Civic Involvement and Party Membership in New Democracies: Natural Experimental Evidence from Indonesia

Jeremy Siow*

Abstract

Who joins parties in new democracies? Answering this question is crucial given that parties with strong membership are one of the key pillars on which democratic stability rests on. Yet we know little about the factors explaining party membership enrollment in new democracies. This article argues that party membership is strongly affected by individual participation in civic associations. Parties prefer to recruit from civic associations because their members possess larger social networks and the organizational capability to mobilize partisan support. Civic organizational members, in turn, are predisposed to join due to their heightened sense of political efficacy and desire to improve their communities. I find support for this argument through a series of quantitative studies using data from the World Values Survey. By highlighting the edifying effects of civic organizations, the findings have important implications for the role of civil society in promoting political participation and representation in new democracies.

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*Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford. Contact: jeremy.siow@politics.ox.ac.uk.

Who joins parties in new democracies? Why do some citizens join parties while others do not? Understanding the factors that influence party membership enrollment in new democracies is crucial because these questions are directly related to the broader concern over the stability and health of democratic institutions within these nascent democracies. Studying post-communist Europe, Tavits (2012, 2013) for example finds that parties with more members not only receive more votes in the short term, but are also able to extend their political longevity and survive in a volatile electoral environment present in many new democracies. Moreover, given that most parties nominate candidates from within their own ranks, the kinds of members recruited should have significant downstream effects on descriptive and substantive representation in the legislative context as well (Carnes and Lupu, 2015). Taken together, both the quantity and quality of party members affect the long-term stability of parties in newly democratized regimes, as well as their ability to perform their intermediary functions between citizens and those who govern. Party stability, in turn, contributes to democratic consolidation by promoting durable connections and improving representation between state and society (Diamond and Linz, 1989; Kitschelt et al., 1999; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005; Mainwaring, 1999).

Although these questions have attracted the attention of many political scientists within the sub-fields of party organization and political participation, extant observations and insights are mostly limited to citizens living in advanced democratic societies in Europe (e.g., Bale et al., 2019; Mair and van Biezen, 2001; Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010; van Haute and Gauja, 2015; Whiteley and Seyd, 2002; van Biezen et al., 2012). Accordingly, civic and ideological incentives appear to be the biggest drivers of membership enrollment (van Haute and Gauja, 2015). By contrast, among the few studies that have looked at party membership entry in new democracies, they share a common economic narrative: that is, citizens join in the hopes of receiving selective benefits such as civil service employment and access to government assistance programs (Bob-Milliar, 2012; Dunning and Nilekani, 2013). Compared to their counterparts in established democracies, these findings suggest that party members

in new democracies appear to attach more weight to the promise of patronage and selective benefits relative to other considerations such as collective goals and ideology. In light of this ostensible contradiction, one might question whether civic incentives even matter in newly democratized regimes.

In this article, I propose an alternative narrative that highlights the edifying effects of civic associations on party membership entry in new democracies. On the one hand, parties prefer to recruit from civic associations because their members possess larger social networks and have prior experience in managing the administrative aspects of a membership organization. On the other hand, individual involvement in civic associations elevates the salience of community-oriented concerns as opposed to parochial interests. Concurrently, these cumulative experiences heighten an individual's sense of political efficacy – i.e., the belief that one can shape political outcomes (Beaumont, 2011). Overall, these arguments lead to the central hypothesis that civic involvement should increase the likelihood of party membership enrollment among citizens in newly democratized regimes. While this theory should apply to individuals living in both established and new democracies, it was primarily tested and confirmed within the confines of the former (Almond and Verba, 1963; Putnam, 2000; Verba et al., 1978). As such, this study represents a novel attempt at examining whether the same salutary effects of civic engagement – as observed in stable democracies – are present in new democracies as well.

Using data from the latest wave of the World Values Survey (i.e., Wave 7, Haerpfer et al., 2020), I test this theoretical expectation through three empirical strategies. The first strategy tests whether civic engagement has a causal effect on party membership among respondents living in Indonesia. Using the frequency of major earthquake occurrences as an instrument for civic involvement, I find that individuals who are affiliated to multiple civic associations are more likely to be party members in Indonesia. I also draw upon recent advances in the causal inference literature and show that the findings are robust to alternative model specifications and sensitivity analyses (e.g., Conley et al., 2012). Next, I conduct a

second empirical test that examines whether the case study results can be extrapolated to seventeen other newly democratized regimes identified in the dataset. Accordingly, I observe a similar empirical pattern among a larger sample of respondents at the cross-national level as well. Finally, I present some preliminary evidence to demonstrate that individual involvement in multiple civic associations affects party membership enrollment through three of the four postulated mechanisms – i.e., social networks, organizational experience, and greater emphasis on community concerns as opposed to individual interests. By contrast, I do not find any evidence in support of the political efficacy mechanism. Overall, the empirical findings are consistent with the paper's primary expectation that civic participation has a direct and positive impact on party membership entry among citizens in new democracies.

This article makes several contributions to different sub-fields within comparative politics. First, it builds on the well-established finding from advanced democracies that organizational involvement has a positive effect on political action, and extends this insight to explain party membership entry in new democracies. Second, the findings advance our understanding regarding party-society linkages in new democracies. Most prior works have considered parties' connections with larger interest groups such as trade unions and business associations, while limiting the scope of their analyses to younger democracies in Europe (Allern and Bale, 2012; Allern and Verge, 2017; Poguntke, 2002, 2006; Verge, 2012). In contrast, this paper considers a wider variety of civic associations – from women's organizations to small self-help groups – and examines their effects on party membership across a larger sample of respondents from several countries with varying levels of democratic experience and regional origins. Lastly, while this paper does not seek to downplay the significance of economic motives, the findings nonetheless suggest that parties have incentives to recruit from among those who are most civic minded, while the most civic minded are also incentivized to join parties in newly democratized regimes. As such, this article highlights a possible pathway through which a vibrant civil society can provide a rich source of civic party members thereby facilitating the twin processes of party institutionalization and democratic consolidation within new and

transitional democracies. I revisit these contributions in the conclusion.

Theoretical Arguments

This section describes the theoretical reasoning behind the overall expectation that individuals with more civic affiliations are more likely to be party members in new democracies. First, I outline the challenges that parties face in new democracies and answer the question from a demand-side angle: what are the incentives that might motivate parties to recruit from civic associations? Next, I offer supply-side explanations that answer the following question: why might civic organizational members be predisposed to join parties? Finally, I provide reasons for why the breadth of civic involvement (i.e., variety and number of organizational affiliations) might be the most appropriate measure to test this theoretical expectation.

