time and stability are critical to the development of coherent brands and ideologies needed for programmatic party competition (Converse 1964; Hinich and Munger 1996; Lupu and Stokes 2010). To the extent that partisanship is at least in part a long-standing psychological attachment (Campbell et al. 1960; Dinas, this Volume, Chapter 13), strong party ties are more likely to be found in systems in which the same parties have endured, ideally without interruption but potentially in spite of authoritarian interludes (Lupu and Stokes 2010; see also Dalton and Weldon 2007). The same is true at the individual level; in Latin America, partisanship is more likely to be expressed by those who are older and who have longer histories of democratic experience (Lupu 2015b). Breakdowns and about-faces (radical policy switches) by parties on the electoral menu are quite counterproductive to the dynamics of party branding and identification, and recovery from such events is bound to be slow because programmatic party competition is far more easily deconstructed than reconstructed (Stokes 2001; Kitschelt et al. 2010).

Taken at face value, partisanship in Latin America frequently functions as it does in older, more-established settings (Lupu 2015b; Nadeau et al. forthcoming). Though levels of partisanship vary across countries, many people do express a party identification, partisanship is a strong predictor of voter choice, and levels of party identification for the Latin American region as a whole have held fairly steady during recent years (AmericasBarometer by LAPOP). That said, stability on the surface belies instability of partisan allegiances, for high electoral volatility cannot exist alongside high and vote-relevant partisanship (as it does
in the region) without voters switching partisan ties as often as they switch vote choices. Moreover, to the degree that parties have lacked time to develop coherent platforms, or have introduced uncertainty in these due to policy switches or allegiances that ‘dilute’ brand recognition (Lupu 2016), it is not surprising to find that party labels are not always as effective in providing heuristic short cuts for citizens who might otherwise use party positions to identify their own stances on issues of the day (Merolla et al. 2007); such a deficiency has likewise been identified in scholarship on Eastern Europe (Brader and Tucker 2012; Brader et al. 2013). Taking a step back to consider the relevance of Latin American partisans to their democratic states more generally, partisans tend to be more engaged and more overtly supportive of democracy in the Latin American region (Lupu 2015b; Vidal et al. 2010; AmericasBarometer by LAPOP), yet it may also be the case that at least some Latin American partisans are more likely to ‘take the streets to protest’ when electoral outcomes fail to go their way (Vidal et al. 2010).

Time and stability, jointly, are also critical to policy-based and ideological voting behavior. Voters in Latin America do select parties on the basis of issue stances, though to varying degrees. Using data from the late 1990s, Luna and Zechmeister (2005) show that the mass public is more likely to link to elites on the basis of issue positions that differ across partisan groups in some countries, such as Chile and Uruguay, than others, such as Ecuador and Bolivia. Party system institutionalization (resulting from time spent consolidating and putting down roots) and, to at least a moderate extent, policy switches influence the degree of issue-based elite-mass linkages across countries in the region. Baker and Greene (2015) analyze fifteen years of survey data to demonstrate evidence of economic policy-based voting in just over three of every four major Latin American countries; the exceptions they identify (that is, the countries in which they find no evidence of economic issue voting) are Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Paraguay (see also Baker and Greene 2011; Saiegh 2015; Nadeau et al. forthcoming).

A frequently shifting and nebulous electoral landscape, in terms of the decline and emergence of political parties and muddled policy platforms, also makes substantive electoral behavior more difficult to the degree that it diminishes the heuristic value of ideological markers, such as ‘left’ and ‘right’. When they are used effectively by elites (who imbue them with meanings that are relevant to the particular party system) and by citizens (who use them to locate themselves, opinions, candidates, and parties in the party system), ideological labels can help rationally under-informed voters make decisions more effectively. In the Latin American region, left-right ideological labels are used less often by citizens than they are in Western Europe, for example. One set of factors responsible for this outcome concerns the shifting nature of the Latin American political landscape. Within Latin America, individuals living under party systems that have higher levels of electoral volatility and higher levels of fragmentation are less likely to locate themselves in a left-right space in Latin America (Zechmeister and Corral 2013).
Zechmeister and Corral (2013; see also Zechmeister 2015) argue that party system fragmentation is a symptom of political instability in the Latin American context (but see also Cohen et al. 2016). Volatility and fragmentation also undermine the connection between policy stances and left-right identifications (Zechmeister and Corral 2013). Furthermore, the relationship between left-right placements and the vote is greater in systems that are less fragmented (Zechmeister 2015).

One salve for the pernicious effects of fragmentation and volatility can come from polarization, or the tendency for parties to stake out distinct (albeit not necessarily too extreme) stances on issues. For example, some variation in the level of issue-based voting is driven by the extent to which elites take clearly distinct stances on issues (Page and Brody 1972; Zechmeister 2008), and indeed it is the case that polarization is associated with higher levels of issue-based voting in the Latin American region (Baker and Green 2015). Furthermore, polarization can make ideological short cuts more likely to be used by citizens and voters (Zechmeister and Corral 2013; Zechmeister 2015; Singer 2016). Given that they have divergent consequences for voter behavior and yet are likely connected in at least some ways, more work remains to be done to understand the emergence and consequences of volatility and polarization in the Latin America region (but see Singer 2016). With polarization unable to provide a complete antidote (and, at the extreme, not always a desirable party system characteristic), it is suffice to say that the tendency for Latin American party systems to exhibit a comparatively high degree of instability in the menu of options, among other factors, undermines the degrees to which party identifications are deeply rooted, voters make decisions on policy divides, and citizens effectively employ cognitive short cuts to make substantively meaningful choices.

**The privileging of economic factors**

A confluence of factors propels economic performance and retrospective economic evaluations to the forefront of voters’ decision-making calculi in the Latin American context. As just discussed, issue- and ideological-based voting – already such a cognitively demanding task that levels even in older, established democracies are far from high – is made more difficult to the extent that Latin American party systems are volatile and fragmented (though polarization can help to counteract those diminishing tendencies). If unable to select based on policy stances, an easy decision rule is past performance (Downs 1957; Fiorina 1981). Furthermore, weak party system institutionalization engenders weak partisan attachments, which can increase voters’ sensitivities to economic outcomes (to the detriment of electoral stability; see Kayser and Wlezien 2011). Finally, in a region where economic vulnerabilities are made salient through comparatively low levels of economic development and comparatively high levels of income inequality, the economy has tended to play a central role in electoral competition (Kitschelt et al. 2010). The economy frequently plays a central role in campaigns...
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across the region (Gélineau and Singer 2015), and both general salience and campaign emphasis matter for levels of economic voting (Singer 2013b; Hart 2013). Furthermore, economic volatility and recession can increase the salience of the economy and voter sensitivity to it (Singer 2011, 2013a; Singer and Carlin 2013; Gélineau and Singer 2015) and, in the course of its most modern history, Latin America has witnessed more than its fair share of economic turbulence and decline.

