



# Party Institutionalization and Party Strength: A New Global Dataset

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# **Party Institutionalization and Party Strength:**

## **A New Global Dataset**

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†To access the data visit: <https://github.com/dsself/pips>

## **Abstract**

Party institutionalization and party organizational strength are two distinct concepts and both are widely used in Comparative Politics. Despite the centrality of these concepts in the literature, we lack measures of party institutionalization and/or strength that 1) accurately measures the concepts, 2) is measured at the party level, 3) is geographically expansive, and 4) covers a substantial scope of time. In this paper we introduce the Party Institutionalization and Party Strength (PIPS) dataset. Using data at the individual-party level from parties across the globe since 1970, we construct several new measures of party institutionalization and strength to facilitate comparative analysis. Our measures include system-level averages of party institutionalization and strength, in addition to individual party scores of institutionalization and organizational strength. We also construct measures which distinguish between incumbent and opposition parties. Lastly, we construct measures of institutionalization and strength contingent on whether the party exists in a democratic or authoritarian regime.

## Introduction

Political parties play a critical role in several dimensions of politics. More specifically, the degree of party institutionalization and/or party strength has been found to explain key outcomes of interest to political scientists. Scholars have found that party institutionalization and/or strength explains economic growth (Bizzarro et al., 2018; Gehlbach and Keefer, 2011, 2012; Pitcher, 2012; Simmons, 2016), the provision of public goods (Hicken and Simmons, 2008; Rasmussen and Knutsen, 2021), the stability of party systems (Bértoa et al., 2023; Croissant and Völkel, 2012), the development and quality of democracy (Bernhard et al., 2020; McGuire, 1999; Müller, 2000; Stokes, 1999; Yardımcı-Geyikçi, 2015), democratization itself (Riedl et al., 2020; Self, 2023; Slater and Wong, 2013, 2022; Ziblatt, 2017), and authoritarian regime survival (Kavasoglu, 2022; Meng, 2021).

In this paper we introduce new measures for the two distinct concepts of party institutionalization (Janda, 1970; Levitsky, 1998; Panebianco, 1988) and party strength (Bizzarro et al., 2018; Tavits, 2012a,b, 2013; Ziblatt, 2017) in the Party Institutionalization and Party Strength (PIPS) dataset. Our measures address critical shortfalls of several existing measures of party institutionalization and party strength. First, our measures help facilitate cross-national research by including parties from every region of the world. Second, each measure is built using data at the individual party level rather than scored solely at the party system level. Recent measures of party institutionalization which capture the most cases are only aggregated at the system level (Bizzarro et al., 2017). Third, our new indicators also capture more years than the alternatives, spanning back to the early 1970s, where other datasets are more limited in the number of years and elections they cover.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, our measures of party institutionalization and strength greatly expand the number of cases to include 169 countries with 1912 unique parties. This results in over 6200 unique party-election observations. Our population of parties is significantly more broad than the best alternatives that use

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<sup>1</sup>We operationalize our concepts using data from the V-Party project (Lindberg et al., 2022a). Specifically, party institutionalization is comprised of Value Infusion (Control of candidate nomination and party continuity) and Routinization (presence of local party offices and local organizational strength). Party strength is built using data on the presence of local party offices, the breadth of organizational strength, and ties to affiliate organizations. See our discussion later for a more thorough justification of this operationalization.

individual party level data which capture 88 countries (Kitschelt et al., 2013) or 51 countries (Poguntke et al., 2016).

Lastly, our indicators account for all parties which span the democratic-authoritarian divide. We conceptualize and measure party institutionalization and strength to allow researchers to use our measures contingent on a given party being in a democracy or autocracy.<sup>2</sup> By including parties in both democracies and autocracies we may greatly expand our understanding of 1) how parties affect politics contingent on being in either a democracy or autocracy, or 2) how parties affect a given outcome regardless of the level of democracy. Researchers can analyze all parties within a global context, or if they choose, limit their analysis to solely parties in autocracies or democracies. Structuring the indicators around regime type allows the researcher to be more flexible with the assumptions they must make when theorizing and modeling how the regime matters.