Why are Parties Incentivized to Recruit from Civic Associations?

Unlike their counterparts in advanced democracies, many parties in newly democratized regimes begin their political lives with few direct or institutional linkages with voters and the society at large. Among former communist regimes for instance, the elimination of pre-existing social and economic stratifications by previous leaders (Ost, 1995; van Biezen, 2003) meant that party officials face the onerous task of mobilizing the electorate after democratic transition, as voters generally lack experience with how democratic elections work (Tavits and Annus, 2006), are more likely to be indifferent or confused about the ideological differences between parties (Grzymala-Busse, 2002; Rose, 1995), and may even exhibit cynicism and distrust toward existing parties (Rose and Mishler, 1998). In other recent democracies where the transition process was dominated by political elites (e.g., most Latin American countries, see O'Donnell et al., 1986), the challenge of creating and cementing party-citizen linkages is particularly germane to many new parties that emerged after transition, as they have to compete with a few established parties that retain several institutional and orga-

nizational advantages due to their close association with preceding authoritarian regimes (Randall and Svåsand, 2002). Operating under this hostile environment, many parties have to direct their recruitment strategies toward a subset of the citizenry who are not only more amenable to party membership enrollment but can also bring significant and immediate value in terms of improving their electoral fortunes. Accordingly, I argue that parties' preference for civic organizational members is influenced by the latter's entrenchment within local social networks and their administrative competency and organizational skills.

First, civic organizational members might be targeted for party membership due to their *social embeddedness and influence* within local communities. An individual's social connectedness is a valuable asset during election seasons as these networks can be activated to help parties secure larger vote shares. By virtue of their community work, individuals who participate in civic groups possess more social ties and enjoy higher frequency of contacts with local residents (Gilster, 2012). Since many parties in new democracies do not possess deep-rooted linkages with individual voters, members of civic organizations are recognized as ready-made 'vote-multipliers' (Scarrow, 1994) who can enlist new party support through their pre-existing ties. Furthermore, members of civic associations excel at performing parties' mobilization and engagement functions due to the accumulation of trust and goodwill within their own communities. In Bolivia for instance, Poertner (2020) presents evidence to show that public endorsements by civic organizations such as neighborhood associations can help to mobilize electoral support for new parties among civic organizational members and people within their own networks.

A second consideration relates to the *organizational skills and experience* acquired by members of civic associations. To begin with, many parties in new democracies outside Europe lack the financial wherewithal to support the development of strong local party branches staffed by permanent and professional administrators (Randall and Svåsand, 2002). Although 70 percent of African states offer public funding for parties, these state subventions are woefully inadequate to offset parties' operating expenses, or were not provided at all

despite legal provisions (Falguera et al., 2014). There had also been significant cutbacks to state subsidies for parties in Indonesia, from a high of US$0.10 per vote in the early 2000s to US$0.01 a decade later (Mietzner, 2013).[1] As such, the fact that party members can 'provide a valuable source of free labor for party efforts during and between election campaigns' (Scarrow, 1994, 48) rings true for many parties in new democracies (see also Levitsky, 2003). Members of civic associations are ideally placed to complement a party's administrative functions as they are skilled in the art of managing people and resources through their prior organizational experiences (Putnam, 1993, 2000). This view is echoed by Brady et al. (1995, 273), who argue that 'adult civic skills relevant for politics can be acquired and honed in the nonpolitical institutions of adult life – the workplace, voluntary associations, and churches.' Hence parties might recruit members from civic organizations to fill the shoes of full-time professional staff and to manage the administrative aspects of their election campaigns on a voluntary basis.

Why Might Members of Civic Associations be Motivated to Join Parties?

I argue that members of civic associations are more likely to join parties because of the internal effects that civic associations have on their members: specifically a shift from a focus on individual needs to community issues and a heightened sense of political efficacy among participants.

One possible reason why citizens are inclined to join parties is the presence of collective incentives, which are based on the provision of collective goods and the achievement of a party's policy goals such as reducing unemployment and improving healthcare services (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). Accordingly, individuals motivated by collective incentives join because they believe that the party 'is pursuing policies which closely accord with their own policy preferences' (Whiteley and Seyd, 1998, 120). I extend this insight and argue that these collective incentives are in turn shaped by participants' prior exposure to activities

[1]While the amount of public funding has been restored to its initial level since 2018, critics argue that the current amount is still inadequate and does little to combat corruption. See Jakarta Post (2019).

organized by civic associations. While citizens may join civic organizations for reasons unrelated to altruistic concerns (Palmer-Rubin et al., 2021), civic participation has the effect of converging these diverse interests toward the common goal of resolving community problems faced by residents (Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000). Due to the nature of their work, participants are exposed to a variety of stakeholders beyond their immediate social circles. For individual members, these face-to-face interactions put into perspective the pressing issues faced by their neighbors. As community problems become more salient, participants of civic associations may feel compelled to externalize their demands on the larger political system (Finkel and Muller, 1998). For instance, members of a neighborhood association may get involved in a party's electoral activities because they support its pledge to improve public safety and to promote housing development in their community. Indeed, several empirical studies have illustrated how neighborhood associations in squatter settlements canvassed support for parties that subsequently protected them against eviction and advocated for infrastructure improvements (e.g., Auerbach, 2016; Rivadulla, 2012). In short, 'participation in civic organizations inculcates skills of cooperation as well as a *sense of shared responsibility for collective endeavors* [emphasis added]' (Putnam, 1993, 90), and these values in turn shape members' collective incentives to join parties.

A second consequence from civic involvement is an *elevated sense of political efficacy* among members. Organizational participation empowers members and promotes the belief that an individual is able to take control over his or her actions to achieve desired goals – i.e., self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1997). The successful management and implementation of each community program represents an important milestone in a participant's confidence-building process. Hence several studies across multiple disciplines report that individual involvement in civic organizations led to increases in participants' self-esteem, heightened members' feelings of mastery over their surroundings (e.g., understanding the community's needs and how to improve service delivery), and contributed to higher levels of political efficacy (e.g., Beaumont, 2011; Itzhaky and York, 2000, 2002; Ohmer, 2007; Zimmerman and Zahniser, 1991).