Ample evidence shows that Latin American voters tend toward casting out-of-office incumbents who deliver poor economic returns (Remmer 1991, 2003; Gélineau 2007; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2008; Lewis-Beck and Ratto 2013; Gélineau and Singer 2015; Singer 2013a; Echegaray 2005). The specter of the economy is so significant that under some circumstances it can induce atypically long memories in voters who reject not only the sitting incumbent but all established parties (Benton 2005; see also Roberts 2003). It is also so significant that it can condition the relevance of other factors. For example, citizens’ tendencies to reject the incumbent for bad governance in Latin America are conditional on the state of the economy: when the economy is in dire shape, voters are more likely to hold the sitting administration accountable for corruption (Manzetti and Wilson 2006; Zechmeister and Zizumbo-Colunga 2013; Carlin et al. 2015; Manzetti and Rosas 2015; Rosas and Manzetti 2015). There is an important asymmetry in the tendency of the Latin American public to factor economic downturns and corruption into their voting decisions: the average citizen punishes poor economic performance regardless of levels of perceived corruption but she withdraws support from the executive for corruption only under economic decline (Zechmeister and Zizumbo-Colunga 2013). The implication is that corruption is likely to remain both a salient and a sticky issue in the Latin American region for years to come. It is nearly always the case that executives are punished for poor economic output and, thus, given their druthers, are likely to place a priority on bringing about economic booms, which have the two-fold benefit of increasing public support and decreasing the extent to which they are held accountable for corruption.

The research industry built on identifying factors that condition the relationship between the economy and incumbent support has not skipped over Latin America. Discussion of conditioning factors, in fact, identifies several that are particularly relevant to the Latin American case. One concerns attribution of responsibility. Incumbents are more likely to suffer at the polls when they preside over bad performance that voters attribute to their doing (Anderson 2000). Hyper-presidentialism (i.e., particularly strong and dominant executives) in Latin America helps center blame on the executive office, thus facilitating economic voting in general (Hellwig and Samuels 2008; Gélineau and Singer 2015; but see also Gélineau 2007). Within the region, the actual extent to which Latin American presidents dominate over the legislature (via share of same-party legislative seats) increases the weight of economic evaluations in voters’ decision-making calculi, while fragmentation in the party system (which presumably obscures
responsibility) decreases it (Gélineau and Singer 2015). A second important aspect of economic voting in Latin America derives from electoral volatility and transitions from one-party dominance, which place on the menu parties that are less proven and, therefore, have governing potential that is comparatively harder to predict. In at least some cases, such as transitioning one-party dominant Mexico at the end of the twentieth century, this type of context can lead risk propensity to condition economic voting, such that standard economic voting patterns were found, for a time period at least, predominantly among those who are risk-acceptant and thus willing to assume the risks inherent in voting for an unknown (Cinta 1999; Morgenstern and Zechmeister 2001).

Third, while voters in Latin America on average, and in a manner similar to that found in other world regions, tend to privilege the national economy over personal outcomes in their voting decisions, variation in the level of economic development in Latin America supports important assessments regarding the tendency for sociotropic versus pocketbook voting to vary across economic contexts. For example, the Latin American region has provided evidence that under-development and poverty can motivate pocketbook orientations (Echegaray 2005; Singer and Carlin 2013). Finally, Latin America’s increasingly globalized economy has provided an opportunity to assess the extent to which the public tempers its economic voting tendencies when the government is more constrained by the world’s economic forces (Hellwig 2014). The evidence suggests that, in fact, globalization’s forces (measured, among other factors, through debts held by the International Monetary Fund, trade openness, and foreign direct investment levels) decrease the extent to which voters in the Latin American region hold the incumbent president accountable for poor economic output (Alcañiz and Hellwig 2011; Gélineau and Singer 2015; Singer and Carlin 2013).

In a consistent focus on the economy as an explanatory factor for voter choice and in the fact that the economy’s relationship to the vote is variable, Latin America is not unique. That said, as noted above, it offers a number of important exemplars of the types of configurations that can induce comparatively higher or more consistent levels of economic voting and in the insights the region can provide into factors that undercut the relationship between (certain) economic factors and the vote. What about other indications of material well-being? A non-trivial number of scholars have examined the relevance of wealth and related measures of socioeconomic status (class) for the rise of populist leaders. The most intensely studied of such chief executives has been Hugo Chávez, with most researchers concluding that support for the former Venezuelan president was strongly driven by those who were comparatively worse off (Canache 2004; Cannon 2008; Handlin 2013; Heath 2009a, 2009b; Rodríguez 2013). In fact, across the region as a whole, the current era has seen a rise in the degree to which left-leaning leaders, and populists in particular, have been successful in mobilizing class-based voting in Latin America, such that class-based voting
in the region has increased over the course of the last two decades (Torcal and Mainwaring 2003; Mainwaring et al. 2015).

**The relevance of candidates, clientelism, and crime for voter choice in Latin America**

While factors identified in classic models of voter choice matter in the region, Latin America’s unique context propels to the forefront a number of additional influences on voter decisions. Among these are candidates, clientelism, and crime. First, as a region with histories grounded in strong leaders (caudillos) and with institutional configurations that motivate personalistic campaigns and facilitate strong executives, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which characteristics of political candidates or office holders influence voter choice (McCann and Lawson 2003; Echegaray 2005). While many aspects of a candidate can matter, including their appearance (Aguilar 2011; Lawson et al. 2010), religion (Boas and Smith 2015), ethnicity (Moreno 2015), and/or gender (Morgan 2015), a factor that is frequently discussed in the case of Latin American (and other) politics, but under theorized and assessed, is charisma. A seminal perspective on this is offered by Madsen and Snow (1991), whose study of the ‘charismatic bond’ between Juan Perón and his followers in Argentina during the first half of the twentieth century presents a framework for understanding the psychological bases of individuals’ allegiances to particular leaders. Much as partisanship has been presented in scholarship rooted in the United States as a factor that taints the public’s interpretation of evidence (Campbell et al. 1960), so too can charisma lead individuals to overlook poor performance for the sake of maintaining a sense of hope and optimism that the given leader can deliver better times (Madsen and Snow 1991; Merolla and Zechmeister 2011; Weyland 2003). Charisma is also relevant to understanding the allure of certain populist leaders who have emerged in the region, and whose governing and rhetorical styles are consistent with the creation of charismatic bonds with the public. Among a number of consequences of these combined factors – charisma and populism – is the public’s acquiescence to or support for the removal of restrictive term limits, put in place by cautious constitution drafters who had favored single-term limits. Due to the currents of incumbency advantage (Corrales and Penfold 2014), the result has been a significant lengthening of mean presidential tenure in office, most notably in Peru where Alberto Fujimori held the executive office for ten years, from his inauguration in 1990 until he was forced out under a corruption scandal in 2001, and Venezuela where Chávez maintained the presidency for fourteen years, from his inauguration in 1999 to his death in 2013.

Second, the historical tendency in Latin America for political parties and candidates to offer jobs (patronage) and material goods (clientelism) in exchange for political support did not disappear when the third wave washed over the region. The continuation of such practices placed such a strain on some countries’
finances that they contributed to the breakdown of at least one entire party system, for example Venezuela in the 1990s (see, e.g., Roberts 2003). Clientelism is more common in some countries (e.g. the Dominican Republic) than others (e.g. Chile) in the Latin American region (Kitschelt and Altamirano 2015; data from the AmericasBarometer by LAPOP). Its relevance for the vote choice is underscored by the fact that a non-trivial number of party supporters in at least some countries (e.g. Mexico) express an expectation of some material incentive for their vote (Vidal et al. 2010).

