Abstract:

Scholars suggest that charismatic movements must institutionalize to survive beyond the death of the founder. Yet charismatic movements around the world that have maintained their personalistic nature have persisted or reemerged. This article investigates the conditions under which politicians can use their predecessors’ charismatic legacies to revive these movements and consolidate power. I argue that three conditions—the mode of leadership selection, the presence of a crisis, and the ability to conform to the founder’s personalistic nature—shape successors’ capacity to pick up their forefather’s mantle and restore the movement to political predominance. To demonstrate my theory, I trace the process through which some leaders succeeded while others failed to embody the founder’s legacy across three charismatic movements: Argentine Peronism, Venezuelan Chavismo, and Peruvian Fujimorismo.
Political movements founded by charismatic leaders are widely considered to be fleeting. Because their legitimacy rests on the captivating appeal of an individual leader, scholars argue that these movements risk collapse when the leader disappears unless they “routinize” by transforming into depersonalized parties.\(^1\) During this process of routinization, followers’ emotional attachments to the leader are replaced by partisan ties rooted in a programmatic trademark\(^2\) or in a sense of belonging to party organizations.\(^3\)

However, some movements have survived the departure of their founders while remaining deeply personalistic. In Latin America, for example, three movements whose original leaders disappeared have remained politically relevant and have maintained larger support bases than any other party in their respective countries: Peronism in Argentina (founded by Juan and Eva Perón), Chavismo in Venezuela (founded by Hugo Chávez), and Fujimorismo in Peru (founded by Alberto Fujimori).\(^4\) While these movements have developed some party structures, their personalistic and weakly institutionalized nature has persisted.\(^5\)

Beyond Latin America, charismatic leaders and their movements have also proven remarkably enduring. In Italy, Silvio Berlusconi’s Forza Italia, which dominated politics from 1994 to 2009, has reemerged as an important political actor. Though the movement ultimately lost the elections in 2018, its personalistic nature has profoundly shaped the country’s political landscape.\(^6\) In Thailand, though a military junta has governed since 2014, Thaksin Shinawatra’s transformative Pheu Thai Party has remained the country’s most popular and influential political force.\(^7\) Even in authoritarian China, Xi Jinping has relied heavily on his symbolic association with Mao Zedong, the charismatic founder of the Communist Party, to sustain the legitimacy of the party and consolidate his popular appeal.\(^8\) In short, charismatic movements across the world have persisted, often under new leadership, and have maintained their personalistic character.
In contrast to existing literature, I argue that charismatic movements can survive beyond the founder’s death by sustaining their personalistic nature. Rather than necessarily becoming institutionalized parties, as the routinization thesis would suggest, I contend that these movements can be revived by new leaders who embody the founder’s personalistic qualities, rekindle deep attachments with the movement’s followers, and consolidate their own charismatic authority. Specifically, like the founder, successors can revive citizens’ charismatic attachments by implementing two strategies: (1) achieving bold performance that “proves” their extraordinary abilities to the followers and (2) tying themselves symbolically to the founder to appear as heroic reincarnations. Though combining these two strategies is difficult, leaders who do so reinvigorate followers’ strong emotional attachments to the movement and garner popular support.

Under what conditions can new leaders successfully employ these two strategies and thus reactivate followers’ deep, emotional attachments to revive charismatic movements and consolidate authority? Three conditions shape successors’ ability to achieve this ambitious feat. The first, crucial condition involves when and how these new leaders emerge. Anointed successors, who are often directly handpicked by the founder and immediately take over, encounter formidable obstacles that prevent them from becoming effective leaders of the movement. Conversely, self-starters, who rise years after the founder’s death, have greater latitude to convince the followers of their heroic capacities and assume the founder’s mantle. Thus, self-starter status is a necessary condition for success.

Yet simply becoming a self-starter does not ensure new leaders’ victory. In fact, many self-starters attempting to embody the founder’s legacy have failed. Instead, two additional factors condition whether self-starters can revive the movement. First, these leaders need a crisis
that generates widespread suffering and makes citizens more likely to crave a new savior capable of rescuing them from their problems. Second, self-starters’ willingness and ability to play into the movement’s personalistic nature, rather than focusing on party-building and programmatic development, is crucial for their capacity to tap into the followers’ deep, emotional attachments and portray themselves as champions of the people.

In the following section, I present a theory on the conditions under which successors can revive these movements politically and consolidate power. Subsequently, I illustrate my argument by tracing the process through which six successors across three charismatic movements in Latin America—Peronism, Chavismo, and Fujimorismo—attempted to reanimate their predecessors’ legacies. Relying on fifteen months of fieldwork, interviews with campaign experts, focus groups with movement followers, and secondary literature, I analyze two anointed successors (Isabel Perón in Argentina and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela), two failed self-starters (Keiko Fujimori in Peru and Antonio Cañiero in Argentina), and two successful self-starters (Carlos Menem and the Néstor and Cristina Kirchner couple in Argentina). In addition to cross-sectional variation, the analysis incorporates an over-time component within a single case by examining at least one successor from Argentina within each paired comparison. To conclude, I examine the trajectories of charismatic movements and their tendency to hinder the development of institutionalized party systems over the long term.

**A Theory of Charismatic Revival**

As stated previously, new leaders can regenerate a charismatic movement by achieving bold, impressive performance and symbolically associating themselves with the founder. I analyze three conditions that impact successors’ ability to enact these strategies: their mode of
selection, the presence of a crisis, and the successors’ adoption of the founder’s personalistic strategy for claiming power.

1. Mode of Selection

To begin, the way in which successors emerge influences their ability to revive citizens’ personalistic attachments. I distinguish between two types of successors based on this criterion: anointed successors and self-starters. Anointed successors seek legitimacy based on direct selection by the founder. They highlight this connection through demonstrated loyalty and, in most cases, the founder’s explicit designation. By contrast, self-starters, who seek power years after the founder’s death or disappearance, must rely on their own resources to revive the movement and depict themselves as true heirs. The direct endorsement of the beloved founder would appear to advantage anointed successors over self-starters. However, this bequest of charisma is a “kiss of death” that virtually precludes success. Conversely, self-starter status opens up the possibility for successors to revive charismatic movements under their own authority.