We have constructed these new measures of party institutionalization and strength using data on individual parties, but aggregate them in various ways to facilitate flexible research. For example, we generate party-system level measures, which aggregate and weight the individual level of party institutionalization or strength within the party system. This allows researchers to assess how general characteristics of party institutionalization and/or strength affect outcomes of interest.<sup>3</sup> We also differentiate between ruling or governing parties, and those in the opposition, and aggregate accordingly. Doing so allows the user to account for the differences between the parties in power and those in the opposition, and how the relative difference in their institutionalization and/or strength matters.

This paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, we develop our conceptualization of both party institutionalization and strength. We then outline how we build the measures and then demonstrate their validity. Following the validity checks, we conduct basic observational analysis on several leading hypotheses in the literature which use either party institutionalization, party strength, or both, to show that the measures function well. We then conclude with some remarks on suggestions of how to use the various indicators.

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<sup>2</sup>In addition to a score for each party relative to all parties in the global sample, we use factor analysis and limit samples to either democracies or autocracies to produce scores of parties relative to other parties within their regime type.

<sup>3</sup>The structure of the data maintains institutional and strength scores at the individual level which allows for multi-level modeling.

## **Party Institutionalization and Party Strength as Concepts**

We begin our exercise in developing measures of party institutionalization and party strength with a discussion of what we mean by these terms. Before developing concepts of institutionalization and strength we must first establish our definition of a political party. We use the minimalist definition of a party presented by Janda (1970) in that parties are organizations that seek to place their members in positions of public office. By using this definition, we diverge from the convention of relying on Sartori (1976) who defined parties as organizations that present candidates for elections.

The reason we do not use Sartori's definition is simply because parties exist in political systems in which elections 1) do not exist or 2) are constrained such that the primary role of parties is not to run for office via elections, but instead to contest power within the regime outside of electoral institutions. Because parties are ubiquitous in both democratic and autocratic regimes, we must conceptualize parties in a way that allows us to assess their institutionalization and organizational strength in a way that cuts across the democracy-autocracy divide.<sup>4</sup>

### **Party Institutionalization**

The concept of institutionalization is often rooted in Huntington (1968) who put forth the idea that institutionalization is the process by which organizations gain value and stability. For this to occur, organizations must be adaptable, coherent, complex, and autonomous. We do not conceptualize party institutionalization around these four factors as Huntington does, instead we rely on others' work to conceptualize how organizations gain value and stability.

Primarily, we use Levitsky (1998) as the basis for our overarching concept of party institutionalization. Levitsky conceptualized party institutionalization as the degree to which parties, as organizations, are infused with value (i.e. permanent) along with the development of routine intra-party processes. Thus, more institutionalized parties are those where ambitious politicians value the survival of the party, have a

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<sup>4</sup>To be clear, our unit of interest is the individual party, not the party system. While the degree of party institutionalization and/or strength may be affected (or may effect) party institutionalization (Bértoa et al., 2023) as defined by Mainwaring et al. (1995); Kim (2023), these are distinct concepts and should not be confused.

well defined party organization, and the party itself is endowed with stable procedures to govern internal affairs.

We see this approach to conceptualizing party institutionalization to be in line with the work done by Janda (1980) and Panebianco (1988). With regards to the party structure itself, institutionalized parties boast a homogeneous organizational structure, internal systems with a complex centralized bureaucracy, and the ability to manage the career paths of politicians (Panebianco, 1988). Furthermore, parties can only be institutionalized if the organizational structure itself is stable, without extreme fluctuations in internal procedures, while also surviving leader turnover (Janda, 1980; Meng, 2021). In effect, institutionalized parties are those that survive multiple electoral rounds and/or leadership changes, feature a party apparatus that is stable and permanent, have rules to govern the management of internal affairs, and manage access to candidacy as a selective incentive for party members.

We acknowledge that others use a more expansive conceptualization of party institutionalization to include the relationship parties have with voters and the party system more generally. For example, Randall and Svåsand (2003) develop a concept of party institutionalization that differentiates between internal and external dimensions of institutionalization, where the external dimension is concerned with the autonomy of the party and the extent to which voters “reify” the party.<sup>5</sup>

We do not include the external dimension in our conceptualization of party institutionalization because doing so would limit the ability of the concept to travel between democracies and autocracies. Parties in autocracies can become institutionalized by way of value and stability when parties create hierarchical positions and implement rules and procedures in order to survive the death of the regime leader (Meng, 2021). Yet autocratic parties often lack autonomy or reification due to how power is contested within authoritarian systems.