Given that political efficacy is a necessary ingredient for party membership entry (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002), one can draw a plausible connection that begins with civic involvement and ends with party membership enrollment. Specifically, civic participation fosters political efficacy which in turn enhances the likelihood that civic organizational members join parties to accomplish their collective goal of improving their communities' welfare.

In sum, organizational involvement should increase the propensity of party membership entry among citizens in newly democratized regimes. On the demand side, parties are inclined to recruit from civic associations because their members are socially embedded within local communities and they possess the necessary skills to fulfill parties' electoral and representation functions. On the supply side, civic organizational members are motivated to join due to their desire to resolve community issues and the belief that they are able to affect policy outcomes through direct participation within parties' membership structures.

Measuring Civic Involvement: Depth, Breadth, or Organizational Type?

For the purposes of this study, I measure civic involvement by the number and variety of organizational affiliations. The primary reason behind this choice is that this measure is most consistent with the theoretical arguments postulated above. Multiple and varied organizational affiliations imply broader interactions across different segments within a participant's community; hence larger social networks. Similarly, the number of associational memberships held by an individual affects civic competence in a positive and cumulative fashion: 'Membership in one organization increases an individual's sense of political competence, and membership in more than one organization leads to even greater competence' (Almond and Verba, 1963, 264–265). Not only do individuals with multiple affiliations feel more confident about their ability to influence political outcomes and processes, parties may also recognize that these individuals are adept at running their election activities.

By contrast, the theoretical effects of other measures such as the intensity of organizational involvement on party membership enrollment are less clear. At best, individuals who

participate actively in one group may develop an interest to take part in other membership organizations; at worse, 'highly intense involvement [in one organization] may build barriers toward outsiders and, consequently, narrow the scope of the networks created' (Wollebaek and Selle, 2002, 38). Put simply, the expected sign of the relationship (i.e., positive or negative) between the intensity of civic involvement and openness toward party membership entry remains ambiguous.

A second alternative is to distinguish civic affiliations by organizational type (e.g., environmental groups, labor unions). While this measure might be appropriate for questions that are related to a citizen's choice of party membership (e.g., which party does an individual join), it does not directly address the broader theoretical concern of this paper – i.e., why certain individuals join parties and not others. Moreover, Wollebaek and Selle (2002) find that members of nonpolitical civic groups (e.g., choirs, bird-watching groups) are not statistically different from members of political associations (e.g., unions) in terms of the size of their social networks and the level of civic engagement. In a similar vein, Teorell (2003, 57) reports that the propensity for political action among a sample of Swedish citizens is affected by the number of civic affiliations, and 'not the social characteristics of those organizations.' As such, organizational type might not be a meaningful predictor of party membership entry.[2] Taken together, the central hypothesis from the above discussion is that *individuals who belong to multiple and diverse civic organizations are more likely to become party members in new democracies.*

Empirical Strategies

Using data from the latest wave of the World Values Survey (i.e., WVS Wave 7, Haerpfer et al., 2020), I test the above theoretical expectation through three empirical studies. First, I investigate the possibility and the extent to which civic involvement might have a causal

[2]Notwithstanding, I include this measure in the empirical section, primarily to evaluate whether party membership entry is motivated by the pursuit of selective incentives (Palmer-Rubin et al., 2021).

effect on party membership enrollment among a sample of WVS respondents from Indonesia. Second, I examine whether the case study results from Indonesia are generalizable to other newly democratized regimes. Finally, I consider the extent to which a citizen's involvement in multiple civic organizations affects party membership entry through the four postulated mechanisms – i.e., demand-side mechanisms like social networks and organizational competency, and supply-side mechanisms like political efficacy and emphasis on community issues.

Description of Explanatory, Outcome, and Control Variables

The following variables are used throughout the three empirical studies.[3] The outcome variable is *Party Member*, where a value of one is assigned to a respondent who self-reports being a member of a political party and zero otherwise. The key explanatory variable is *Civic Involvement*. WVS respondents are presented with a list of eleven voluntary organizations – such as labor unions and women's groups – and identify those associations with which they are affiliated. Hence *Civic Involvement* counts the total number of affirmative responses (active or inactive) within the list of voluntary organizations at the individual level. Put simply, this variable measures the breadth and diversity of one's civic engagement.

Several control variables are also included. The first is *Sex*, which equals one if female and zero otherwise. Second, I include *Age* as a control in light of the general trend that youths are considerably less active than their older counterparts in terms of civic and political participation (e.g., Putnam, 2000; Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010). Next, I control for the number of people who live with the respondent – i.e., *Household Size* – since a larger household implies a more extensive social network. The next covariate is *Married*, which equals one if married and zero otherwise. *Religiosity* describes the frequency with which the respondent attends religious services, while *Education* measures a respondent's highest educational achievement. I also control for whether the respondent resides in an *Urban* (equals one) or rural settlement. The next covariate is *Interest in Politics*, a four-point ordinal measure that is expected to

[3]See section A1 of the Online Appendix (OA) for a description and summary statistics of the variables.

affect both civic involvement and party membership enrollment.

Finally, the pursuit of selective benefits might provide an alternative explanation for both civic and political activism among citizens in new democracies. For example, citizens might join a civic association because that association can help broker state patronage and make demands for local public goods on behalf of its members (Palmer-Rubin et al., 2021). Similar incentives could also drive party membership enrollment. Hence the relationship between civic engagement and party membership may be spurious. Though far from perfect, I include a battery of socioeconomic measures as proxies for selective incentives. These are *Income*, *Chief Earner*, *Savings*, and *Employment*. The intuition behind this is that individuals who shoulder greater economic burden are more likely to be motivated by selective incentives. For instance, an unemployed citizen might join a party and hope that his or her efforts will be rewarded with future employment in the party or civil service.

Establishing Causality and Case Selection

The previous theoretical discussion suggests a causal relationship between civic involvement and party membership entry among citizens living in newly democratized regimes. Empirically speaking however, it is difficult to establish causality between the two variables. For one, it is hard to envisage – let alone implement – a feasible experimental design that allows a researcher to manipulate whether a subject is assigned to be a member of a civic association or not. As such, we have to rely on observational data to test the hypothesis.

This however brings another set of empirical challenges. While we can control for various social and economic characteristics – such as income and age – in the regression analysis, unobserved traits such as gregariousness can systematically affect an individual's level of civic involvement and the likelihood of being a party member. In other words, both civic involvement and party membership may be jointly caused by other unobserved variable(s). The possibility of reverse causation poses another threat to inference. Verge (2012) for instance documents two types of strategies that parties in Spain have used while working

with civil society. The first involves the creation of collateral social organizations that share the party's ideological goals and are led by party members (see Poguntke, 2002). The second is penetration, where party members are encouraged by their leaders to get involved in pre-existing civic associations. In both instances, party membership precedes civic involvement.