Anointed Successors

Because they perceive themselves as unparalleled heroes and seek to retain maximum power, charismatic leaders are reluctant to groom a powerful deputy and prospective successor. To guarantee their predominance and shield their personal legacy from being outshone, they treat everyone else in the movement as an underling and surround themselves with sycophants who pose little threat to their “divine” power. They also intentionally marginalize skilled politicians who present potential threats to their unmatched superiority. The refusal to nourish a worthy replacement, combined with the determination to eliminate skilled competitors, helps charismatic
leaders consolidate their status as supreme protectors. However, it also results in a scarcity of talented heirs. Indeed, when forced to face their mortality, charismatic leaders select their replacements based on allegiance rather than skill.\textsuperscript{14} Having been followers for years, anointed successors struggle to become leaders in their own right. As disciples, they demonstrate devout loyalty to the founder but lack the independent strength, self-confidence, and personal appeal to take over the founder’s deep bonds with the followers.

Compounding the problem of handpicking inadequate successors is an issue of timing. Specifically, by the time the anointed successor comes to power, the bold policies implemented by the founder to prove his/her heroic capacities are likely to be on the verge of collapse. The reason is that, for these policies to make a truly remarkable impact, the founder uses resources unsustainably, often draining them. Such behavior makes the founder appear extraordinary.\textsuperscript{15} Yet due to the rushed, haphazard, and weakly institutionalized nature of the founder’s programs, they are prone to eventual failure. The founder delays this outcome by seeking new ways to impress the followers rather than adapting the policies to achieve more sustainable, if modest, progress. While this tactic protects his/her image, it leaves anointed successors—who must also demonstrate extraordinary performance to appear worthy of the founder’s mantle—in a precarious situation.

On the one hand, the initial benefits generated by the founder’s actions constitute a crucial foundation for the followers’ loyalty to the movement. Thus, any attempt by anointed successors to diminish or reform these policies would appear to betray the founder. On the other hand, the programs’ early success has long waned by the time these successors take power. Because these leaders have not demonstrated their independent abilities, followers are quick to blame them, rather than the beloved founder, for these failures. Moreover, anointed successors
have no scapegoat to target for the resulting problems. They cannot blame the founder, who represents the sole source of their legitimacy and the object of the followers’ adoration. Yet by directly succeeding the founder, they have no alternative target to convincingly accuse. Consequently, anointed successors struggle to demonstrate superhuman potential. In fact, their loyalty to the founder constitutes their only redeeming quality in the eyes of the followers.

Existing studies of charisma support the notion that anointed successors cannot uphold their predecessors’ movements. Yet in contrast to my theory, scholars tend to interpret this as evidence that movements must routinize to survive. For example, Kostadinova and Levitt state, “When [the founder] withdraws from politics or dies, the organization faces an enormous challenge: it either replaces the leader with a functionary who is not remotely comparable with the predecessor, or else it splinters or simply dissolves. In either case, electoral loss is a more likely outcome than revival.” Similarly, Madsen and Snow claim, “the ability of any [anointed successor] to maintain a direct tie with his/her following is very much diminished.” Thus, “charismatic movements, if they are to survive for an extended period, will inevitably develop structure and with that structure will come some decentralization of influence.”

I argue that this logic of routinization underestimates the resilience of affective attachments to the founder, which cultivate a political identity among the followers that is remarkably stable over time. Even in the absence of the founder, relevant cultural symbols—such as images of the founder and stories of his/her heroism—can help sustain the identity among the followers. In fact, these symbols may trigger especially intense feelings of sadness and yearning when the founder dies, making it very difficult to replace the followers’ identity with de-personalized partisanship. In the cases of Peronism, Chavismo, and Fujimorismo, scholars indicate the resilience of followers’ deeply personalistic identity with the movement.
Focus groups conducted with Peronist and Chavista followers provide further evidence of the enduring, affective nature of this identity. In discussions across both countries several years after the death of the founder, participants collectively expressed an active, deeply emotional attachment to the charismatic founder and movement.\textsuperscript{22} As I will illustrate in subsequent sections, successors who adopt a strategy of routinization—including Antonio Cafiero in Argentina—overlook the intensity of the followers’ enduring, charismatic attachments and therefore fail to tap into this reservoir of deep emotional support.

In sum, anointed successors are virtually doomed to fail. Yet the resilience of citizens’ affective attachments to the founder signals the potential for self-starters to reactivate those attachments, revive the founder’s transformative mission, and consolidate independent authority. Even so, success is anything but guaranteed. In fact, most self-starters who attempt to revive the movement in their own name fall short of establishing themselves as powerful heirs. The next section assesses the conditions under which such self-starters can achieve this objective and carry the movement forward.

Self-Starters

Only self-starters have the potential to revive charismatic movements because they avoid two key problems impeding anointed successors. Crucially, self-starters do not inherit the founder’s unsustainable policies. Instead, these successors rise in later years, allowing policy implosions and the associated image of inadequacy to fall on someone else.\textsuperscript{23} In addition, self-starters are more likely to exercise the individual agency necessary to adopt a personalistic style reminiscent of the founder. By rising on their own and harnessing independent ambition, skill, and personal charisma, they emerge not as subservient followers, but as leaders in their own right who demonstrate their personal talents and attract the movement’s supporters.
Scholars of routinization would claim that these two factors could not revive charismatic movements because their lack of structure would cause disintegration before self-starters could bring them back to life. By contrast, I argue that charismatic movements can tolerate much more leadership volatility than institutionalized parties precisely because of their weakly structured nature and their firm emotional foundation. Unlike conventional partisanship, the profoundly affective and personalistic nature of citizens’ attachments with the movement, which is rooted in the founder’s legacy, can endure even if the movement suffers an organizational decline. While the political salience of the attachments may fade during such moments, ambitious leaders who “embody the prototype” of the movement—i.e., leaders who signal their likeness to the founder—can politically reactivate citizens’ ties and earn their loyalty as new standard-bearers.  

Indeed, while it is difficult to change the personalistic nature of citizens’ attachments, in some contexts talented successors can strategically “shift the intensity” of these ties to increase their political salience.

2. Conditions for Self-Starters’ Success

Many self-starters emerge but few succeed in reviving the movement and becoming its preeminent leader. One reason is that reactivating citizens’ charismatic attachments depends on an exogenous condition: the eruption of an acute crisis. Under such circumstances, many people lose their sense of self-efficacy—citizens feel they are unable to control their lives. This is especially true of charismatic followers who, as traditionally marginalized peoples, are likely to suffer disproportionately. During hard times, these individuals—as adherents of the founder with great faith in his/her mission of salvation—look for a leader capable of rescuing them. Moreover, a crisis can intensify followers’ identification with the movement and foster group cohesion by symbolically and materially threatening their livelihood. The renewed salience of this identity,
combined with feelings of low self-efficacy, makes the followers yearn for a new hero to save them in a manner reminiscent of the founder.