For example, Golkar, the ruling party during the New Order regime in Indonesia<sup>6</sup> developed routinization, stability, and value. It would be incorrect to claim that Golkar did not become institutionalized during the authoritarian period. However, the party lacked autonomy because the military, the

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<sup>5</sup>We argue that, like Janda (1980), thick relationships between parties and outside groups can exist, without violating the capacity of the party to make its own decisions (e.g. maintain autonomy), so long as there is a firewall between the party and outside groups (Ziblatt, 2017; Riedl et al., 2020).

<sup>6</sup>The New Order regime was a military-backed regime in power from 1965-1998.



state, and the regime leader (Suharto), had significant influence over party decisions. Furthermore, the structure of the authoritarian era elections were tilted in Golkar's favor, so it is impossible to determine how reified the party was under those conditions. Despite its lack of autonomy and open electoral competition, Golkar survived the turbulent end of authoritarian rule primarily because it was a routinized party that also was infused with value.

By reducing the concept of institutionalization to the internal dimension, we focus on the organizational stability of the party, along with the extent to which actors value its permanence. In doing so, we allow for comparisons both within and between authoritarian and democratic regimes. We also note here, that with our conceptualization of party institutionalization, there is no assumption that party institutionalization is static. Institutionalization may be a process that culminates in value infusion and routinization, but these factors can ebb and flow over time.

## **Party Strength**

While there is substantial agreement on what constitutes an institutionalized party, there is far less agreement around the concept of party strength. For example, party strength may mean the extent to which candidates campaign on the party's reputation rather than their own (Shugart, 1998). Or, party strength may mean the degree of organizational centralization and the development of programmatic linkages (Hankla, 2006). Still, for some, party strength may capture the level of party cohesion and the lack of party switching (Bizzarro et al., 2018).

Our goal here is not to develop a single unifying concept of party strength. Instead, our goal is to conceptualize and measure the degree of organizational strength of the party, and have this remain as a distinct concept from party institutionalization. Thus, our concept of party strength does not revolve around organizational permanence and routinization à la institutionalization, but instead around the breadth of the organization and the capacity of the party to mobilize voters.

A key difference between an institutionalized (permanent) party and a strong party is the breadth of its organizational reach. Recent work on incumbent-led democratization has theorized that strong authoritarian parties are more likely to pursue democratization, rather than double-down on autocracy, pri-

marily because their organizational strength increases their confidence of winning elections (Riedl et al., 2020; Ziblatt, 2017). In this literature, strong parties are those that are able to mobilize voters at a nationwide scale, maintain thick ties with subordinated outside groups, maintain a permanent professional staff, mobilize around salient issues, and develop firewalls to protect itself from extremist groups.

To define party strength, we draw from the authoritarian-led democratization work on some specific dimensions of party organization; namely national mobilization and thick linkages with outside groups. We justify this decision to focus solely on the organization by also drawing on work done on post-communist party organization. According to Tavits (2012a,b, 2013) strong parties are endowed with local offices throughout the territory, have a large membership, and professional staff. This approach also fits within the framework featured in Bizzarro et al. (2018), which conceptualizes party strength around organizational complexity.<sup>7</sup>

We diverge from the conceptualization of party strength in Bizzarro et al. (2018), however, in that we do not see party cohesion and the lack of party switching as a necessary condition of party strength. We remove these factors from our concept of party strength largely to develop a concept that works in both democracies and autocracies. Party cohesion and party switching may be an appropriate indicator of party strength within democracies, but not autocracies.

Cohesion and the level of switching is not an appropriate indicator of party strength in autocracies because the structure of authoritarian rule artificially inflates the degree of cohesion and dampens party switching. There is less party switching in autocracies, not because of the strength of parties, but because ambitious politicians align themselves with the preferences of the center of power in the regime in order to access benefits from the regime. Thus, a party that appears to be cohesive and have low levels of party switching, likely features these conditions more because that is how to access rents and power in an authoritarian regime, rather than the strength of the party itself.

Returning to the example of Golkar in Indonesia, the degree of party cohesion and the lack of party switching was clearly inflated during the authoritarian period. Under Suharto, Golkar was the preferred

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<sup>7</sup>This is where party institutionalization and strength overlap. Institutionalized parties may have *permanent* but not necessarily *broad* organizations. We see strong parties as having broad organizations which requires some permanency of the apparatus.

party, and thus many politicians worked within Golkar in order to access the benefits and patronage bestowed to regime loyalists. However, after the regime fell, the degree of party switching jumped dramatically, and the level of cohesion fell, because Golkar no longer controlled access to patronage. Thus, it was not Golkar's strength *per se*, but the nature of authoritarian rule, that caused Golkar's cohesion.