Numerous scholars have documented the various ways that politicians and brokers use material incentives to motivate particular outcomes at the polls across the region. Some important conclusions from research on clientelism in Latin America, with particular relevance to electoral behavior, include the fact that vote buying can be used to de-mobilize as much as it can be used to mobilize (Nichter 2008, 2010; Simpser 2012); that those who are more marginalized are more likely to be targeted by vote-buying practices (see e.g. Chubb 1981; Debs and Helmke 2009; Szwarcberg 2010; Lehoucq 2003; Stokes 2005; Taylor-Robinson 2010); and that vote-buying practices tend to be placed within a portfolio of strategies used by a diverse set of parties across the region, rather than the standalone approach of a particularly distinct set of political actors (Magaloni et al. 2007). Gauging the relative importance of vote buying as one component of a broader platform is difficult, in part because of challenges in the measurement of vote-buying practices (Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. 2012) and in part because of the lack of cross-national comparable survey data that would connect reports of vote offers to particular parties or candidates. Yet, it remains the case that vote buying is a persistent feature of modern elections across many parts of Latin America, with its relevance to the vote decision varying not only across countries but also across subsets of individuals within countries.

Third, and finally, crime has become increasingly salient in modern Latin America. Some opinion divides over this issue were present among the public in the 1990s (though less so among legislators; see Luna and Zechmeister 2005). Recently, the Latin American public’s concerns with security have increased (Zechmeister 2014). This can be seen quite clearly in the public’s increased tendency to identify issues related to crime and insecurity as the ‘most important problem’ facing the country (see Figure 6.1). At present time, research is only beginning to assess the extent to which and how experiences with and concerns about security enter into voter decision calculi in the Latin American region. As scholars work to address how this new issue is being incorporated into electoral decision-making in Latin America, they will need to consider at least three possible mechanisms, relating to policy, retrospective assessments, and issue priorities.

For one, increased discussion over issues related to crime and security might translate into issue-based voting behaviors by which individuals select candidates based on the extent to which they offer one approach versus another
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e.g. hardline versus softline, punishment-oriented versus rehabilitation-focused platforms. In violence-ridden Honduras, for example, the 2005 presidential contest pitted a candidate emphasizing tougher punishments for criminals (‘Pepe’ Lobo Sosa) against a candidate with a stance that emphasized police and social reform (Manuel Zelaya) and it is possible that the electorate’s tendency to favor this more moderate stance helped bring about Zelaya’s victory at the polls. As politicians experiment and achieve varying successes (and failures) with different platforms and programs aimed at addressing the problem of violent crime in the Latin American region, it is likely that policy-based voting on issues related to law and order will increase in the years to come.

For another, voters might select to address issues related to security via retrospective evaluations at the polls. As in the field of economic voting, a relevant question is whether the public is likely to take into consideration sociotropic or egoistic factors. The evidence, to date, favors the former. Because most crime occurs close to home and can feel idiosyncratic, it may be more commonplace for the voting public to connect general performance on security issues to their voting decisions more so than individual experiences with crime victimization (see Pérez 2015). An even more complex set of causal processes remains to be uncovered in this nascent research domain, for example with respect to the role that the media might play in amplifying concerns about crime and the consequences this might have for voter decisions (on the role of news consumption, see Castorena and Zechmeister 2015).

Figure 6.1 Distribution of most important problem issue areas over time, Latin America

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP (18 Latin American countries only)
Finally, issues related to crime and security might enter into electoral politics via voters’ selection of candidates and parties that pledge to prioritize this issue. Jones and Baumgartner (2004, p. 1) reflect that ‘problem solving is a critical component of competent government’. Especially when issue-based voting is particularly challenging, it is conceivable that voters might privilege selecting candidates based on the slate of issues they prioritize more so than the specific positions they take. Such a model of representation is closer to the trustee than the delegate form presented by Pitkin (1967; see also O’Donnell 1994). In confusing electoral contexts in which voters face numerous choices at the polls, such as the Brazilian case, evidence suggests voters do in fact tend to select candidates on the basis of the single most important issue rather than take steps to comprehend a multi-dimensional policy landscape (Cunow 2014). It may be, then, that the emergence of issues related to crime and security at the top of many voters’ agendas in Latin America will motivate increased attempts by parties to brand themselves as prioritizing and competent in this realm. The consequence is likely to be seen in some (but not an overwhelmingly large) rise in voting based on security policy stances; a moderate increase in security-based retrospective voting; and, perhaps even more so, more voting on the basis of security issue prioritization. Simultaneous to such developments we might expect to find a consequent decline in the relevance of economic factors for at least the short run, in at least some of the more insecurity-plagued countries in the region.

EASTERN EUROPE

The countries of Eastern Europe and the satellites of the former Soviet empire have generally followed two distinct trajectories since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The first group evolved into democracies and semi-democracies. Geographically, this group is mostly located in Central and South-Eastern Europe with Ukraine, Georgia and Mongolia situated on its democratic frontier. The second group of post-communist polities initially flirted with democracy, but eventually settled on a firmly authoritarian path. This group of countries includes all of the Central Asian republics, Belarus and contemporary Russia (Hale 2014).

The most Western-oriented countries of Eastern Europe demonstrated a desire to democratize and consolidate their party systems swiftly. Yet, after twenty-five years, their trajectory is surprisingly fragile, despite the fact that countries on the Western border started the process with the best possible economic endowments, favorable legacies and an aspiration to re-join the West. In the past five to ten years, a fluidity of voter attachments, political corruption in which private interests systematically shape policies (state-capture), commercialization and politicization of media, and the push-back against liberal civil society have plagued even the most advanced East European democracies. The greatest buffer against a semi-authoritarian reversal does not seem to be democratic longevity,
but membership in the European Union, which has carrots and (limited) sticks at its disposal to discipline the newest members (Levitz and Pop-Eleches 2010; Vachudova 2008). But despite the influence of Brussels over Eastern Europe, it has been unable to quiet anti-democratic sentiments and illiberal inclinations.

At the same time, after virtually being left alone to build ties with the West for twenty years, a more assertive Russia has emerged to compete for the hearts and minds of East Europeans, who are split between their love for Western liberties and their nostalgia for economic safety and self-rule.7 This benefits Russia, which is aligning itself with political forces, both in Western and Eastern Europe, pursuing a more narrow definition of democracy as a community of ethnic equals and a greater national independence. If this trend continues, we may not be far from a moment when voting in new East European democracies will become a vote on the sustainability of tolerant and diverse societies.

**Diversity among authoritarian legacies in Eastern Europe**

Between 1989 and 1991, East European party systems emerged from decades of one-party rule. Despite homogenizing attempts to create a universal *homo sovieticus*, societal preferences and human endowments across communist societies were quite distinct. An early study of societal cleavages uncovered a very diverse field of social and ideological differences among twelve countries, which mapped differently onto party systems (Evans and Whitefield 1993). Legacies of communist rule diversified party systems at the onset of democratization as well (Kitschelt 1992, 1995, 2003, 2015; Kitschelt et al. 1999). Memories of either democratic or semi-authoritarian inter-war regimes were transmitted over generations. Similarly, legacies tied to industrialization, monopolistic institutions, bureaucratic competence, mass schooling, nationalist mobilization and ethnic tensions were preserved for between fifty and seventy years only to emerge at the onset of democratization and influence party systems (Bunce 1999; Bernhard and Karakoç 2007; Darden and Grzymala-Busse 2006; Fish 1998; Ekiert and Hanson 2003; Kopstein 2003; Pop-Eleches 2007; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2011).