To minimize the possibility of reverse causation and other methodological challenges from analyzing an observational dataset, I test the hypothesis by first analyzing WVS responses from Indonesia. There are two reasons why Indonesia might be an appropriate case study to test the theoretical conjecture. First, it experiences many of the institutional difficulties and flaws that are also observed in other new democracies. Most notably, the prevalence of weakly institutionalized parties (e.g., Choi, 2007; Tan, 2006; Tomsa, 2008; Ufen, 2009) and a severe lack of public funding for parties (Mietzner, 2013) make it a representative case among new democracies.

The second reason relates to parties' recruitment strategies and the manner in which local civic organizations are established in the country. At the village level for instance, a majority of local groups are mandatory by law and are established by *nonpartisan* village officials – and not political parties – to administer government programs, and to offer residents an institutional pathway to participate in the community's development activities. Examples include neighborhood associations (*Rukun Tetangga/Warga*, RT/RW) and youth organizations (*Karang Taruna*). Moreover, under the current legislation, individuals who are appointed (or elected) to serve on the boards of these organizations *cannot* be members of political parties in the country. Hence Indonesian parties possess limited influence in creating or affecting this type of state-led grassroots organizations, which accounts for more than 70 percent of all village-level community organizations in Indonesia.[4] Among voluntary groups such as religious associations and unions, the possibility of reverse causation also appears unlikely. Mietzner (2013, 90–95) for instance notes that members of nationalist and Islamic parties are more likely to be recruited from a variety of social organizations, and not

[4]Section A2 of the OA describes the types of village-level community organizations in Indonesia, together with the number of organizations and employees reported for each type.

the other way around.

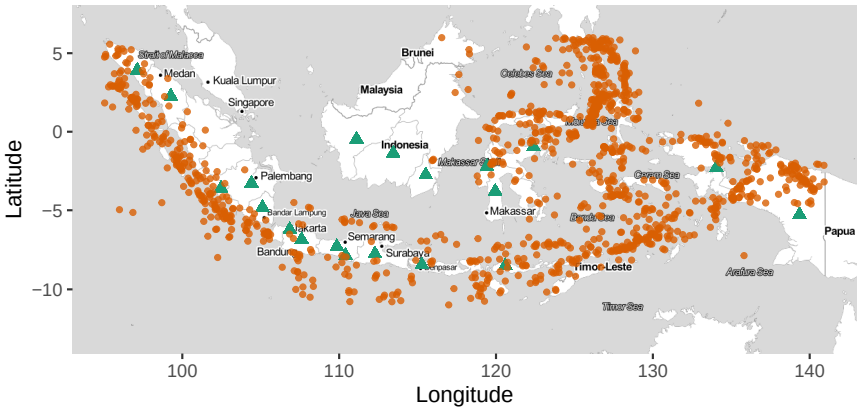
Earthquakes as an Instrument and Identifying Assumptions

Another motivation for evaluating the causal relationship in Indonesia concerns the frequent occurrence of earthquakes in the country. Between 1910 and 2017, the U.S. Geological Survey (2020) recorded more than 1200 earthquake incidents around the Indonesian archipelago that have a minimum magnitude of six – or an annual average of eleven major earthquakes. Figure 1 plots the locations of the major earthquake episodes during this period. Unlike other natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes are often viewed as 'acts of God' and are less likely to be triggered by human activities. The notion that earthquakes are natural occurrences is even more relevant in the Indonesian context: according to the Human-Induced Earthquake Database (Foulger et al., 2018; Wilson et al., 2017), only three earthquakes since 1945 are caused by human activities. As such, the causal effect of civic involvement on party membership can be more precisely estimated by using earthquakes as an instrumental variable. Specifically, *Earthquakes* is an instrument that counts the number of major earthquake incidents (i.e., minimum magnitude of six) that occurred within a 100-kilometer radius from a respondent's location during his or her lifetime.[5]

The validity of the instrument rests on satisfying four identifying assumptions. First, there exists contextual evidence to suggest that natural calamities including earthquakes have a direct impact on participation in civic organizations, especially for victims who live near the epicenter – i.e., relevance assumption. In the aftermath of a disaster, the destruction of local government offices and other physical infrastructure imposes significant barriers for state officials to provide immediate relief for victims. As such, many civic associations complement government efforts by raising funds, delivering materials, and sending volunteers to aid those affected by the crisis (e.g., Bolin and Stanford, 1998; Jalali, 2002; Shieh and Deng, 2011).

[5]The Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences (2020) estimates that an earthquake with a magnitude between 6.0 and 6.9 can be destructive in areas up to about 160 kilometers. As such, the instrument provides a more conservative estimate of the number of major earthquakes experienced by a respondent.

Figure 1: Major Earthquake Events in Indonesia (1910–2017)



Notes: Major earthquake incidents are defined as those that have a minimum magnitude of six. Data on earthquakes and WVS respondents' locations obtained from U.S. Geological Survey (2020) and Haerpfer et al. (2020) respectively. The locations of the earthquake epicenters are represented by circles while WVS respondents' locations are indicated by triangles.

These efforts increase the frequency with which survivors interact with civic organizations. Similarly, other studies report increases in sympathy and altruistic behavior among survivors of natural disasters, as they work together to overcome the collective challenge of rebuilding their ravaged communities (e.g., Brunsma et al., 2007; Douty, 1972). Yamamura (2016) for instance finds that residents who lived closer to the epicenter of the 1995 earthquake in Kobe, Japan, are more likely to participate in voluntary community-building work. The desire for a swift recovery, coupled with the availability of voluntary associations on the ground, increases the likelihood of cooperation and the creation of stable linkages between survivors and civic organizations. Hence Lee and Fraser (2019) report that individual experiences with disasters increase the number of organizational memberships and the degree of civic involvement among a sample of Japanese citizens. Consistent with this literature, the first column in Table 1 shows a positive and significant relationship ($p < 0.001$) between *Earthquakes* and *Civic Involvement* among respondents in Indonesia. All else being equal, experiencing five earthquake events correlates with membership in a civic organization.[6]

Next, I address the possibility that the instrument may affect the likelihood of party

[6]The mean number of earthquake episodes experienced by a respondent during his or her lifetime is 3.31.