## Why Ours

Having conceptualized both party institutionalization and party strength, we now turn to an explanation of why researchers should use our measure over alternative options. We note that the available alternatives have significant strengths, and researchers should consider the trade-offs between the different data available to them. We argue that the primary strength our data has over the alternatives is greater spatial and temporal scope, while maintaining the data at the individual party level.

Below, we present a table (Table 1) of the alternative indices to summarize the key differences between our data and alternatives published in the past few years. As the reader can see, our measure of party institutionalization and strength provides more years and countries for the largest alternative datasets, with the exception of Bizzarro et al. (2017) and Bizzarro et al. (2018). The strength our data has over these two, however, is that our data is measured at the individual party level.

The two datasets created by Bizzarro et al. (2017) and Bizzarro et al. (2018) use V-Dem data which infers the level of institutionalization or strength by relying on expert ratings of parties at the *system level* rather than measuring institutionalization and/or strength at the party level. Thus, users of this data may expand the number of cases available, but must make stronger assumptions about the characteristics of the parties within the system, while also losing the ability to measure individual-level party institutionalization and/or strength.<sup>8</sup> Our measures nearly capture an equal number of countries as Bizzarro et al. (2017) while maintaining individual-level party measures of institutionalization and strength.

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<sup>8</sup>We also note that the 234 years available in Bizzarro et al. (2017) relies on historical V-Dem data, and the number of available countries becomes increasingly more limited the further back into history the data goes.

Table 1: Available Datasets on Party Institutionalization and/or Strength

Dataset	Years	Countries	Party level	Parties	Autocracies	Components
PIPS	49 <sup>9</sup>	169	Yes	1912	Yes	9
DALP <sup>10</sup>	1 <sup>11</sup>	88	Yes	503	No	80
PPDB <sup>12</sup>	1	51	Yes	288	No	427
BHS <sup>13</sup>	234	196	No	NA	Yes	5
V-dem PS <sup>14</sup>	153	110	No	NA	Yes	6
Bertoa <sup>15</sup>	171 <sup>16</sup>	45	Yes	878	No	2
IIP <sup>17</sup>	1	9	Yes	28	No	15
Statutes <sup>18</sup>	NA	49	Yes	303	No	1

Two major alternative measures of party institutionalization come from Kitschelt et al. (2013) and Scarrow et al. (2022). The strength of these alternatives is the scope of components available to the users. Both datasets code the parties available on a wide array of characteristics that are of potential interests to party researchers. Thus, these alternatives offer a breadth of party features unavailable in other measures. However, because DALP and PPDB are so expansive in what they code, they are significantly limited on the number of countries and years available.

Both DALP and PPDB have coded parties in waves – with PPDB having completed two waves, while DALP is currently in the midst of completing its second wave. This presents a significant limitation for researchers seeking to assess temporal shifts in party characteristics. Furthermore, because of the breadth of their measures, the costs of data collection limits the number of potential countries in their datasets. These two datasets allow researchers to take a fine grained approach to parties, but limit researchers to a snapshot of major parties in democracies.

Overall, our dataset is an improvement over alternatives should researchers need data that accounts for party institutionalization and strength at the individual party level in a global context. Our data allows

<sup>9</sup>1970-2019

<sup>10</sup>Kitschelt et al. (2013)

<sup>11</sup>We note that DALP takes measurement for party prior to 2009. So, while only taking one measure, it is an average over several years.

<sup>12</sup>Scarrow, Webb, and Poguntke (2022)

<sup>13</sup>Bizzarro, Hicken, and Self (2017)

<sup>14</sup>Bizzarro, Gerring, Knutsen, Hicken, Bernhard, Skaaning, Coppedge, and Lindberg (2018)

<sup>15</sup>Bértoa, Enyedi, and Mölder (2023)

<sup>16</sup>Not continuous coverage for all countries. The year coverage is structured around survival of party systems.

<sup>17</sup>Basedau and Stroh (2008)

<sup>18</sup>Scarrow, Wright, and Gauja (2023)

for analysis of nearly every party system in both democracies and autocracies since the early 1970s. This will allow researchers to perform cross-national research that is not limited to regions – as is the case with Bértoa et al. (2023) and Basedau and Stroh (2008).