Civil society actors contributed to the collapse of communism (Ekiert and Kubik 2001; Wittenberg 2012) and proved essential during the process of democratization by creating bottom-up pressure on political elites to move forward with the EU accession process (Petrova and Tarrow 2007; Schimmelfennig 2005; Vachudova 2005, 2014). There is a fundamental disagreement between scholars of civil society over whether Eastern European civil societies are inherently weak and apathetic (Howard 2003) or diverse, active and innovative (Ekiert and Foa 2011; Rakušanová 2007). While active citizenry has been perceived as a net contributor to the development of liberal civil society, recent scholarship has begun to slowly turn to the study of more illiberal forms of civil society participation, such as xenophobic movements and hostile paramilitary associations, and their
negative impact on majority-minority relations in new democracies (Bustikova 2015; Chambers and Kopstein 2001; Kopecky and Mudde 2003; Minkenberg 2015)

The uniqueness of Eastern European development stems from a multiplicity of concurrent transitions: an economic transformation, a democratic transition, and a redefinition of both the state and ethnic boundaries (Brubaker 2004). Among a multitude of legacies that reflect this complexity, three have shaped post-communist party alignments the most: (1) regime divide, (2) economic endowments, and (3) historical patterns of ethnic tensions.

The notion of a ‘regime divide’ in Eastern Europe refers to divisions over the nature of the previous regime (autocratic regimes ruled by communist parties in the former Soviet bloc) and its interpretation. In most cases, the interpretation of the Soviet legacy in various post-communist countries has been either consensual or strongly contested. Whereas Central Europeans tend to view the rule of their respective communist parties aligned with Moscow as alien rulers (Hechter 2013), eastern parts of the bloc tend to view the Soviet Union as glorious and victorious. In countries such as the Baltic states, Serbia and Ukraine, legacies were contested mostly due to the reversal of ethnic hierarchies or significant loss of power. Naturally, some lamented this change, and therefore did not subscribe to the dominant narrative of the past. Regime divides reflect this consensus or contestation of the past.

Central Europeans viewed the legacy as largely negative, and were united in their desire to eradicate the stain of communism from their history (Darden and Grzymala-Busse, 2006). Central Asians viewed the legacy as rather positive and were united in their appreciation of economic opportunities that the long-ruling Soviet regime opened up for their pre-industrial societies. Since Leninist legacies (Jowitt 1992) in these two extreme cases were not contested, regime divides in these cases dissipated very quickly and did not polarize party systems. The impact of regime divide on party system was short-lived but it created a positive legacy in itself by allowing for an immediate consolidation of the parties behind, or against, the reform agenda.

Where the past has been contested, such as in post-1993 Russia and Ukraine, different interpretations of Soviet rule deeply split voters for a decade and the reform agenda was blurry (McFaul 2001). The most extreme example of political schizophrenia today is Ukraine. Opposing views of the past and a protracted decision about whether ‘to lean East or West’ created a rift in a violently polarized Ukraine, pitching a post-Soviet industrialized East against a patriotic, and historically rural, West (Beissinger 2013; Darden 2013; Kubicek 2000; Shevel 2002). Contested regime legacy thus had a more lasting impact by forcing parties to re-negotiate historically rooted state identities, which detracted from their efforts to address more mundane tasks of governance.

Economic endowments and legacies of bureaucratic capacity related to governance have also proven to be a powerful, yet often short-lived, legacy.
The depth and the severity of the initial economic decline associated with the onset of transition were unexpected (Svejnar 2002). The initial economic decline after first market reforms were introduced was shaped both by wealth and administrative capacity inherited from communism. Countries with better economic endowments and more efficient public bureaucracies suffered less. Large declines in economic output ‘varied from 13 to 25 percent in Central and Eastern Europe [and] over 40 percent in the Baltic countries’ (Svejnar 2002: 8). Some transition economies experienced high inflation or even hyper-inflation, such as the Baltic countries, where consumer price inflation was about 1000 percent in the very early 1990s (Svejnar 2002: 10). Similarly, unemployment rates rose quickly, and uncompetitive sclerotic socialist enterprises collapsed like a house of cards.

These tumultuous events affected voters right away. The first manifestation of economic voting linked transitional winners and losers, defined mostly in economic terms, to voting preferences and distinct party families. Because many left-wing parties in Central Europe, often successors of communist parties, supported fast economic liberalization and did not conform with a more traditional Western alignment of parties on the left-right scale (Grzymala-Busse 2002; Ishiyama 2009; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Lewis 2001; Tavits and Letki 2009), voting was often structured around those who supported market-oriented policies versus those who advocated for the preservation of market protections associated with the communist regimes (Colton 2000; Tucker 2006). However, due to the diversity of transition strategies and catch-up growth, which came eventually, the effect of communist economic legacies evaporated within a decade and was therefore short-lived (O’Dwyer and Kovalčík 2007).

A historical pattern of ethnic tensions is the third powerful – and most durable – legacy of the communist rule. Given the multi-faceted and diverse nature of many post-communist polities, ethnic identities were natural focal points around which to organize politics (Whitefield 2002; Siroky and Aprasidze 2011). The most violent wave of ethnic mobilization in the early 1990s swept the Balkans, but ethnic polarization was also echoed in the politics of the dissolving Soviet, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak federations. The less violent wave of identity politics emerged once the basic tasks of creating market institutions were completed, which led to new opportunities to restructure the political field.

Mobilization on ethnic issues therefore proceeded in two waves. The first wave followed immediately after the dissolution of many of the multi-ethnic federations and was a direct result of newly achieved sovereignty and a shift to a direct rule (Siroky and Cuffe 2015). Nationalist mobilization along ethnic lines resulted in voting both for parties that embraced newly earned independence and freedom from being ruled by non-titular ethnic groups. At the same time, the opportunity to organize in a new democracy combined with the nationalist fervor that accompanied independence created a sense of threat among small ethnic groups, which mobilized to form parties on ethnic platforms.
Yet not all ethnic groups had the same capacity to organize. Roma and Jews are minorities dispersed among countries without a strong political backing. They are targeted across a broad spectrum of parties and voters are occasionally sympathetic to calls for their exclusion from public life. The second types of minorities (e.g. Russians, Hungarians, and Turks) are more concentrated and apt to mobilize. These are often minorities who were once in a high-status position (the rulers), but ended up on the wrong side of the border at a crucial historical moment. They have a high capacity for collective action and can keep the titular nationalities in check by calling on their ‘mother countries’ who serve as patrons in ethnic relations (Jenne 2007). At the same time, the political accommodation of these groups by established parties increases voting for radical right parties (Bustikova 2014). Legacies of regime divide, past economic endowments and configurations of ethnic relations were able to structure party systems at the onset of democratization, yet they were not powerful enough to induce party system stability.

This is because, in the first ten or fifteen years, big issues such as privatization, democratization, and the EU accession (which were often induced by external actors, e.g. the IMF, World Bank, and the EU) strained the party systems, subdued domestic debates and (temporarily) imposed order. Eventually, however, the processes of building basic market and democratic institutions were completed and new issues – such as inequality, loss of sovereignty and entrenched political corruption – were introduced and injected fluidity back into the party systems.

Fluidity of party attachments / volatility of party systems

After the regime change, party systems were predisposed to volatility. Yet, despite the lack of consolidation based on societal cleavages throughout the 1990s, party systems aligned according to their positions on reforms and the degree to which voters sought fast privatization and dismantlement of the old economic structure. Under seemingly volatile systems, discernible voting blocks and parties emerged. Parties, both old and new (Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015), changed names, but the blocks of parties associated with transitional supporters or opponents displayed a surprising degree of stability and ability to structure party and voter alignments in the early stages of democratization.