Table 1: Tests of Relevance and Exclusion Restriction Assumptions among WVS Respondents in Indonesia

DV =	Civic Involvement	Interest in Politics	Employment	Savings	Health
Models	OLS	OLS	Logit	OLS	OLS
Earthquakes	0.204***	0.006	−0.011	0.009	0.011
	(0.021)	(0.007)	(0.020)	(0.007)	(0.007)
N	3136	3136	3136	3136	3136

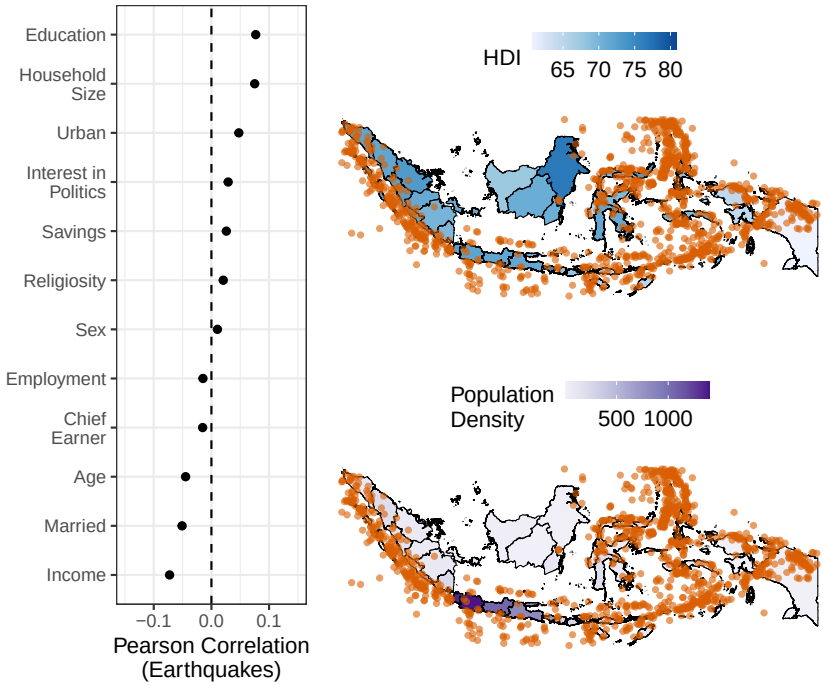
Notes: Table entries are unstandardized coefficient estimates. Robust standard errors with degrees of freedom correction (HC1) are displayed in parentheses. *Health* is a five-point variable measuring a respondent's current state of health. Control variables (i.e., *Sex*, *Age*, *Household Size*, *Married*, *Education*, *Income*, *Religiosity*, *Urban*, *Interest in Politics*, *Employment*, *Savings*, and *Chief Earner*) are included but not presented. Full regression results are reported in Table A3.5 of the Online Appendix (OA). ***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05.

membership through alternative pathways other than *Civic Involvement* – i.e., exclusion restriction. There are two possible scenarios in which the validity of this assumption may be challenged. For one, the occurrence of a catastrophic event might generate a sense of political mistrust toward the governing parties in light of their ineptitude to provide adequate support for those most affected by the crisis (Carlin et al., 2014). Given their disenchantment toward the incumbent parties, survivors may acquire a deeper interest in political issues and embrace opposition parties. Hence a direct consequence of earthquakes is the strengthening of party membership enrollment among opposition parties. Second, the incidence of natural disasters might heighten an individual's economic motivations to join parties. In other words, the economic exigencies brought about by the disaster (e.g., unemployment) may compel survivors to enroll into parties as a means of economic betterment (e.g., public sector jobs).

If the above mechanisms are true, individual experiences with earthquake episodes should exert a positive effect on *Interest in Politics* and a negative effect on socioeconomic outcomes (i.e., *Employment*, *Savings*, and *Health*). The second to fifth columns in Table 1 however show that the instrument is not a meaningful predictor of an individual's political interest and socioeconomic outcomes in Indonesia, thereby mitigating the plausibility of both sets of alternative mechanisms. Admittedly, there may exist other alternative mechanisms that

have yet to be considered. I elaborate on this concern in the next section.

Figure 2: Tests of Independence Assumption at Individual and Provincial Levels



Notes: Population density is measured by the number of people living within a square kilometer while HDI is a composite index of life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicators. Data on provincial level indicators obtained from Badan Pusat Statistik (2020) and earthquake locations from U.S. Geological Survey (2020).

Third, although earthquakes are widely regarded as natural events, instrument assignment may not be random – i.e., possible violation of the independence assumption. For instance, wealthier individuals possess the means to move to places where there had been fewer earthquakes while their poorer counterparts lack the resources to do so. As such, the number of earthquakes experienced may be correlated with one's economic background. A simple test of this assumption is to assess the extent to which balance is achieved. For continuous instruments, one can inspect the correlations between the instrument and the covariates. According to the left plot in Figure 2, the correlation values fall well within the range of ± 0.1 thereby suggesting that the confounding effect of the covariates is small. Similarly, the two right plots in Figure 2 show that earthquake locations (i.e., in circles) are independent from provincial level indicators such as population density and Human Develop-

ment Index. Overall, there does not appear to exist any gross violation of the independence assumption.[7]

Finally, I assume that WVS respondents in Indonesia have stayed in their reported locations throughout their lifetimes i.e., no internal migration. While this can pose a serious threat to identification, internal migration rates have remained fairly low in Indonesia. According to Pardede et al. (2020), the annual number of migrants per thousand residents hovers around eight per year for movements between sub-districts or between districts, while inter-province movements are lower at around five. To put into context, the average size of an administrative district is 4140 km^2, or a 64 $\times$ 64 square (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020). Hence most movements between sub-districts should still fall within the impact range of a strong earthquake (i.e., 100-km radius). On the other hand, larger scale migrations (i.e., between districts and provinces) only affect one percent of the population in any given year. Furthermore, it appears unlikely that these migratory movements are primarily triggered by the experience of multiple earthquake occurrences. For example, Java is not only the primary migration destination for many Indonesian citizens (Wajdi et al., 2017), but it also has one of the highest rates of earthquake disasters among the major islands in the country (see Figure 1). As such, the instrument should be correctly identified for a large majority of the WVS respondents in Indonesia.[8] Taken together, the preceding discussion provides evidence in favor of the use of *Earthquakes* as an instrument to estimate the causal effect of civic involvement on the likelihood of party membership entry in the Indonesian case.