Furthermore, our data provides flexibility to the researcher. Because we use sub-components of party institutionalization and strength drawn from the V-Party dataset, users can desegregate or make alterations to the measures of party institutionalization and strength. Should users disagree with how we've operationalized party institutionalization or strength, users are free to reconstruct their own indicators by subtracting or adding indicators to our current measures.

## **Additional Measures**

As stated, our new dataset is an improvement on alternative datasets by featuring more countries and years at the individual party-level while also providing a measure of party institutionalization and party strength. We also recommend using our dataset over the alternatives because we provide the indices structured around types of systems or institutions which feature parties. Thus, in addition to using a measure of party institutionalization/strength at any given individual party, users can also measure party institutionalization/strength unitized in the following ways:

1. **Party System:** Measures of party institutionalization/strength are aggregated to the system level. This is not to be confused with party system institutionalization.
  - (a) **System Average:** The dataset features measures of party institutionalization/strength weighted or unweighted by vote share.
  - (b) **System Variation:** In addition to aggregated measures which provide an average of party institutionalization/strength at the system level, we also provide a measure of the variation of party institutionalization/strength within the system.
2. **Incumbent:** We provide a weighted and unweighted by seat share average of the party institutionalization/strength of the incumbents. These measures includes individual parties or ruling coalitions.

3. **Opposition coalitions:** The dataset includes an average of party institutionalization/strength of parties in the opposition, including a specific measure of parties within an opposition coalition.
4. **Democracy/Autocracy:** We use latent measurement analysis to create specific measures of democratic party institutionalization/strength separate from autocratic party institutionalization/strength.<sup>19</sup>
  - (a) **Democratic Parties:** Latent measures that are generated using only democracies<sup>20</sup> in the sample. This generates a measure of party institutionalization/strength for a given party *relative only* to other democratic parties.
  - (b) **Autocratic Parties:** Latent measures that are generated using only autocracies in the sample. This generates a measure of party institutionalization/strength for a given party *relative only* to other autocratic parties.

## Building the Measures

To build the measures of party institutionalization and strength, we use variables from the Varieties of Parties database (Lindberg et al., 2022a,b). V-Party (henceforth called V-Party) uses expert surveys and a Bayesian Item Response Theory measurement model (IRT) to create continuous measure of party platforms and organizations from ordinal survey responses (Pemstein et al., 2018, 2020). By relying on expert surveys, V-Party covers more time, countries, and parties than most other party database. Consequently, by using V-Party, our measures have greater coverage. Finally, using V-Party allows researchers to make alterations to how the original V-Party data is used in their measurement models, a feature we took advantage of to create our measures.

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<sup>19</sup>We provide measures where party institutionalization/strength is determined relative to all parties, or solely to parties within the party's regime type. We do this to allow the research to use analysis with the assumption that regime type does not matter in some circumstances. For example, a researcher may want to know how party institutionalization affects economic growth, and needs to know where each party lies in the global spectrum of party institutionalization. However, if a researcher wants to assess how institutionalization affects regime survival, that measure would be inappropriate. Instead, the researcher should use the indicator where party institutionalization is measured relative to other parties of the same regime type.

<sup>20</sup>Our cutoff is 0.42 using V-Dem's polyarchy variable.

## Constructing Party Institutionalization

To construct *Party Institutionalization* we use *Nomination* (item *v2panom*), *Continuation* (item *v2paelcont*), *Local party office* (item *v2palocoff*), and *Local organizational strength* (item *v2paactcom*). For the value infusion dimension of party institutionalization, we use *Nomination* to capture the extent to which individual party members' advancement is tied to the party, and *Continuation* to measure the permanence of the party. For the dimension of routinization, we use *Local party office* and *Local organizational strength* to capture the extent to which the party has developed its own internal system and bureaucratic complexity.

In order to construct *Party Institutionalization*, we first had to make an adjustment to V-Party's *Nomination* variable. As structured by V-Party, the *Nomination* variable captures the degree to which the candidate selection process is centralized, with open primaries as the least centralized and unilateral power in the party leader as the most centralized (Lindberg et al., 2022c). While we believe that the candidate selection process is a valuable indicator of value infusion and party institutionalization, we disagree with the ordering of the survey responses.