It is therefore paradoxical that, after twenty-five years, party systems today are more volatile than in their first decade of existence. Current Eastern European party systems are rather fluid with a high number of parties in the system and weak party attachments (Hanley and Sikk 2014). Electoral volatility, when compared to Western Europe and to at least parts of Latin America, is exceptionally high (Birch 2003; Tavits 2005). Surveying what they call seismic elections ten to twenty years after the breakdown of communism in Bulgaria (2001), Poland (2001), Hungary (2010), the Czech Republic (2010 and 2013), and Slovenia (2011 and 2014), Tim Haughton and Kevin Deegan-Krause (2015) describe
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a system of instability in Eastern European party systems akin to a ‘hurricane season’.

According to their study, these seismic elections ‘involve swings of more than 40 percent and give pluralities to parties still in their infancy’ (Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015: 61). At the time when party systems should be deepening consolidation, these disruptive elections signal that they are instead heading for a period of high volatility characterized by a pattern in which established parties lose, and ‘uncorrupted’ parties rise only to lose to newcomers until the cycle of political earthquakes begins again.

In a recent, similarly pessimistic analysis of party system stability, Conor O’Dwyer concludes that ‘[i]n postcommunist Europe, one finds both low-volatility party systems whose composition today closely resembles that of the early 1990s, and, at the other extreme, volatile systems with vanishingly small continuity over time’ (O’Dwyer 2014: 530). O’Dwyer shows that, where economic issues have dominated party competition, party systems tended to be most stable. This is consistent with previous research, which found that societal cleavages, as opposed to economic ones, were incapable of stabilizing party systems, especially in the first decade of transition (Tavits 2005).

When compared to economic cleavages, ethnic cleavages had a limited impact on structuring peaceful Eastern European party systems (cf. Kitschelt et al. 1999; Tworzecki 2003; Rovny 2015). Theories of economic voting proved to be superior in predicting voting, turnout, and electoral outcomes. Economic voting exhibited a dynamic comparable to the US (Fiorina 1981), Western Europe (Lewis-Beck 1988; cf. Anderson 2007) and Latin America (Remmer 1991; Singer 2013a; Gélineau and Singer 2015). The effect of economic considerations on voting was so well established that Joshua Tucker concluded in his extensive review of Eastern European voting that [rather than whether the economy matters] ‘we can now begin to ask exactly how [it] affects … voting’ (Tucker 2002: 294, cf. Bernhard and Karakoç 2011).

The reward-punishment model of economic voting (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000; Stegmaier, Park and Lewis-Beck, this Handbook, Volume 2, Chapter 25), in which the voters vote out the government if the economy underperforms, was mostly applicable in the first post-transitional decade (Pacek 1994; Fidrmuc 2000). After two large waves of voting, in which the voters oscillated between political alternatives (Pop-Eleches 2010), they came to the realization that establishment parties cannot address their concerns about the legitimacy of newly acquired wealth and inequalities associated with access to state resources. Populism, personalism and a fragmented political landscape driven by anti-establishment sentiment have therefore disrupted the mapping of economic cleavages on parties.

The consolidation of party politics in the 1990s was a temporary phenomenon that reflected the structuring impact of two exogenous shocks on new party systems: massive economic restructuring and, in the case of the accession countries, the obligation to comply with the EU requirements (Vachudova 2009). Once
these two forces were removed, the shallow nature of post-communist politics came to full force.

**Economic/material well-being and voting**

In the first decade, economic issues dominated the formation of post-communist party systems, which led to the impression that East European party systems were on the path toward orderly consolidation. What were the factors that contributed to the initial, post-transition alignment?

In the early stages of transition, voters aligned according to economic issues and mapped onto the platforms of parties on economic transition. Urban voters who had marketable skills compatible with the new economy supported parties associated with the fast-paced economic transition. Conversely, pensioners, rural voters, and voters from declining sectors such as mining, textiles, and heavy machinery – lacking human capital or towards the end of productive age – were more inclined to vote for parties that would buffer them from imposed austerity measures and the subsequent economic anxiety associated with declining incomes, worsening access to quality health care, and security in the retirement age (Fidrmuc 2000; Whitefield 2002).

In countries where there was a general consensus about the political direction, governing and opposition parties quibbled over the speed and nuances of the reforms. In countries leaning in a more authoritarian direction, the agreement was against the adoption of the so-called Washington consensus and reforms stalled. In more divided polities, where consensus was absent from the very beginning, the process of democratization was more protracted, since the transition forces were battling strong advocates of the old regime (Frye 2010; McFaul 2002, cf. Hellman 1998). The regime divide did not structure voting in cases where the nature of the regime was settled and therefore politics could evolve around economic winners and losers.

Where the nature of the regime was contested, such as in Ukraine or Russia, the party system was sharply polarized and voters were more divided on the issue of regime, which prevented a consensus about the policy choices associated with economic reforms. In countries with equally strong pro-regime and anti-regime political backing, this division ultimately undermined economic progress (Frye 2002) and eventually raised the stakes for the transitional losers. Policy instability deterred outside investment and internal development. In politically polarized societies, the pool of transitional losers was expanding faster, making economic success and failure highly politically salient.

Although new economic opportunities emerged for East European voters, the ability to capitalize on them was unequally distributed. The harsh impact of economic restructuring that had started in the early 1990s removed safety nets and exposed voters to the brutalities of the market. Fifteen years after the transition, most voters thought that they were economically better off under the previous
regime, which provided them with protections, such as job and pension security, cheap housing, food, transportation, and access to health and education. At the same time, many voters were not thrilled with the new democratic institutions that were associated with the implementation of free markets (Mishler and Rose 2001).

The division between the winners and the losers of transition, rooted in human capital and the ability to adapt to the new political and economic environment, was also translated into voters’ positions on European Union enlargement and the process of re-joining Europe both politically and through trade ties (Vachudova 2005; Kelley 2006; Kopstein and Relley 2000). During the pre-accession process of the late 1990s and early 2000s, attitudes towards the EU structured the political field in a similar manner: young, urban voters with marketable skills capable of taking advantage of the opening to the West leaned towards parties that embraced the European project more enthusiastically. Yet a large proportion of voters were not enthusiastic, since their ability to take advantage of travel, investment, work and study opportunities due to the enlargement were limited. Eventually the voters have also recognized that the European project restricts state sovereignty, which was re-gained so recently.

For one or two decades, the party systems were overwhelmed by problems of economic transition and adoption of the large body of the European law: *acquis communautaire*. Preoccupation with the redistribution of economic resources and with the adjustments required to join the European community blinded politicians to the injustices incurred during the massive displacement of economic opportunities and consequences of the reduction of national sovereignty. The end of economic restructuring and the completion of the European enlargement process enabled new issues to gain traction and salience in the party systems.

**New issues: corruption and the anti-establishment revolt**

Despite the fact that the transition to free markets rewarded investment into human capital, it was accompanied by vast corruption, waste, and a misappropriation of state and European funds. After more than two decades of intermingling politics and business, through the processes of simultaneous democratization and marketization, many countries developed political-economic, semi-criminal networks that penetrated state structures, party offices, and quasi-independent media (Grzymala-Busse 2007; Kopecky and Spirova 2011; O’Dwyer 2006).