By itself, however, the existence of a crisis is insufficient to reactivate citizens’ attachments. To become the movement’s new leader, self-starters must also fulfill a second, more subjective condition that depends on their individual agency: they must use their own skill, ambition, and charisma to “perform” as the people’s savior by adopting the founder’s personalistic leadership style. In contrast to organization-building and programmatic development, this personalistic strategy better corresponds to the movement’s pre-existing nature and fulfills most followers’ expectations. Because it showcases successors’ charismatic appeal, it resonates deeply with supporters, who desire a new leader to fill the void left by their beloved founder. To foster their own affectionate bonds with the followers, self-starters draw on supreme communication skills to bypass intermediary leaders and institutions and establish frequent, direct contact with the followers. In addition, these politicians incorporate symbols tied to the founder into their speech, dress, and gestures to appear as genuine heirs. Finally, they frame their actions as crucial steps for fulfilling the founder’s mission of transformation.

In combination with the impressive, material impact of their daring performance amidst crisis conditions, these symbolic gestures cause followers to view self-starters as contemporary heroes of the movement. The material and symbolic accomplishments also attract new followers (e.g. from newly marginalized groups or younger generations), expanding self-starters’ support base and consolidating their image as truly paradigm-shifting leaders—veritable reincarnations of the charismatic founder.

In sum, charismatic movements can be revived by new leaders who fulfill three conditions: coming to power as self-starters rather than as anointed successors; taking advantage
of a crisis, which primes citizens to look for a savior; and tapping into the followers’ attachments by using their own skill and charisma to adopt the founder’s personalistic style. Only then can successors enact daring policies to “prove” their superhuman potential while co-opting the founder’s legacy to reinvigorate the movement and consolidate follower support. Figure 1 illustrates these three conditions and indicates at what point the six successors examined in the subsequent section succeeded or failed.

**Figure 1. Flow Chart: Conditions for Successful Revival of Charismatic Movements**

1. Mode of Selection
   - **Self-Starter:** Necessary for Success
   - **Anointed Successor:** Almost Certain Failure
2. Crisis
   - **Present:** Necessary for Success
   - **Absent:** High Probability of Failure
3. Leader Style
   - **Personalistic:** Necessary for Success
   - **Programmatic:** High Probability of Failure

- Isabel Perón
- Nicolás Maduro
- Keiko Fujimori
- Antonio Cafiero
- + Carlos Menem
+ Néstor & Cristina Kirchner

**Testing the Theory: Charismatic Successors in Latin America**

To test my theory of charismatic revival against the routinization thesis, I focus on Peronism, Chavismo, and Fujimorismo because they constitute the three most prominent charismatic movements in Latin America’s recent history. Specifically, I examine three sets of successors from across these movements: two anointed successors, two failed self-starters, and two successful self-starters. To begin, I analyze Isabel Perón and Nicolás Maduro, the only two
anointed successors from these movements. Subsequently, I explore the paths of two failed self-starters: Keiko Fujimori and Antonio Cafiero. While many self-starters have attempted and failed to revive charismatic movements, I analyze Fujimori and Cafiero because their candidacies were widely considered as viable and competitive. Finally, I analyze the complete set of successful self-starters from these cases: Carlos Menem and the Kirchners in Argentina.

Using secondary sources and interviews with former leaders and campaign experts, I trace the process through which each set of leaders failed or succeeded to return the movement to power and assess the relevance of the three conditions outlined in my theory. Next, I turn to focus groups conducted with followers of Peronism and Chavismo to highlight participants’ personal experiences as followers and their impressions of the founder and subsequent leaders.32 While the participants do not constitute a representative sample of followers, their discussions provide multiple accounts from the perspective of the followers regarding the strengths and weaknesses of different types of successors.33

I use three criteria to distinguish “success” from “failure.” First, to embody the founder’s legacy, I argue that successors must occupy the same office: that of the chief executive. Yet becoming the chief executive is insufficient; after all, anointed successors achieve this without any real accomplishment of their own. To become true heirs of the founder, successors must also achieve a strong popular mandate by securing a landslide electoral victory over opposition candidates and drawing mass support in a sustained way once they are in office. To qualify as a landslide victory, I contend that successors must win the election by a margin of at least ten percentage points. To show their ability to draw mass support in a sustained way, I turn to executive approval ratings.34 Successful leaders must achieve the approval of a majority of the
population (at least 50 percent) for at least one year in executive office. Table 1 displays the six successors analyzed here with their scores for each of the three criteria.

Table 1. Scoring of successors under analysis: anointed successors, failed self-starters, and successful self-starters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successor Type</th>
<th>Leader (Country)</th>
<th>Chief Executive</th>
<th>Margin of Victory</th>
<th>Highest Annual Exec Approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anointed successor</td>
<td>Isabel Perón</td>
<td>Yes (1974-1976)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nicolás Maduro</td>
<td>Yes (2013-present)</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>37.91 (5/2013-4/2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed Self-Starter</td>
<td>Antonio Cafiero</td>
<td>No (1989 campaign)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keiko Fujimori</td>
<td>No (2011, 2016 campaigns)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cristina Kirchner</td>
<td>Yes (2007-2015)</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>58.84 (1/2011-12/2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As her husband’s vice president, Isabel Perón became president upon his death rather than being elected. Her approval numbers are not listed due to the scarcity of public opinion data from this tumultuous period in Argentine history. Nevertheless, her widespread unpopularity as president is widely documented (e.g., Madsen and Snow 1991, 134; McGuire 1997, 165-170), suggesting that her approval numbers would have fallen below the 50-percent threshold.

** Néstor Kirchner and Carlos Menem advanced to a second round of presidential elections in 2003. Due to Kirchner’s overwhelmingly superior numbers, Menem dropped out of the race before elections were held.

*** Though Cristina immediately succeeded Néstor as president, I consider her as a self-starter rather than an anointed successor because, from their initial rise to national executive power in 2003, the two ambitious leaders planned a joint project to become Argentina’s new saviors. See endnote 9 for further details.