Case Study Results and Robustness Checks

I estimate the causal effect of civic involvement on party membership using two-stage least squares (2SLS) regression. As shown in Table 2, the findings are generally consistent with

[7]Because Kalimantan is situated furthest away from the Pacific 'Ring of Fire', residents had experienced far fewer earthquake incidents over the past hundred years (see Figure 1). Hence I exclude these respondents and replicate the same instrumental variable analysis (Table A3.7). The main results remain unchanged.

[8]I replicate the same regression models for a smaller sample of respondents who were born in Indonesia and whose parents are not immigrants to the country (Table A3.8). The main results are almost identical.

the paper's central hypothesis. All else being equal, the probability that a respondent is a member of a political party increases by 0.061 ($p < 0.001$) when he or she belongs to an additional exogenously-assigned civic organization. Moreover, the instrument has a strong effect on *Civic Involvement*, with an F-statistic score of 106 which far exceeds the recommended value of 10. There is also some evidence to suggest that the explanatory variable might be endogenous (Wu-Hausman statistic = 3.11, $p < 0.1$). Hence the OLS estimate should be interpreted with caution. In sum, the results provide strong evidence in support of the theoretical expectations that (1) the instrument has a substantial impact on the key independent variable – i.e., relevance assumption is not violated, and (2) civic involvement has a causal and positive effect on the likelihood of party membership in Indonesia.

Table 2: Indonesians with More Civic Affiliations are More Likely to be Party Members

DV =	Party Member		
Models	2SLS	OLS	Reduced Form
Civic Involvement	0.061***	0.044***	
	(0.012)	(0.003)	
Earthquakes			0.013***
			(0.003)
N	3131	3131	3131

Notes: Table entries are unstandardized coefficient estimates. Robust standard errors with degrees of freedom correction (HC1) are displayed in parentheses. Control variables (i.e., *Sex*, *Age*, *Household Size*, *Married*, *Education*, *Income*, *Religiosity*, *Urban*, *Interest in Politics*, *Employment*, *Savings*, and *Chief Earner*) are included but not presented. Full regression results are reported in Table A3.6 of the OA. ***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05.

As mentioned earlier, there may exist a number of other alternative mechanisms that have yet to be accounted for in this study. This explains the importance of performing additional robustness tests such as a sensitivity analysis. The first test, or the 'zero-first-stage test', works on the premise that 'in a subsample for which the first stage (that is, the effect of the IV [instrumental variable] on the treatment variable) is zero, the reduced form

(that is, the effect of the IV on the outcome) should be zero too if the exclusion restriction is satisfied' (van Kippersluis and Rietveld, 2018, 316). According to the dataset, more than 93 percent of the respondents from the regions of Nusa Tenggara and Papua are affiliated to at least one civic organization ($N = 460$). As such, there is reason to suspect that the frequency of earthquake incidents might not have a statistically significant influence on the degree of civic involvement within this subsample. Indeed, the first stage and reduced form estimates for *Earthquakes* fail to achieve conventional levels of statistical significance within this subsample (Table A4.9 of the Online Appendix [OA]). The results from this indirect test hence provide some evidence to suggest that the exclusion restriction assumption had not been (severely) violated.

Next, I analyze the sensitivity of the 2SLS estimate for *Civic Involvement* by varying the severity with which the exclusion restriction assumption is violated (Conley et al., 2012). This method involves a relaxation of the assumption and allowing a portion of the reduced form effect of the instrument (i.e., *Earthquakes* $= 0.013$ from Table 2) to enter into the second stage. According to Table A4.10, the effect of *Civic Involvement* would still be significant ($p < 0.05$) even if up to 60 percent of the reduced form effect of *Earthquakes* on party membership had occurred through other unobserved paths. While there are reasons to think that the instrument may not be strictly exogenous, it is difficult to imagine that alternative channels would exert such a substantial impact (i.e., $> 60\%$) that it would wipe out the effect of civic involvement on the probability of party membership entry in Indonesia.

Cross National Analysis

This section examines whether the findings from Indonesia extend to individuals who live in other newly democratized regimes. Although there does not exist any general agreement about the operationalization of *new democracies*, I define the concept based on two criteria: recency and stability. Fundamentally, a regime is classified as democratic if it achieves a minimum polity score of six (Marshall and Gurr, 2018). With regard to the first criterion,

a country must have experienced a democratic transition after 1980. Specifically, a transition occurs when a country's polity score crosses the minimum threshold of six after 1980. The proposed cutoff year is also compatible with Huntington's (1991) widely-cited definition of 'Third Wave' democratization, in which global changes since the 1970s (e.g., improved communication technologies, and a greater emphasis on human rights protection and democratic institutions by nongovernmental and international organizations) had paved the way for several democratic transitions in Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

Second, the country should maintain a polity score that is equal to or greater than six for a minimum period of five years prior to 2018 (i.e., the last reported year in the polity dataset). Taken together, while the 'recency' criterion excludes WVS respondents from established democracies (e.g., Australia and Germany) and stable authoritarian regimes (e.g., China and Jordan), the 'stability' criterion excludes countries such as Russia and Bangladesh, both of which experienced transitions to democratic regimes after 1980 but have also experienced periods of intermittent authoritarian regression. Table A5.11 of the OA lists the eighteen new democracies included in the cross national analysis. Accordingly, there is a great deal of variation in terms of their regional origins and democratic experience. For instance, the average length of democratic experience is 21.9 years, with the youngest democracy being Tunisia (five years), and the 'oldest' being Bolivia (36 years).

To facilitate interpretation of results, I use a linear regression model with country fixed effects to estimate the effect of organizational involvement on the probability of being a party member in a new democracy.[9] In general, the empirical findings from Table 3 support the expectation that individual participation in civic associations is positively correlated with the likelihood of party membership entry. According to the first column in Table 3, a unit increase in the number of civic affiliations is associated with a 0.071 increase in the probability of being a party member ($p < 0.001$). Furthermore, both the coefficient sign and statistical significance for *Civic Involvement* remain unchanged even after including country

[9]Given the binary structure of the dependent variable *Party Member*, I replicate the two models using logit regression and report similar findings in Table A6.13 of the OA.

weights (i.e., second column in Table 3).