In its original form, the *Nomination* variable is a better measure of personalism rather than value infusion and tends over estimate party institutionalization in highly personalized or autocratic parties.<sup>21</sup> To remedy this conceptual invalidity, we reorder the ordinal survey responses and used V-Party's IRT model to create a new continuous indicator of *Nomination* to better reflect value infusion. In place of the original ordering, we reorder the *Nomination* variable as such: party leader has unilateral control (lowest), open primaries, primaries for party members only, local/regional delegates decide the leader, executive committee decides the nominations (highest). We argue that this measure, which captures the degree to which the *party* controls political advancement, serves as a better indicator of how loyalty to the *party* (as opposed to populist appeals or loyalty to a single leader) is tied to advancement within the party.

We then constructed the party institutionalization measure using the reordered *Nomination*, *Contin-*

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<sup>21</sup>If unaltered, highly personalized parties in autocracies score better than, or on par with, highly institutionalized parties like Sweden's Social Democratic Party.

uation, *Local party office*, and *Local organizational strength* variables. For the first iteration of the measure, we use factor analysis to create two latent measures for the two theoretical dimensions of party institutionalization. For routinization, the *Local party office* and *Local organizational strength* converge to make one factor, while *Continuation* and *Nomination* converge to make the value infusion variable.<sup>22</sup>

Using these two components, we create two measures of party institutionalization. The first is an additive index, where the two components are added together and divided by two. The second is a multiplicative index, in which we multiply the two components. For those who consider value infusion and routinization jointly necessary (as opposed to those who view party institutionalization as a more radial concept), we recommend using the multiplicative measure.

The equations for the two measures are as follows:

$$(1) \textit{Additive} = \frac{1}{2}\textit{Routinization} + \frac{1}{2}\textit{Value Infusion}$$

$$(2) \textit{Multiplicative} = \textit{Routinization} \times \textit{Value Infusion}$$

## Constructing Party Strength

For *Party Strength*, we use *Local party office* (item *v2palocoff*), *Local organizational strength* (item *v2paactcom*), and *Affiliate organizations* (item *v2pasocfie*). We acknowledge that there is some overlap in the measures used to construct *Party Strength* and *Party Institutionalization*.

The two overlap in their use of *Local party office* and *Local organizational strength*. We do this because a party cannot be strong, in terms of its capacity to mobilize, if its organization is not permanent and deeply rooted in society. While party institutionalization and strength are related, they are conceptually and empirically different because party institutionalization includes variables that capture value infusion. Value infusion, an essential component of party institutionalization, is conceptually and empirically distinct, thus making the party institutionalization measure distinct from the party strength measure. Our single measure of *Party Strength* is constructed using factor analysis.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>The SS loading for the routinization component is 1.523 and the Cronbach's alpha is 0.84. The SS loading for Value Infusion is 0.359 and the Cronbach's alpha is 0.3.

<sup>23</sup>The SS loading and the Cronbach's alpha for Party Strength are 1.963 and 0.84



## Constructing the Additional Measures

As mentioned above, we provide measures of *Party Institutionalization* and *Party Strength* for the system level, different regime types, and whether they are in government or the oppositions.

A benefit of using factor analysis to create the measures is that factor loadings change depending on what observations are in the analysis. By running factor analysis on only parties in democracies or autocracies, we capture the subtle differences between the party institutionalization and strength in different regimes types. While its helpful to have a global measure of party institutionalization and strength, we expect that parties in autocracies are distinct from parties in democracies, and these difference matter in empirical research.

Thus, we create a global, democratic-only, and autocratic-only measure for both party institutionalization and party strength. To create these measures, we begin by sub-setting the data by regime type, and then perform the analysis as outlined above. The formulas for these measures are identical to the global measures, with the primary difference being the subset of observations included in the factor analysis.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to creating regime-specific scores for individual parties, we also aggregate the measures to allow researchers to conduct analysis at the party system level. To construct system level measures, we use the party-year indices and create a straight average of the scores, along with a weighted measure.