1. Anointed Successors: Isabel Perón and Nicolás Maduro

I begin by assessing the trajectories of two anointed successors: Isabel Perón, who inherited the Argentine presidency in 1974 from her husband Juan, the charismatic founder of Peronism; and Nicolás Maduro, whom moribund Hugo Chávez, the founder of Chavismo, handpicked as president of Venezuela in 2013. While both became chief executives of their respective countries, their support rapidly diminished shortly after they took office. After two
disastrous years, Isabel was ousted by a military coup in 1976, while Maduro became an authoritarian leader clinging to power through repression rather than charisma. Though they assumed the top office, both leaders projected an uninspiring symbolic image and failed to reform their predecessors’ collapsing policies. The shortcomings of these anointed successors led to the temporary collapse of the movement; however, citizens’ charismatic attachments survived, setting up the future possibility of movement revival by self-starters—an outcome that routinization would not predict.

**Isabel Perón**

Juan Perón rose to the presidency in 1946 on a wave of overwhelming popularity. As other scholars have shown, he consolidated a powerful charismatic movement alongside his second wife, Eva, by granting unprecedented benefits to millions of socioeconomically and politically excluded citizens. Though Eva died of cancer in 1952 and a military coup exiled Juan to Spain in 1955, outlawing Peronism for nearly two decades, Perón remained Argentina’s most prominent political figure throughout his lifetime. Indeed, during his exile (1955-1973), he influenced politics through proxy leaders and his unmatched support base.36

Perón frequently spoke of creating an “organized community” of followers, suggesting that his movement might one day routinize. In practice, however, he undermined the organizational dimension of his movement by allowing the proliferation of ideological rifts within it and maintaining unchallenged personalistic control over it.37 These tactics deepened the “chameleonic” nature of his political brand and prevented the rise of powerful protégés while reinforcing his position as supreme leader.38 Indeed, personal loyalty to Perón constituted the only thread uniting his otherwise bitterly divided followers. Upon returning to Argentina to serve a third presidential term in 1973, he displayed reluctance to share his power. Despite old age and
a delicate political and economic context, he appointed his most faithful servant, Isabel, as his vice president and eventual successor. By nominating a complete political novice rather than a more experienced leader, he showed his desire to dominate the movement.

As her husband’s unwilling successor, Isabel lacked the political experience and skill to maneuver her government out of the crisis and claim her place as Peronism’s new leader. Instead of reaching out to console the devastated masses, she failed to take ownership of the deep bonds her husband cultivated. Thus, while followers expressed euphoria upon Juan’s return to Argentina in 1973, they viewed Isabel as weak and uninspiring. In fact, her presidency was widely perceived as a “leaderless situation,” and voters “assumed that she would not be able to remain, even as a figurehead” for the movement.

Isabel’s failure to inspire the followers was compounded by her inability to reform her husband’s dysfunctional policies of economic nationalism. During the 1940s and early 1950s, these programs created impressive industrialization and rapidly delivered unparalleled prosperity to millions of Argentine workers. By Perón’s exile in 1955, however, the policies were approaching exhaustion. Subsequent regimes struggled to implement adequate reforms and were therefore held responsible for the declining trade, expanding debt, increasing inflation, and low growth that resulted. This failure to address the crisis provided Perón with a second opportunity to prove his heroic power upon returning to Argentina in 1973. At the time, he proposed the “Social Pact,” a series of bold programs—enhancing Argentina’s economic independence from the U.S., freezing inflationary prices, and increasing workers’ wages—to return the country to the prosperity of his prior rule. As before, these policies initially delivered impressive results and sustained Perón’s superhuman reputation for the rest of his life, which lasted just nine months, until July 1, 1974. Shortly thereafter, the policies quickly imploded, causing a grave crisis.
Despite the urgent need for reform, Isabel feared that altering her husband’s policies would impose a painful cost on the followers and betray his legacy. To maintain support, she promised to deepen rather than reform his platform of economic nationalism through nearsighted, irresponsible methods such as manipulating inflation. This strategy soon shattered the economy and unleashed violent social conflict, and Isabel—unable to credibly attribute the policies’ failures to an opposing leader—was saddled with the blame.\textsuperscript{42} Rather than promising to rescue the country through bold action, as Perón had done in the past, she reacted by retreating from politics. In September 1975, she took a leave of absence and ceded \textit{de facto} authority to a trusted confidant, José López Rega, who used brutal repression to prop up the regime.\textsuperscript{43}

Isabel’s weak personal image and disastrous performance led Peronist followers to view her as a tremendous disappointment rather than her husband’s genuine heir. Thus, while their loyalty to Perón and Eva survived, their attachments never transferred to Isabel. As followers stated in focus groups with the author in 2016 when asked about Isabel’s rule, “I am Peronist of [Juan] Perón;” “I am an \textit{original} Peronist;” “I follow Eva and her masses, but Isabel was a disaster;” and “Isabel was chaos.” Although her rule gave way to a military dictatorship in March 1976, these statements suggest that, because followers disassociated Isabel from Perón, their attachments to his legacy survived.

\textit{Nicolás Maduro}

Hugo Chávez won Venezuela’s presidential elections in 1998 with over 56 percent of the vote. As president, he took drastic measures to destroy the unpopular, corrupt, and dysfunctional regime he replaced and establish himself as a true champion of the poor.\textsuperscript{44} For example, upon rising to power, he oversaw the drafting of a new constitution that prioritized citizens’ political and social rights. Starting in 2003, he leveraged an oil boom to implement social “missions” in
diverse areas including public health, education, housing, and social security. Though the missions’ dramatic impact depended on unsustainably high oil prices and drastic overspending, they provided unprecedented benefits to millions of poor citizens and solidified Chávez’s status as their savior. Thus, when he revealed his terminal cancer to the public in December 2012, the hero appeared as surprised and devastated as his followers that he would not live on to serve as their immortal protector. As though resigned to the fact that any successor would be inadequate, Chávez anointed Nicolás Maduro, an obsequious follower with scant ambition or domestic political experience, as his heir. The choice surprised many within and outside of Chavismo. Yet the anointed successor’s lack of skill made Chávez appear even more impressive; furthermore, Maduro had devoted years of service to Chávez—a characteristic of paramount importance to the founder.45