Eastern Europe in 2015 might be compared to Berlusconi’s Italy insofar as dominant parties are imploding, corporations that keep journalists on a tight leash have been increasing their control over media, and populist politicians are promising to fight corruption only to quickly enrich themselves or their business partners. This trend is reflected in declining confidence in democracy over the past ten years (Figure 6.2).

A new cleavage around anti-establishment populist politics emerged when the transition dust settled and the EU accession process was completed (Pop-Eleches
This populist cleavage however does not have the ability to consolidate
the party systems in the long run. Voters often take cues from parties, which
put popular attractive personalities with no policy agendas (other than a shallow
commitment to root out corruption) on ballots to conceal the true donors, who
operate in the background with ulterior business motives and control politics
through proxies.

For example, Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydło was put up front as a
candidate for the Law and Justice Party in 2015, due to the unpopularity
of its leader, Jarosław Kaczyński. This strategy proved successful with the
president-elect, Andrzej Duda (also from the Law and Justice party), who
managed to defeat a very popular President Komorowski. Yet the former
prime minister, Kaczyński, is the actual leader of the party and commands
the loyalty of both Duda and Szydło. Another example of non-transparent
leadership structures can be found in the Czech Republic’s anti-corruption
party, Public Affairs. The true leader of the party, Vít Bárta, was the owner
of a security agency. According to information leaked to the leading Czech
newspaper, the decision to form a new political party was a business decision
in order to gain access to economic intelligence and compromising materi-
als. Bárta is currently under investigation for illegal wiretaps, but maintains
his innocence. The party was founded on an anti-corruption platform, since
that was expected to resonate with the voters. For some time, it was led by
Radek John, a popular public figure and former writer, who later became the
Minister of Interior.

Figure 6.2 Decline in confidence in democracy, Eastern Europe
Decline in confidence in democracy. BTI 2006–2004 for East-Central and Southeast Europe
Source: Confidence in democracy has been shaken: regional averages BTI 2006–2014. Bertelsmann
Transformation Index 2014, Regional Report, East-Central and Southeast Europe http://www.bti-project.org/
reports/regional-reports/east-central-and-southeast-europe/
A list of corrupt politicians with dubious business backing could fill this whole chapter, but a few of the most recent flagrant cases will suffice. A district court in Slovenia ruled that the former Prime Minister of Slovenia, Janez Janša (and his conspirators), had sought about €2m in commission from a Finnish firm, Patria, for military contracts. Janša was arrested, but the Constitutional court overturned the verdict in 2015. In Albania, the circle behind the controversial Prime Minister Sali Berisha managed to get their candidate Lulzim Basha elected as the mayor of the capital city of Tirana in 2011 after a re-count, which included ballots that were cast in the wrong ballot box (BTI 2014). An alleged wiretapping operation (called Gorilla), leaked in 2011, practically destroyed a center-right reformist party in Slovakia (SDKU). The Gorilla file alleges that an investment fund (Penta) was involved in privatization deals with the reformist government. It states that Penta has paid millions of euros in bribes to public officials and provided shoddy financing for major Slovak political parties.

The deterioration of media freedoms among the most consolidated democracies is the strongest indicator of backsliding (Figure 6.3). Despite the fact that crude indicators of political freedoms, separation of powers and governance indicators have not changed that much over the past ten years and are quite positive, the politicization of the media in the post-accession period and the curtailment of the ability of journalists to impartially report on political corruption and abuse of state powers indicates corrosion in the quality of regimes. Central-East European newspapers have traditionally been in the hands of foreign media companies, which did not interfere with media content. Due to declining profit margins, foreign investors have been withdrawing from the region, leaving the media sector to local businessmen with political ambitions (Guasti and Mansfeldová 2017) who take advantage of corruption scandals and weak governance to drain votes from established parties.

A scandalous media affair lies at the heart of the current illiberal turn in Poland after the Law and Justice Party won elections in 2015. The party dominates Poland like no other party in twenty-seven years by controlling the presidency, both houses of parliament and the government. The roots of its current success can be traced to the so-called Rywin Affair. In 2002, Lew Rywin met with the editor in chief of the popular daily, Gazeta Wyborcza, and offered him 17.5 million USD to modify a draft bill of the media law. The meeting was secretly recorded by the editor and leaked six months later. The change in the draft law would have allowed the owner of Gazeta Wyborcza, Agora SA, to expand into television broadcasting. This affair eventually led to the resignation of Prime Minister Leszek Miller, who was suspected, among others, to be behind Rywin’s offer. More importantly, the affair fatally wounded the ruling party – the Polish social democrats – and opened the door for the populist Law and Justice Party to win on the anti-corruption platform in 2005. The party was eventually voted out of office, but regained power in 2015. Immediately after seizing power, the Law and Justice Party introduced a new Media Law, which gave the ruling party the
executive power to appoint the heads of state TV and radio. The party replaced senior staff to restore balanced reporting in line with ‘national interests’ and tightened the grip of the government on public media (Guasti and Mansfeldová 2016).

A media leak was also behind the demise of the once well-established Hungarian social democratic party. In 2006, an audio recording of Prime Minister Gyurcsány’s speech, in which the leader of the social democratic party admitted that the government had been lying to the public about its administrative and economic competence, was leaked to the public. The speech led to the Prime Minister’s resignation, but more importantly marked the beginning of the illiberal turn in Hungary under the leadership of Viktor Orbán and his party. Developments in Hungary since 2010 and in Poland since 2015, both under conservative governments, have sent shockwaves throughout the European Union. Both Poland and Hungary were once poster children of democratic consolidation in Eastern Europe, but are now developing a playbook to undermine the pillars of democratic governance. These steps include assaults on the constitutional court and constitutional checks, increased control over state media, and delegitimizing the opposition by suggesting that they are disloyal proxies of foreign forces.

In January 2016, for the first time in the EU’s history, the European Commission launched a formal investigation into the rule of law in one of its member states, Poland. The EU and the Council of Europe are mostly concerned with laws passed to overhaul the Polish constitutional tribunal and curb media freedoms. The pushback against the destruction of Polish democracy is closely watched in the whole region. The EU was able to reverse an attempt to impeach the Romanian president via unconstitutional means in 2012 by threatening to suspend Romania’s voting rights in the EU, but it has not been able to tame Viktor Orbán in Hungary. Cracks can be observed in yet another front-runner of democratic consolidation: the Czech Republic.

In 2013, a business oligarch, and current Minister of Finance, Andrej Babiš, purchased the most popular Czech newspaper from a German owner through his firm, Agrofert. His firm is the largest recipient of EU structural funds. Since the purchase, many investigative journalists have left in protest over the newspaper’s loss of impartiality. The newspaper molds public opinion in favor of Babiš, his political party and his business empire, and away from his political opponents. He has become famous for his desire to run ‘the state as a firm’, efficiently and without the hassle of endless democratic deliberations. The protracted nature of democratic governance, inefficiencies in governing, and inability to tackle wealth inequality – combined with the permanent revolving door between political interests and business interests (Guasti 2014; Innes 2014; Rupnik 2007) – contribute to the anti-establishment sentiment and democratic backsliding.

Corruption – and the populist anti-establishment backlash associated with it – have become niche party issues in the first decade of the new millennium and have contributed to the destabilization of party systems. The ability of this
niche topic to re-configure party systems along stable, programmatic lines is very limited, since it possesses only a shallow relationship to societal cleavages, and operates within a fluid party system in which parties are forced to quickly respond to corruption affairs or fabricated new issues. For example, the Czech Civic Democratic Party, which has been a dominant and stable force in Czech politics since the early 1990s, completely collapsed in 2013, due to the sex affair of its Prime Minister.