Table 3: Individuals with More Civic Affiliations are More Likely to be Party Members in New Democracies

DV =	Party Member	
Models	(1)	(2)
Civic Involvement	0.071***	0.075***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
N	23490	23490
Country fixed effects	✓	✓
Country weights		✓

Notes: Entries are unstandardized coefficient estimates. Robust standard errors with degrees of freedom correction (HC1) are displayed in parentheses. Control variables (i.e., *Sex*, *Age*, *Household Size*, *Married*, *Education*, *Income*, *Religiosity*, *Urban*, *Interest in Politics*, *Employment*, *Savings*, and *Chief Earner*) are included in both models but not presented. The reference country is Argentina. Country weights correspond to the 1000-equilibrated weights found in the WVS dataset. Full regression results are reported in Table A6.12 of the OA. ***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05.

With regard to the remaining covariates (Table A6.12), party members are more likely to be male, are less devout, and are generally older. Unsurprisingly, party members also display higher levels of political interest. However, contrary to the predominant finding observed among citizens in advanced democratic societies, the coefficient sign for *Education* is negative ($p < 0.001$) thereby suggesting that citizens who possess lower educational qualifications are more likely to enroll into parties in new democracies. Finally, the coefficient estimates for all four economic measures (i.e., *Income*, *Savings*, *Employment*, and *Chief Earner*) fail to be significant at conventional levels. Put simply, there is no evidence to suggest that socioeconomic outcomes can explain why some citizens enroll into parties in new democracies.

I also estimate the effect of civic involvement at the country level and report the coefficient estimates for each of the eighteen new democracies in Figure A6.2. Accordingly, the effects of *Civic Involvement* on *Party Member* are consistently positive and significant ($p < 0.05$)

across *all* eighteen countries in the sample, thereby implying that the findings from the Indonesian case study apply to most (if not all) newly democratized regimes, irrespective of their democratic experience and regional origins.

Testing the Mechanisms between Civic Involvement and Party Membership

As described in the theory section, the empirical patterns observed above can come about in two ways: civic organizational members join parties because they are recruited by party officials (i.e., demand-side factors), and/or they become party members out of their own volition (i.e., supply-side factors). On the demand side, individuals with extensive organizational involvement are more likely to be recruited by parties when they (1) have larger social networks and (2) possess prior experience in organizing political and social activities. On the supply side, individuals who have multiple civic affiliations are more likely to join parties because they (3) feel a stronger sense of obligation toward their own community and (4) enjoy higher levels of political efficacy.

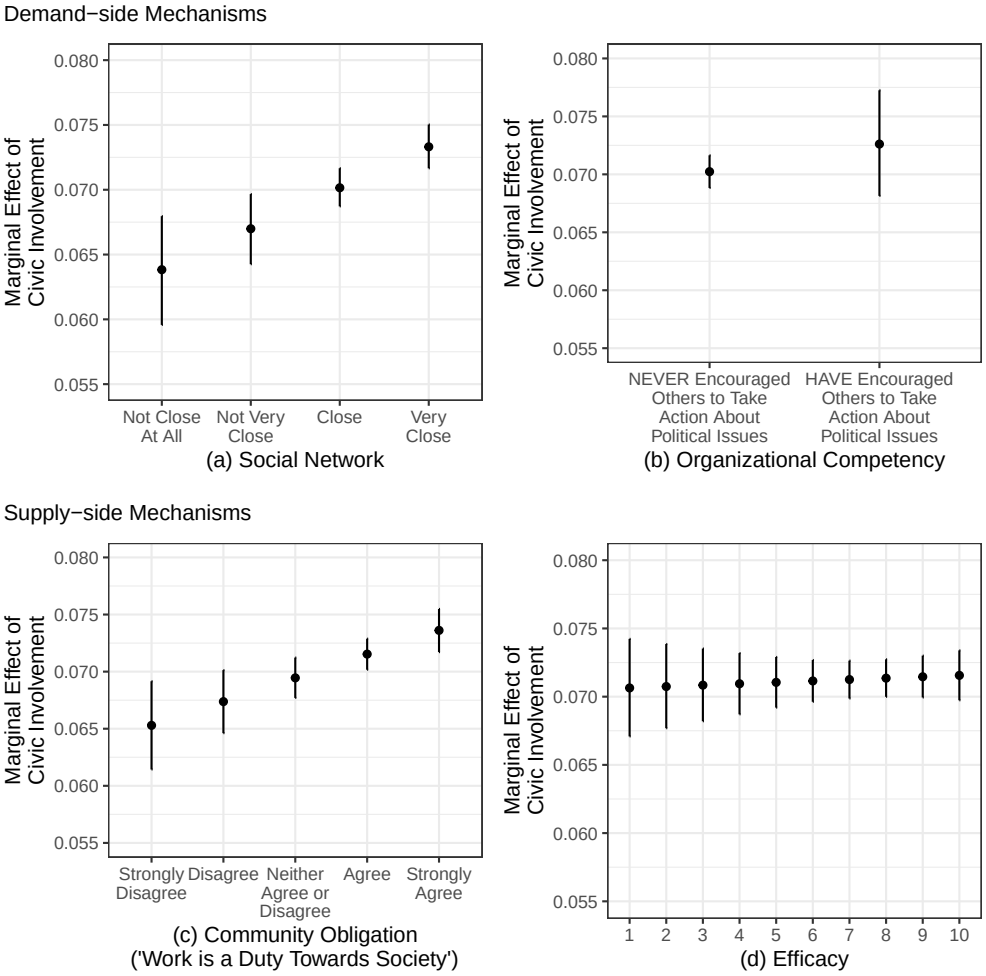
I identify four WVS questions that approximate the intermediate factors. To measure the breadth of a respondent's *Social Network*, I rely on ordinal responses to the question, 'Would you tell me how close do you feel to your village, town or city'. As a proxy for *Organizational Competency*, I examine whether respondents had encouraged others to take action about political issues. Next, to measure one's sense of commitment toward his or her community (i.e., *Community Obligation*), I consider respondents' degree of agreement with the statement, 'Work is a duty towards society'. Lastly, *Efficacy* is measured by respondents' self-placement on a ten-point scale with respect to the question, 'How much freedom of choice and control you feel you have over the way your life turns out'. In general, responses are coded such that larger values correspond to more positive traits.[10]

Utilizing the same cross national dataset from WVS, I interact each of the four postulated mechanisms with *Civic Involvement*, as well as the twelve covariates used in previous

[10]See section A1 of the OA for a description of the mechanisms and their summary statistics.

analyses. I use linear regression with country fixed effects to estimate the marginal effects of *Civic Involvement* on the likelihood of party membership entry, conditional on the values of the intermediate variables. According to the theory, the effects of civic engagement on party membership should be more pronounced when the values on the mechanisms are larger. The results are summarized in Figure 3, which illustrates the conditional change in the probability of being a party member from a unit increase in *Civic Involvement*.