Since becoming president in 2013, Maduro has fallen short of claiming true leadership of Chavismo. His attempts to legitimate his authority have hinged exclusively on his appointment by Chávez rather than the establishment of an independent charismatic image. For instance, he has declared himself the “son of Chávez,” referenced the founder constantly in speeches, and covered public spaces with images of his predecessor. Perhaps as a result, support for Maduro remains at about 20 percent—a surprisingly high figure, considering his catastrophic mismanagement of the economy and society in general.46 Nevertheless, his claims to have assumed the founder’s mantle appear absurd to many followers, who have been forced to endure hyperinflation, extreme shortages of basic goods, and even starvation.47 Furthermore, Chávez relied on magnetic appeal to consolidate support, whereas Maduro has used despotic tactics to remain in power, including jailing opposition politicians, outlawing (or holding fraudulent) elections, and repressing civilians.48
Like Isabel Perón in Argentina, Nicolás Maduro has also proven unwilling and unable to transform his predecessor’s foundering policies. To sustain the flow of benefits to his followers during his regime, Chávez squandered the state’s oil profits and recklessly interfered with the economy. Maduro therefore inherited an administration that severely undermined economic production and embraced drastic overspending, triggering inflation, shortages, corruption, and crime. Despite these problems, the leader’s only political asset—Chávez’s personal endorsement—made him unwilling and unable to introduce desperately needed reforms, which has caused a devastating crisis. Furthermore, his attempts to blame the domestic opposition politicians and foreign “imperial” powers, such as the United States and Europe, have appeared thoroughly unconvincing—even to followers, who have long distrusted these “enemy” groups. Consequently, many Chavistas view Maduro as responsible for their suffering. As several followers expressed in focus groups conducted in 2016, “Maduro is a bad Chavista;” “we are more Chavista than Maduro is;” and “what a shame that Maduro is the one representing Chavismo today.” Because of Maduro’s refusal to reverse policy failures, about half of Chávez’s followers opposed Maduro in 2015, two years into the anointed successor’s rule.49

Several scholars have taken Maduro’s failure as evidence that Chavismo has died—a testament to the ephemerality of charismatic movements.50 Conversely, I argue that the stark contrast between Chávez and Maduro has caused many followers to reinforce their attachments to the former while distancing themselves from the latter. Indeed, half of Chávez’s most devoted followers—about 16 percent of the electorate—identify as “Chavistas no Maduristas.”51 Moreover, despite Maduro’s unpopularity, 57 percent of voters maintain favorable views of Chávez.52 And in focus groups conducted with Chavista followers in 2016, participants expressed disdain for Maduro while declaring their love for Chávez and expressing faith that a
more competent successor will appear someday: “I am with the future, and we are going to get it with Chavismo;” “one looks to the future and one sees Chávez.” Others declared that their future leader should be “charismatic,” “honorable,” “capable of restoring order,” and “100 percent Chavista.” Contrary to the logic of routinization, wherein citizens’ bonds must transform into depersonalized organizational linkages, the survival of citizens’ affective ties to Chávez suggest the potential for his movement to reemerge one day in its original charismatic form under a more appealing successor.

2. Failed Self-Starters: Keiko Fujimori and Antonio Cafiero

Only self-starters can restore charismatic movements to power because they rise years after the founder, escape blame for the collapse of his/her policies, and steer clear of the founder’s desire to marginalize skilled leaders who might steal the limelight. Yet being a self-starter is insufficient for success. These leaders must also rise during a crisis to enact impressive policies and must portray themselves symbolically as new saviors devoted to reviving the founder’s mission to transform society. I analyze two self-starters who failed to fulfill one of these two conditions: Keiko Fujimori in Peru and Antonio Cafiero in Argentina.

Keiko Fujimori

In June 1990, political outsider Alberto Fujimori was elected president of Peru during a period of hyperinflation and insurrection. He immediately implemented drastic policies of economic stabilization, bringing the hyperinflation to a screeching halt, and soon launched a campaign to combat the insurgent groups as well. Combined with his personal allure and his inspiring mission to “reengineer Peru,” these bold initiatives helped him consolidate impressive popular support. Devotion to Fujimori proved especially strong among the poor, who had
suffered the most from economic crisis and political violence prior to his rise to power. Indeed, his popularity remained well above 50 percent in 2000, ten years after his rise to power, when he won a third (unconstitutional) term.55

While he retained a large and devoted following, Congress threatened to depose Fujimori following his electoral victory in 2000, citing accusations of corruption and misconduct. He resigned that November while in Japan and remained in self-imposed exile until 2007, when he was imprisoned for human rights abuses committed during his rule.56 When he was forced to step down, Fujimori’s personalistic legacy left the country in a leadership vacuum. In fact, in subsequent years, Peru endured a series of disliked presidents characterized by “broken promises.”57

Over time, however, Keiko Fujimori—the daughter of the exiled founder—demonstrated her potential to return Fujimorismo to power and become its new champion. When she competed in presidential elections in 2011 and 2016, she built a larger and more consistent support base than any other political party. In 2016, she claimed 39.9 percent of the vote in the first round—nearly twice as much as the runner-up candidate.58 To build this support base, Keiko first established herself as a self-starter. Rather than relying on her father’s anointment, she sought the presidency several years after his disappearance, relying on her own charismatic appeal to establish direct connections with Fujimorista voters. While embracing her father’s reputation for jumpstarting the economy, combatting guerilla insurgency, and becoming the people’s champion, she established independent authority. Perhaps as a result, substantial tension emerged between Alberto and Keiko. Indeed, analysts speculate that unlike her brother Kenji, who fought for years to pardon Alberto and finally succeeded in December 2017, Keiko opposed her father’s release from prison, fearing he would overshadow her ambitions to become the movement’s new
leader. Nonetheless, she enjoyed the support of traditional Fujimoristas and a growing number of “Keikistas” within the movement, who supported both her father’s legacy and her new leadership.

In addition to positioning herself as a self-starter, Keiko adopted key elements of her father’s personalistic style to win over Fujimoristas. For example, rather than campaigning on a specific platform, she made sweeping promises to reverse economic stagnation and meet the needs of citizens “tired of waiting for solutions to their pressing problems.” She also donned her father’s approachable, “down-to-earth” style and traveled the country to forge direct ties with voters.

Importantly, even as she established personalistic appeal with her supporters, Keiko also tried to establish a party organization more than any other presidential candidate. She created a new party, Popular Force (Fuerza Popular—FP), organized local-level party committees throughout Peru, and nominated candidates for subnational elections under the new party label. Perhaps as a result, FP achieved some electoral successes, including an absolute majority in Congress in 2016 with 36 percent of the legislative vote.