Given that  $i$  is a political party, the system level measures of party institutionalization and strength for any given country-year observation are the following:

$$(3) \textit{Unweighted System Level} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \textit{Party Index}_i$$

$$(4) \textit{Weighted System Level} = \sum_{i=1}^n \textit{Party Index}_i \times \textit{Vote Share}_i$$

Lastly, we also create a variant of these system level measures by first partitioning the data into opposition and government parties, as well as specific coalitions, and then taking the average (unweighted and

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<sup>24</sup>The SS loading and Cronbach's alpha for the routinization democracies only measure are 1.443 and 0.84. For autocracies only they are 1.702 and 0.92. For value infusion democracies only they are 0.457 and 0.35, and for autocracies only they are 0.062 and .06. For Party Strength in democracies only, they are 1.824 and 0.81. For autocracies, they are 2.331 and .91

weighted) of these measures.<sup>25</sup> Because a party's role in a coalition depends more on the number of seats held in the legislature, we use seat share in place of vote share for our weighted measures.<sup>26</sup> The formulas for these measures are below.

$$(5) \textit{Coalition Average} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \textit{Party Index}_i$$

$$(6) \textit{Weighted Coalition Average} = \frac{1}{\textit{Coalition Seat Share}} \times \sum_{i=1}^n \textit{Party Index}_i \times \textit{Party Seat Share}_i$$

## Validity

Having outlined how we measure party institutionalization and party strength, we now assess the validity of these measures. We demonstrate the validity of these measures by comparing them to other similar or related measures already used by others.

The novelty of our measures stems from it being the first of its kind – there are almost no party-level measures of strength and institutionalization, and those that do exist do not capture as many parties as the measures presented here. As a result, there are very few variables that we can directly compare our measures to. However, our measures do correlate well with several proxies and components of party institutionalization and strength. The plot presented in Figure 1 shows that our measures of party institutionalization and strength correlate well with prominent measures of and proxies for party strength and institutionalization.

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<sup>25</sup>To create the opposition and government measures, we sort the parties in two groups by their value in the V-Party Government Support variable (item *vzpagovsup*). Parties with values less than 3 are part of the government. Parties with values equal to 3 are part of the opposition.

<sup>26</sup>Seat share is likely more endogenous to institutional configurations than raw vote share. We thus caution scholars who chose to use these weighted variables to predict such institutions in case of potential tautology.