Figure 3: Marginal Effects of Civic Involvement on Probability of Party Membership, Conditional on (a) Social Network, (b) Organizational Competency, (c) Community Obligation, and (d) Efficacy



Notes: Vertical lines are the 95% confidence interval of the point estimates. Each point represents the marginal effect of *Civic Involvement* on the likelihood of party membership. The control variables are *Sex*, *Age*, *Household Size*, *Married*, *Education*, *Income*, *Religiosity*, *Urban*, *Interest in Politics*, *Employment*, *Savings*, and *Chief Earner*. The reference country is Argentina. Full regression results are reported in Table A7.14.

In line with the paper's expectations, the civic involvement effects are larger and statistically significant among respondents who report closer attachments to their communities (top left plot in Figure 3), who have encouraged others to participate in political activities in the past (top right plot), and who exhibit a stronger sense of obligation toward their community and society at large (bottom left plot). On the other hand, the point estimates for *Civic Involvement* do not vary significantly across different levels of individual efficacy (bottom right plot). Indeed, the coefficient estimates for *Efficacy* and the interaction term do not reach traditional levels of statistical significance (Table A7.14). Taken together, the empirical evidence suggests that *Efficacy* does not amplify the relationship between civic engagement and party membership entry, nor does it contribute to an individual's propensity to join a party after controlling for other covariates.

Interestingly, the latter finding contradicts the extant observation within established democracies that personal and political efficacy are positively related to party membership entry (Hoffmann and Springer, 2019; Whiteley, 2011). This result may be a reflection of the oft-cited undemocratic and centralized party organizational structures found in most new democracies. According to van Biezen (2005, 156) for instance, while most parties in Southern and East-Central Europe had formally adopted the West European model of the party as a membership organization, these organizations 'tend to be small and have relatively little participatory substance.' Since ordinary members generally occupy marginal positions within parties' organizational and decision-making structures in many newly democratized regimes (see also Mietzner, 2013), individual efficacy may play a more limited role in one's decision to join a political party in these countries.

Finally, I consider the possibility that selective incentives might be a mechanism that links civic engagement to party membership. Instead of developing the 'I' into the 'we' (Putnam, 1995), the experience of participating in a civic association may reinforce individualistic tendencies (Palmer-Rubin et al., 2021) thereby prompting members to join parties as a means to gain access to discretionary programs and subsidies.

Following the logic that certain organizational types (e.g., neighborhood and peasant associations) are associated with 'patronage-based mobilization strategies' while others are not (Palmer-Rubin et al., 2021, 131-132), I identify each respondent's civic affiliation(s) by organizational type and evaluate their individual effects on the likelihood of party membership (Table A7.15). Accordingly, respondents who belong to organizations that have a penchant for self-interested goals (e.g., professional associations) are just as likely to be party members as those who are affiliated with groups that advocate broad-based collective initiatives (e.g., women's groups). In other words, the positive association between civic involvement and party membership cannot be solely attributed to the 'selective incentives as a mechanism' explanation; rather, the findings hint at the *coexistence* of both selective and collective incentives as viable mechanisms that mediate the relationship between civic engagement and party membership.

Conclusion

Among citizens living in newly democratized regimes, individual involvement in civic associations affects party membership in a positive manner. First, by leveraging on the notion that earthquake occurrences are plausibly exogenous in the Indonesian context, I show that civic involvement has a causal effect on party membership enrollment in the country. Second, there is strong empirical evidence in support of the paper's central hypothesis at the cross national level as well. Finally, I provide preliminary support for the proposed causal mechanisms – i.e., social networks, organizational competency, and individual feelings of social obligation – thereby bolstering the paper's central claim that civicness is very much alive today, and it contributes to meaningful political participation for citizens living in new democracies. In addition, the results suggest that the pursuit of material benefits alone cannot explain the positive association between civic engagement and party membership. Indeed, this relationship appears to be sustained by a combination of both selective and

collective incentives.

The findings from this paper make several important contributions. First, although it is comforting to know that the same salutary effects of civic engagement on political participation as seen in established democracies (e.g., Almond and Verba, 1963; Putnam, 2000; Verba et al., 1978) are also observed in new democracies, there are a few subtle differences between the two. For instance, education is negatively related to the likelihood of party membership entry. Similarly, the observed association between civic involvement and party membership cannot be explained by an individual's belief over his or her ability to shape political outcomes (i.e., efficacy). These implications open up an interesting avenue for future research about the institutional and cultural sources that explain these differences. As speculated before, given that party membership structures in most new democracies are heavily centralized and are monopolized by a few strong personalities, these organizational configurations might therefore provide an institutional reason for why ordinary citizens in new democracies appear to be less engaged in their countries' political affairs (Karp and Banducci, 2007).

The findings also contribute to a better understanding of the linkages between parties and civil society in new democracies. They show that parties recognize the value and importance of including civic organizational members in their membership fold, in light of their expansive social circles and organizational expertise. Furthermore, party members in new democracies hail from a broad range of civic associations, from groups that engender 'particularistic socialization' among members such as professional associations, to those that champion broad-based collective aspirations such as women's groups and environmental organizations (Palmer-Rubin et al., 2021). On a related note, the results highlight the concurrence of both selective and collective incentives as major drivers of political participation among citizens in new democracies. While this observation does not deny the plausibility of economic incentives in explaining party membership entry in new democracies, it challenges those views that understate or ignore the importance of civic associations in promoting participatory norms and communal values at the individual level. Future research should devote greater

attention towards an adjudication between the two sets of incentives. Simply put, under what conditions do selective (or collective) incentives reign supreme?

Finally, the findings suggest that the salutary effects of civic organizations extend beyond institutional performance (Putnam, 1993). Besides improving the quality of governance in developing democracies, this study highlights the unique role that civic associations play in providing a rich supply of civic party members, and that in turn improves the accountability and representation of political parties in new democracies. The results presented here also affirm the efforts made by leaders of advanced democracies in spearheading the development of civil society in many newly democratized regimes (such as the United States Agency for International Development [USAID]), especially in the face of ongoing assaults against freedom of speech and association in these countries. While these efforts are only intended to improve community participation and the quality of local governance, this study suggests that there are important spillover effects from a strong and vibrant civil society.

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