Despite these efforts, I contend that Keiko prioritized her personalistic appeal over her party-building efforts at crucial moments. During her presidential campaigns, she created a “personalistic vehicle” that overshadowed her nascent party. Her supporters also came to call themselves “Keikistas” rather than FP partisans, indicating their loyalty to the individual over the party. Finally, across both elections, Keiko established a remarkably stable base of supporters in an environment of profound popular distrust toward parties, suggesting that her supporters confided in her personal leadership more than her party label. In short, Keiko’s “success at party-building [was] far from guaranteed,” whereas her image as a fresh leader capable of
delivering prosperity to the suffering masses—as her father did decades earlier—played to the personalistic foundations of Fujimorismo.⁶⁵

Though Keiko achieved self-starter status and adopted an engaging personalistic style, however, she narrowly lost the elections in both 2011 and 2016, failing to secure the presidency as well as an impressive, landslide victory over her opponents.⁶⁶ Thus, she was unable to restore her father’s movement and exercise power as the people’s new savior.

I argue that Keiko failed due to the absence of a crisis—another crucial condition for self-starters’ success. An economic boom in the mid-2000s, driven by international demand for Peru’s copper, gold, and natural gas, generated substantial growth and acted as a “buffer against social malaise.”⁶⁷ International actors such as the U.S., who largely endorsed Fujimori’s neoliberal policies, also supported Peru’s economy throughout the 2000s through trade deals.⁶⁸ Consequently, while Peruvians expressed disappointment in their leaders, they did not desperately crave a hero as they did prior to Alberto’s rise in 1990. Keiko’s promises to once again “reengineer Peru” and restore prosperity did not resonate enough with the public to catapult her into power.

Antonio Cafiero

In Argentina, Antonio Cafiero, a talented and experienced leader, had the potential to become a successful self-starter when he competed in the Peronist presidential primaries in 1988. By then, memories of Isabel’s failures had been overshadowed by the even-worse performance of the military during the 1976-1983 dictatorship. Furthermore, by seeking power fifteen years after Perón’s death, Cafiero rose as an independent leader and not as a submissive protégé of the founder. Without the inherent weaknesses of anointed successors, Cafiero’s path to power seemed more promising than that of his Peronist predecessor.
Additionally, Cafiero sought power amidst a terrible economic crisis, further enhancing his prospects for becoming the new leader of Peronism. The outgoing president from the (non-Peronist) Radical party, Raúl Alfonsín, had failed to stimulate growth, reduce inflation, or ameliorate the country’s ballooning debt. Despite Alfonsín’s attempts to stabilize the economy, unemployment worsened, wages stagnated, and prices soared, increasing social conflict while destroying his popularity. This provided a unique opportunity for Peronist self-starters such as Cafiero to seek power: with Alfonsín delegitimized and the crisis worsening every day, citizens grew eager for a new leader to rise up and relieve their misery.

Despite these advantages, Cafiero failed to reactivate followers’ attachments and secure the Peronist presidential nomination. I argue that this is because he did not play to the movement’s charismatic foundations. Rather than promising to save his people through whatever means necessary, as Perón had done, Cafiero committed himself to the “Peronist Renovation,” an effort to institutionalize Peronism and build a clear, center-left programmatic platform. While this attempt to rebuild the movement from scratch as an organized party appealed to middle-class intellectuals, it distanced Cafiero from traditional, popular-sector (lower- and lower-middle-class) Peronists, who simply wanted a strong leader to resolve their pressing problems.

Furthermore, Cafiero’s lack of affinity with Perón’s personalistic legacy caused the followers to perceive the successor and his team as “a bunch of urbane intellectuals mesmerized by an exotic leftist ideology perhaps appropriate for Sweden or Germany but alien to Argentina’s nationalist tradition.” Cafiero’s dry communication style also projected “formality, wordiness, and lukewarm progressivism,” further alienating him from traditional Peronist followers.

In brief, Cafiero’s failure demonstrates the unviability of routinization for reviving a charismatic movement. His commitment to party institutionalization over the cultivation of an
inspiring, charismatic image prevented him from appearing as Perón’s heroic descendant.

Though he was a self-starter in a time of crisis, he attempted to create a programmatic party rather than simply playing to Perón’s personalistic legacy. This strategy of routinization alienated followers and marked Cafiero as an elite politician rather than a hero capable of reviving Perón’s ambitious mission to transform society.

As Keiko and Cafiero illustrate, self-starters fall short of reanimating charismatic movements when they fail to meet one of two essential conditions. First, as Keiko’s unsuccessful quest for power shows, leaders who emerge in the absence of crisis cannot leverage citizens’ desperation for a new savior and thus struggle to establish a charismatic image reminiscent of the founder. Second, Cafiero demonstrates that self-starters who attempt to routinize the movement into a structured party rather than filling the absent founder’s shoes fail to tap into supporters’ profound, affective bonds and thus struggle to cultivate their own charismatic allure.

3. Successful Self-Starters: Carlos Menem and the Kirchners

I now turn to two sets of Argentine self-starters who successfully revived Peronism: Carlos Menem, who governed from 1989 to 1999, and Néstor and Cristina Kirchner, who ruled from 2003 to 2015. Both Menem and the Kirchners dominated the movement, kept its organization weak, and demonstrated through stark policy reversals that they had little interest in programmatic routinization. Instead, these self-starters focused on embodying the movement’s pre-existing, personalistic nature through their own charismatic authority.

Carlos Menem

Carlos Menem defied expectations by securing the Peronist presidential nomination in 1988 against Cafiero, the favored candidate, and becoming president the following year.
Subsequently, Menem established a new chapter of Peronism and became the most beloved leader of Argentina since Perón. Indeed, Menem swept the 1989 elections by more than 10 points; enjoyed approval ratings as high as 70 percent within two years of assuming office; successfully revised the constitution to allow for reelection; and won a second term in 1995 by more than twenty points. Like Cafiero, his self-starter status and his rise during a severe crisis improved his outlook for success. The difference in the two leaders’ fates, I contend, lies in their contrasting leadership styles. Whereas Cafiero’s efforts to routinize the movement led to his downfall, Menem’s deliberate effort to revive Perón’s personalistic approach and apply his own charismatic appeal helped him reactivate the movement and consolidate a decade-long rule.