Unlike in Western European democracies, anger is more often directed at democratic institutions themselves, rather than just at untrustworthy politicians. Furthermore, mobilization based on corruption sometimes grows roots into the cleavage structure by coexisting with ethnic cleavages. In 2012, the far right party in Hungary proposed to create a list of the Jewish members of the Parliament as threats to national security. In the initial phase of the backlash, corruption was a niche issue that mapped onto identity politics. Anyone labeled as corrupt can be framed as the enemy in ethnic or identity terms. In the long run, however, the anti-establishment backlash might eventually undermine identity-based cleavages by broadening the base of voters concerned with corruption and the perceived lack of attention to the ‘people’. Therefore, anti-elitism has the ability to erode identity cleavages, further contributing to the inability of the party systems to consolidate (cf. Tavits and Letki 2014).

Ethnic identities and legacies of nationalist mobilization from pre-transition years are the most durable cleavages inherited from the past. Initially, after the
first years of transition, when states shifted to direct self-rule, identity-based cleavages were related to sovereignty and to the resurgent pride among titular nationalities, to control their own affairs. Independence from Moscow and from the central federal authorities reinvigorated patriotism and assertiveness of titular nationalities, as many newly minted post-communist political leaders rediscovered nationalism. In the case of Yugoslavia, this led to a protracted series of civil wars and ethnic conflicts (1991–2001). Those polities that remained peaceful became involved in the busy work of transition and putting on their best faces vis-à-vis the European Union. They transformed their economic, representative, and legal systems and re-invigorated their civil societies (Ekiert and Kubik 2001).

The second non-violent wave of identity politics was mostly channeled through party systems in the new millennium. The verbal viciousness of this new wave of identity politics is related to the profound disillusionment with the return to Europe as well as unfulfilled (and unrealistic) expectations of wealth accumulation (Grzymala-Busse and Innes 2003). After more than two decades of transition, very few countries can boast to have created a secure middle class, an accountable political class, and steady economic growth. Identity politics in the post-economic transformation era is mostly non-violent, but vitriolic and infused with two new topics: profound disappointment with corrupt politicians and irritation with new liberal social issues, such as minority rights as well as gay and lesbian rights, often associated with the cosmopolitan nature of the European Union and implemented by democratic elites.

Euroscepticism in Central-Eastern European has risen significantly in the past ten years (Mansfeldova and Guasti 2012; Taggart and Sczerbiak, 2013; Whitefield and Rohrschneider 2014: 17). According to a study by Leonard and Torreblanca (2014), overall trust in the EU has declined steeply since 2003. In 2013, only thirty percent of all EU citizens trusted the EU. Across post-communist countries, trust in the EU varies, but the overall trend is negative. In 2007, citizens from all the accession countries still trusted the EU. By 2013, most Czechs, Croats, Slovenes, Latvians, Slovaks, and Hungarians did not trust the EU. Even among countries such as Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Estonia, and Bulgaria, where most citizens still trust the EU, the overall level of trust declined between 2007 and 2013 (Leonard and Torreblanca 2014: 4).

The implications for future voting decisions are troubling. East European voters have learned their lesson from the early 1990s. The track record of the new political and administrative elites, with a few exceptions, is dreadful. The new Bertelsmann Transformation Index report for East-Central and South-Eastern Europe states that one of the main challenges facing these countries is ‘profound, persistent corruption’ (BTI 2014). The report also states that: ‘[d]emocracy has suffered in 12 of the region’s 17 countries. Two long-standing trends are responsible for this trend: majority governments disregarding the rule of law and growing mistrust in democracy’ (BTI 2014).
This disillusionment has implications for trust in democracies, since the major difference between Western and Eastern European democracies is that dissatisfaction with democracy and unaccountable politicians is increasingly being linked with anti-democratic attitudes in the latter (Minkenberg 2015). Corrupt political practices are certainly present in Western Europe at the highest levels (Warner 2007), but they are not associated with calls that challenge the nature of the democratic order. In the East, multi-ethnic arrangements and democracy are bundled together, such that the new (shallow) anti-establishment cleavage is feeding off the intensity and depth of emotion associated with a deeper identity-based cleavage grounded in ethnicity.

Nationalism and sour attitudes towards liberal democracy have three interlinked sources. The first one is the European Union, which is associated with liberal democracy advocating for the rights of ethnic, social, and sexual minorities, and with restrictions of national sovereignty. Opposition to liberal democracy thus implies a pathway to increased sovereignty in domestic affairs, something many patriots or nationalists strive for. Second, opposition to liberal democracy is often disguised as opposition to multi-culturalism and goes hand in hand with advocating further restrictions on civic life. Third, since the democratic and economic transitions proceeded simultaneously, voters associate the introduction of free markets with democratization. The corrupt nexus of politics and economics, which was born in dual transition, has cast a shadow on democratic institutions that have often failed to plant adequate regulatory institutions of oversight to curb political corruption.

Corruption and anti-establishment attitudes engage economic issues and are certainly enhanced by feelings of economic unfairness (Klašnja et al. 2014; Hanley and Sikk 2014). For the most part, however, economic issues are bundled with identity issues, where ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ is associated with rage against the political elites that sold national interests out to outsiders, foreigners, and ethnic minorities. Retraction from a liberal democratic project is not only attempting to re-arrange ethnic relations, social issues, and ethnic dominance in some countries, but to challenge the very foundations of democracies.

Any backsliding from the commitment to liberal democracy should be primarily understood in the context of these identity-based (mostly ethnic) cleavages, not as a gut reaction to economic insecurities and inequalities, unless these are coupled with the perceived dominance of ethnic and social groups. The anti-establishment cleavage can tap into the identity cleavage, but it has a potentially corrosive effect since it can blur the boundaries of ethnic and social cleavages.

Undemocratic propositions to restrict civil society, tame unruly media, and correct excesses associated with the freedom of expression are often accompanied by desires to restrict rights of both social and ethnic minorities. This is not that hard to do as a result of the relatively higher levels of aggregate xenophobia in the East (Mudde 2005). Therefore, attempts to modify ethnic relations, which are wrapped in populist calls for a more direct relationship between voters and leaders, can be interpreted as covert calls to re-visit inclusive democracy as a
form of political representation. We can hope that regimes, which have survived for more than twenty years, will be resilient enough to remain part of the democratic West, but this outcome is far from certain.

CONCLUSION

Whereas few in Latin America or Eastern Europe dream of a return to authoritarian or communist rule, the modern democratic experience has not been rosy. This has had numerous implications for electoral behavior in these regions. In the first place, it has diminished the legitimacy of the new regimes. The regime split is particularly salient in Eastern Europe, where dissatisfaction with political corruption and infringements on national sovereignty have created a backlash against a set of young democratic systems. Political entrepreneurs in those cases have pursued a narrower definition of democracy as a community of ethnic equals and advocated for a greater national independence. In a worst-case scenario, voting in some of the new East European democracies might eventually turn into a referendum on the sustainability of tolerant and diverse societies. A classic regime-type divide has nearly dissipated in Latin America, but dissatisfaction with what modern democracy has delivered, political instability, and the success of populist leaders who dismantle traditional institutions and curb liberties all conspire to leave the issue of democratic quality and consolidation far from resolved and thus still relevant to the electoral agenda.