To begin, while Cafiero focused on building the center-left Peronist Renovation, Menem boldly promised to end the skyrocketing hyperinflation that had caused followers tremendous suffering. To do so, he reached out to traditionally anti-Peronist business leaders and implemented drastic free-market policies that contrasted sharply with Perón’s state-centered programs. Cafiero and others in the Peronist Renovation condemned these daring gestures as anti-Peronist. Yet by straying from the substance of Perón’s original policies, Menem embodied the founder’s daring spirit and, in the short term, rescued the followers from their misery. For example, his “Convertibility Plan,” which pegged the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar, reduced inflation from 1,344 percent in early 1990 to 17.5 percent in 1992 and to 3.9 percent in 1994. The impressive, stabilizing impact on inflation and prices granted Menem overwhelming popular support, even if these policies ultimately hurt poor Peronists by generating high unemployment, social spending cuts, and a devastating economic crash in 2001. Even today, long after his fall from power, many Peronists personally attribute their 1990s prosperity to him. As followers reported in the focus groups, “thanks to Menem, I bought my first house, there was credit
available, and there wasn’t inflation;” “Menem was good to my dad;” “with Menem, we could eat well.” While some leaders strongly opposed Menem, followers praised him for quickly resolving their problems and fulfilling Perón’s mission to deliver prosperity.

In addition to addressing citizens’ immediate needs through bold reforms, Menem established direct, affectionate communication with Peronist supporters, reinforcing his image as the founder’s authentic and charismatic heir. In contrast to Cafiero’s elitist image, Menem embraced a “swashbuckling personal style,” donned casual clothing and sideburns that rivaled those of historic caudillo Facundo Quiroga, and traveled tirelessly to personally connect with ordinary people.76 Alberto Kohan, a close advisor, recalled how massive crowds would greet Menem as his campaign bus pulled into each town. After years of suffering under disappointing leaders, Kohan stated, citizens felt inspired by Menem’s charisma.77 Carlos Corach, who became Minister of the Interior, explained that, like Perón, Menem was able to “interpret the sentiments, both good and bad, of the people,” and used this understanding to “tell the people what they wanted to hear.”78 And while Cafiero droned on about complex policy goals, Menem skillfully invoked Perón’s name to justify his free-market policies, even as his critics labeled them “anti-Peronist.” In fact, during a 1993 interview, he declared, “This government, this president, is doing what Perón would have done if he had to govern Argentina in this era.”79

By rescuing citizens from hyperinflation, tying himself to Perón, and communicating in a direct and emotive fashion, Menem embodied Perón’s most alluring traits. His policies eventually collapsed and unleashed an even deeper crisis. Yet their impressive short-term effects, combined with the leader’s captivating appeal, successfully reactivated citizens’ charismatic attachments to Peronism, expanded his base to include the business-oriented middle class, and granted Menem tremendous, personalistic authority for a decade.
Néstor and Cristina Kirchner

Due to Menem’s unsustainable policies, especially the problematic Convertibility Plan, Argentina’s economy collapsed in December 2001. In turn, this disaster delegitimized the political system: the government cycled through five presidents in ten days, beginning with Fernando De La Rúa, Menem’s non-Peronist successor who resigned on December 21, and ending with Eduardo Duhalde, a Peronist who served as interim president from January 2, 2002 to May 25, 2003. During this transition, Peronism fragmented and did not nominate an official presidential candidate for the 2003 elections. Instead, three Peronist politicians—Carlos Menem, Adolfo Rodríguez Saá, and Néstor Kirchner—ran on independent tickets. Menem won the first round of elections with 24 percent of the vote but dropped out of the race, fearing he could not win in a run-off against Néstor, who was overwhelmingly the favored candidate. Thus, Néstor, a governor from the far-flung, southern province of Santa Cruz, became president.

While Néstor owed his presidential victory in 2003 in large part to the weak profiles of the other candidates, he and his wife, Cristina, leveraged favorable conditions to redefine Peronism on their own terms and dominate politics for the next twelve years. First, like Menem in 1989, Néstor became president in 2003 as a self-starter rather than an anointed successor. He achieved this by waiting four years after Menem’s fall to seek power. This allowed Menem’s economic policies to break down under De La Rúa, a non-Peronist; softened Menem’s once-powerful grip on Peronism; permitted Néstor to frame Menem as a neoliberal traitor; and created the opportunity to reconfigure the movement by promising a return to Perón’s economic nationalism.

Second, Néstor’s rise after the 2001 collapse was crucial to his reactivation of Peronism. To address the crisis and citizens’ extreme suffering, Duhalde, Néstor’s immediate predecessor,
implemented strict economic stabilization policies in 2002, including a massive devaluation of the peso. This, combined with rapid growth in commodity prices, produced much-needed relief during Néstor’s presidency. Crucially, the self-starter capitalized on this opportunity to frame himself as the people’s savior. Specifically, he aggressively attacked others for causing the crisis—including Menem, the International Monetary Fund, and foreign creditors—while taking personal credit for the recovery. \(^{82}\) This strategy proved effective: by July 2003, two months into his presidency, Néstor’s approval soared to 74 percent and Peronists seemed convinced that he would assume the founder’s mantle. \(^{83}\) As followers declared in the focus groups conducted by the author in 2016, “the world was sunken, and he saved us;” “the people began to believe in their president once again;” and “Perón’s legacy [was] alive in Néstor.”

Third, both Néstor and Cristina behaved in a highly personalistic fashion, consolidating their image as charismatic heroes and heirs of Perón and his widely adored partner, Eva. For example, the leading couple adopted a confrontational approach against “enemies” of the movement ranging from Menem to international actors to the military dictatorship. \(^{84}\) These symbolic gestures, disseminated through speeches, public acts, and executive decrees, boosted the Kirchners’ charismatic appeal, especially among middle-class and leftist Peronists.

In addition, upon becoming president in 2007 in what was intended to be a strategy of alternation in power with Néstor, Cristina focused on rekindling direct, emotional ties with followers from the popular sectors. This strategy solidified the Kirchners’ symbolic position as true Peronists and, in combination with the miraculous economic recovery under Néstor, curried favor with the movement’s traditional followers. For instance, Cristina portrayed herself as “Evita reloaded” by mirroring the founder’s wife in speech, dress, and interactions with followers. \(^{85}\) This activated followers’ passionate, visceral connections to the movement and
associated Cristina with Eva’s saint-like image—“a combination of Christ, Che, and Robin Hood.”

After Néstor’s unexpected death from a heart attack in 2010, Cristina also portrayed him as a martyr alongside Juan and Eva, drawing explicit comparisons between the two leading couples. Consequently, Cristina won reelection in 2011 with an unprecedented 54 percent of the vote. Reflecting on this period, followers declared in the focus groups, “Perón is embodied by Néstor, and Eva by Cristina;” “for me, Cristina is a reflection of Eva;” “Perón and Eva, Néstor and Cristina, they are the most important leaders in Argentina.”

During Cristina’s second term, the Kirchners’ policies of economic nationalism began to deteriorate, resulting in rising inflation, crime, and poverty. Correspondingly, some Peronists grew frustrated with Cristina’s attempts to portray herself as the contemporary Eva. The Kirchner regime thus collapsed in 2015 with the presidential election of Mauricio Macri, a non-Peronist. Yet while their administration ultimately fell, I argue that Néstor’s rise as a self-starter; his policies, which became associated with dramatic growth and economic prosperity; and both Néstor and Cristina’s symbolic strategies to reignite the followers’ emotional attachments to the movement enabled the Kirchners to establish a formidable new chapter of Peronism.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This article contends that charismatic movements can persist to dominate politics long after their founders disappear. Contrary to existing studies, which suggest that survival depends on institutionalization, I claim that many such movements endure by retaining their personalistic core and welcoming new leaders who recharge their charismatic nature. Thus, rather than establishing stable development trajectories like more conventional parties, these movements unfold in a “spasmodic” pattern. After their founders disappear, charismatic movements become latent and the whole country seems adrift. Yet new crises enable subsequent leaders to emerge,
reactivate citizens’ emotional attachments, and restore these movements to power. This process does not rely primarily on party organizations, as scholars of routinization would argue. Rather, it depends on successors’ ability to convincingly portray themselves to the followers as charismatic saviors who have come to revive the founder’s mission to rescue society.

As illustrated in this article, successors must fulfill three conditions to revive the movement in new contexts: achieve self-starter status; rise up amidst a crisis; and play to the movement’s personalistic nature. While many politicians have attempted to restore charismatic movements to power in Latin America and beyond, only those who have leveraged these conditions, such as Carlos Menem and Néstor and Cristina Kirchner, have succeeded and consolidated independent authority.

Importantly, the power of successful self-starters is temporary. Like charismatic founders, their bold performance eventually collapses. Unless they leave power before this implosion, it dampens their heroic image and dilutes their connection to the founder. Yet these failures do not destroy the movement because citizens’ attachments remain rooted in charismatic founders, not in successors. Indeed, followers label disappointing successors as “traitors” to the founder. The movement then enters a period of leaderless fragmentation until conditions ripe once more for a new self-starter to rise and pick up the founder’s baton.

Successors’ revival of charismatic movements holds important implications for democracy. Like the founders, these leaders compromise the development of party organizations and reinforce the detrimental characteristics of political movements, including excessive personalism and the weakening of democratic procedures in the name of a larger “mission.” Furthermore, because followers’ support rests on heroic performance and symbolic gestures
rather than programmatic accountability, successors often build precarious and ideologically incoherent ruling coalitions that serve short-term goals over long-term stability.

This article focuses on Latin America. Yet charismatic movements have dominated political systems across the world, including Berlusconi’s Forza Italia, Orbán’s Fidesz in Hungary, the Kaczynski brothers’ Law and Justice Party in Poland, and Shinawatra’s Pheu Thai Party in Thailand. These movements have threatened democracy and have shown few signs of routinizing. My study reveals an alternative pathway these movements can take after the disappearance of their founders: revival in personalistic form. Furthermore, my theory provides a generalizable framework with which to evaluate the behaviors and relative success of new leaders who attempt to replace their charismatic predecessors. Above all, my findings indicate that the movements have the potential to survive, generate instability, and undermine the party institutions for years to come. Future research should explore this possibility by testing the theory in these and other cases beyond Latin America.

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Notes

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9 Strictly speaking, it is most precise to refer to movements including Peronism, Chavismo, and Fujimorismo as “political movements founded by charismatic leaders.” For the sake of simplicity, however, this article uses the more concise term, “charismatic movement.” Additionally, because the scope of this study is limited to cases of charismatic personalism (as opposed to non-charismatic personalism), the terms “charisma” and “personalism” are used interchangeably.


11 Néstor and Cristina are widely viewed as joint leaders of a single administration, much like Juan and Eva Perón from 1946 to 1952. Long before Néstor’s presidential candidacy, both leaders held political offices in their own right and worked together to increase each other’s influence. Moreover, Ollier indicates, “the Kirchner couple planned to alternate power between themselves—as [Cristina] affirmed—but [Néstor’s] death [in 2010] made that plan impossible.” Finally, many Peronist followers compare Cristina to Eva Perón—whose charismatic appeal


14 Self-starters are unlikely to compete for power under these circumstances, as they must face the candidate personally anointed by the beloved founder and are therefore unlikely to win.


16 Loxton and Levitsky.


18 Madsen and Snow, 25-28, emphasis added.


20 Huddy 2001, 143-144.

21 Andrews-Lee; Gervasoni; Levitsky and Zavaleta.
Please see appendix for further information on the design of the focus groups cited throughout the article.

Self-starters typically emerge about ten to twenty-five years after the founder’s disappearance, during which time the generation of followers who personally experienced the founder’s rule, and who sustain a powerful identity with the movement, remain alive.


Huddy 2001, 148.


Haslam et al., 137.

By definition, successors who seek to revive the movement must openly identify with its label.

Because focus groups were not conducted in Peru, this type of evidence is not used for the case of Keiko Fujimori.


During this period, presidents owed their victories to Perón’s endorsement or the abstention of his followers; military dictators seized power in response to elected presidents’ inability to sustain a popular mandate and stable government in Perón’s absence (Kirkpatrick, 49-78).


Pion-Berlin, 61.

McGuire, 166.

45 Corrales and Penfold, 160.


51 Briceño.


Arce and Carrión, 37-38.

Ibid; Levitsky and Zavaleta, 433.

Dargent and Muñoz, 147.

Ibid, 145-147.


Levitsky and Zavaleta, 436-437.

Dargent and Muñoz, 152.

Ibid.

Levitsky and Zavaleta, 415.

Ibid; Tanaka.

Dargent and Muñoz, 155.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid, 147.
69 McGuire, 185-186.
70 Weyland, 138.
72 Alberto Kohan, Interview by author, Buenos Aires, Jul. 20, 2016; McGuire 1997, 211.
73 McGuire, 211.
75 Weyland, 158.
76 McGuire, 208.
77 Kohan, author interview.

Gantman, 345.

Carlin et al.; Mora y Araujo.

Wortman.

Ibid.

Author interview with one of Cristina’s communication strategists on Apr. 6, 2016. The interviewee’s name has been kept confidential upon request.