Collectively the two regions, Latin America and Eastern Europe, demonstrate how difficult it is to find stable equilibria in young party systems in the modern era. Electoral volatility is high and has been on the rise in both regions despite decades of democracy. Interestingly, electoral volatility centers around new party entrance and exit in both regions. Further, in both, it is accompanied by significant levels of personalism in politics, despite the fact that Latin America’s systems are presidential and Eastern Europe’s systems are parliamentary. According to Wilkinson’s study of India, volatility is not always incompatible with a deep commitment to democracy, and the adversarial effects of volatility on democratic commitment can be exaggerated (Wilkinson 2015). In fact, one might argue that economic inequality could put democratic stability at a higher risk than electoral volatility. Unfortunately, both Latin America and Eastern Europe are also plagued by economic inequality, leaving their party systems with multiple, and potentially interacting, vulnerabilities. Although economic voting has contributed to the consolidation of party systems, inequality, market uncertainty, and polarization can and do undermine party system structuration. This observation echoes the conclusion reached in a study of party system volatility in Africa by Weghorst and Bernhard (2014), which found that inequality increases volatility because ‘distributionally harsh divides’ foster polarization. Therefore, economic voting may contribute to consolidation only when the distributional impact of
economic change does not lead to levels of inequality and polarization that are high enough as to jeopardize democratic stability. Those extreme cases aside, both regions testifies to the primary position of the economy in voter decision calculi in newer democracies, much as this dimension occupies a central role in voter choice in older, more established democracies.

Poor economic conditions can aggravate other issues, including corruption and crime. As noted, in Latin America, the evidence is that voters are more likely to punish executives for corruption when economic times are bad. The privatization campaign in Eastern Europe – when state enterprises were being rapidly sold en masse – was a phenomenal opportunity for political entrepreneurs to enrich themselves (a process that was not unheard of in Latin America during its privatization period). Especially in Eastern Europe, economic liberalization contributed to the creation of a now well-entrenched system of non-transparent financing of political parties. Voters took note and were angered by the long-term diversion of state resources and subsidies into private pockets. In both regions, inequality that stems from or is otherwise perceived to be connected to political corruption is a highly salient issue. Such governance issues are likely to remain on the agenda alongside issues of democratic quality and party system consolidation for some time. Collectively these factors create what might be termed a ‘pessimistic equation’ (in contrast to modernization theory’s optimistic equation; see Lipset 1960), where poor governance, corruption, ineffective oversight on the economy, inequality, insecurity, and other poor output fuel or facilitate each other while undermining public confidence in the legitimacy of democracy. This type of dynamic would appear relevant to a variety of newly emerged or young democracies, not only those of Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Capitalizing on system discontent, a new cleavage around anti-establishment populist politics has emerged both in Latin America and Eastern Europe. In Latin America, this happened as traditional parties became discredited due to a failure to deliver on the promises of democracy, most notably with respect to widespread economic benefits but also – especially recently – with respect to citizen security. In Eastern Europe, the emergence of an anti-establishment cleavage coincided with the end of the economic transition and the completion of the EU accession process. In both regions, the populist cleavage presents another challenge to the ability to consolidate those party systems in the long run and, at the same time, has implications for voter behavior in a number of ways, including via new cleavages formed between those who identify with or are against the populist’s agenda.

Populism has been associated with a rise in class-based voting in both regions and in this way, among others, is strengthening the relevance of identity politics for electoral agendas. In considering material influences on the vote, we admittedly have not devoted much attention to clientelism in this chapter. In general, in mid-income countries, clientelism is often related to political patronage, access to procurement contracts, preferential distribution of subsidies, and targeted policies (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013). Yet, in a number of cases, vote-buying machines
and processes are regularly employed by parties and candidates to voters who come to expect them. This is not to say that these efforts are particularly efficient; for example, Kitschelt and Altamirano (2015) document how vote-buying efforts in Latin America constitute a type of ‘leaky bucket’, where the resources expended fail to match the returns achieved through the practice. Differences in levels and forms of clientelism differ within and across the Latin American and Eastern European regions, and the same is true when considering how such practices manifest in other regions such as Asia, where patronage is rampant, or Africa, where cash-for-vote operations can take on highly visible forms.

As we have noted from the start, electoral behavior in newer democracies shares many similarities with that in older, more established democracies, but also a number of notable differences. Some of these differences appear to be points of commonalities among newer democracies, for example, electoral volatility, shallower party attachments, and political options that stoke new cleavages and concerns in ways that may not bode well for the consolidation of programmatic party competition. Other differences are unique to each region and, at an even finer level of detail, across countries within regions. These include each country’s own experiences with the prior authoritarian regime and transition to a newly formed democratic context. They include, as well, the multitude of ways in which regular patterns of democratic party competition are subverted (or bolstered) in small, and sometimes large, ways across elections.

**Notes**

1. The radical right in Eastern Europe, for the most part, supports state interventionism and market protection (Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009; Ishiyama 2009).
2. Elections have been held in Colombia, Costa Rica, and Venezuela since the middle of the twentieth century, which, although oligarchical especially in the early years and not always free of controversy, have mostly met minimal requirements for democratic competition. Mexico has held regular elections for national office since the early 1900s, though these only became competitive toward the end of that century.
3. Between 1983 (when a fifty-year-old in 2015 would have been eighteen) and 2015, the number of years in which there have been presidential, legislative, or concurrent elections in Latin American countries ranges from five in Nicaragua to sixteen in Argentina and El Salvador. The number in the text represents the average across the eighteen Latin American countries; though note that legal voting age is lower than eighteen in some cases.
4. Nadeau et al. (forthcoming) show that evaluations of how the administration is handling democracy are relevant to voter choice in contemporary Latin America.
5. Cohen, Salles, and Zechmeister (2016) document that ‘Type A’ electoral volatility – that caused by party entry and exit – has increased in Latin America in recent times.
6. A dearth of questions on standardized surveys makes it difficult to compare the weight of candidate traits or charisma to the vote choice across countries within Latin America, or between the Latin American region and other regions. We hope, nonetheless, that this type of comparison will be taken up in future scholarship.
7. According to the New Europe Barometer, the majority of respondents in Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Romania, Slovakia, and Bulgaria think of their current economic system (2004–2005) as
worse than the communist economic system before 1989 (Bustikova 2009). The Czech Republic
was the only country that viewed the communist economy as strictly negative. The evaluation of
the system of government was slightly more positive, but in many instances the communist and post-
communist systems of government are viewed as on a par with the current systems (Rose, 2007).

8 Market reform protectionism is either advocated by unreformed communist parties, mostly in
the countries of the former Soviet Union or populist-nationalistic parties in Central Europe, where
former communist parties morphed into social democratic parties that embraced social liberalism,
cosmopolitanism and pro-European market liberal orientation.

9 The political gains that minority segments of populations achieved irritated voters, who then turned
to radical right parties to reverse those gains. Voting for the radical right parties does not originate
in prejudice, but rather in opposition to policies that accommodate their demands and elevate their
status (Bustikova 2014).

10 According to a study by Powell and Tucker (2014), which covers elections from the early 1990s to
the early 2000s, the effective number of parties was 5.77. The average volatility caused by the entry
and exit of parties from the political system was 31.86, and the average volatility that occurs when
voters switch their votes between existing parties was 12.68. Tavits (2007) reports that the total
number of new parties in the region since the early 1990s was 248. The average number of new
parties per election for the whole democratic period was 5.6.

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