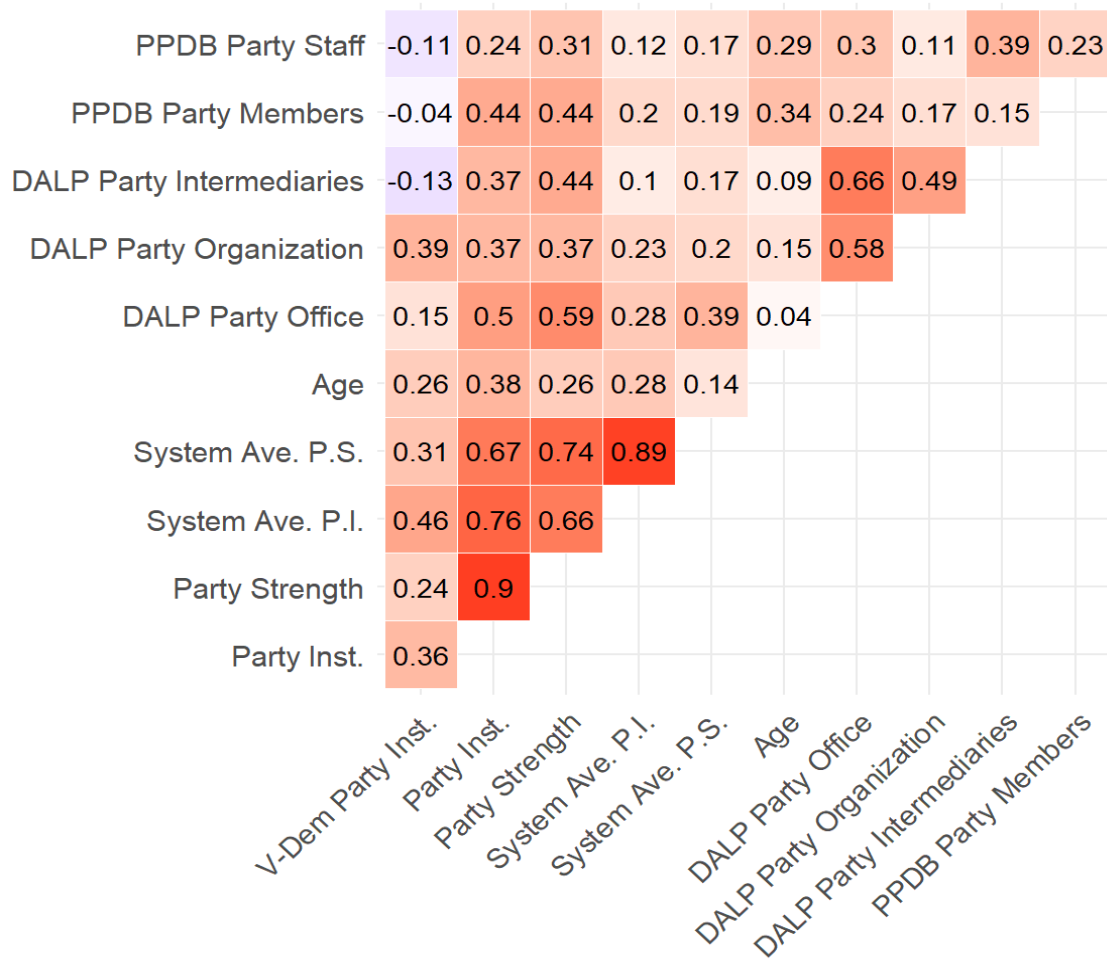


Figure 1: Correlations Between PIPS and Alternative Measures

Measurement validity at its core is when measures "meaningfully capture the ideas contained in the corresponding concept" (Adcock and Collier, 2001). These correlations provide valuable evidence that our measures meet this criteria. Because there are few measures at the party-year level, most of the alternative measures are imperfect comparisons. However, the degree of correlation matches theoretical expectations, demonstrating that our measures capture the concepts outlined in literature.

First, the correlations between Party Strength and Institutionalization are strong. This is unsurprising given the presence of the routinization indicators within the Party Strength measures. However, the coefficients also clearly show meaningful differences between institutionalization and strength; this is also expected given their conceptual and qualitative distinctions. While a broad organizational presence

may increase the party institutionalization, it does not guarantee the presence of value infusion.

Outside of correlations within our measures, Party Institutionalization has a moderate correlation with party age. Given that that party age lacks useful variation within a party's score from year to year, we consider this correlation a valuable indicator of the measure's validity: older parties tend to be more institutionalized, but that is not a guarantee. More specifically, older parties can decrease in institutionalization if they lose routinization or value infusion. Notably, party age and Party Strength are less correlated. Since party age is more often used as proxy for party institutionalization, this smaller coefficient is not of concern but helps demonstrate the distinctness of the two concepts and how we've measured them.

We also assess the validity of our measures in relation to DALP (Kitschelt et al., 2013). For the various DALP measures, we also see encouraging results. Party Strength has moderately strong correlations with Local Offices, Organizational Presence, and Intermediaries (e.g. neighborhood leaders, local notables, religious leaders). The correlations between Party Institutionalization and the DALP measures are less robust, but still moderately strong. This is expected since these DALP measures only capture the routinization aspect of Party Institutionalization, not value infusion. These results are notable for two reasons. First, these are the DALP versions of the components used in our measures, and are among some of the best measures of party organization in the field. Second, DALP takes only one measure for several electoral cycles, meaning that the magnitude of correlation coefficient is likely limited. In spite of this lack of variation, the coefficients are sufficiently large to demonstrate the validity of our measures.

Regarding variables from the PPDB, we find continue to find encouraging results (Scarrow et al., 2022). First, we find that our measure of party strength is moderately correlated with the number of registered party members and staff.<sup>27</sup> We see weaker correlations between Party Institutionalization and the party staff variables, but a moderate correlation with party members. Because party staff better approximates routinization, and not value infusion, we are not surprised that it correlates well with Party Strength and not as well with Party Institutionalization.

Finally, we compare our measure of party institutionalization with that of V-Dem's (Bizzarro et al., 2017). Recall that V-Dem's measure of party institutionalization is an assessment of the average level of in-

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<sup>27</sup>Because raw party size fluctuates based on population, we standardize the PPDB variables by dividing them by the county's population in the year the data was collected.

stitutionalization of all parties in the system, rather than a measure of the individual parties in the system. Thus, we use the V-Dem measure to assess our system average measure of party institutionalization. Here we find a moderately strong correlation between the two variables. We find a positive correlation between the V-Dem measure and the individual measures, but the coefficients are noticeably lower, demonstrating the need for party-level measures, as the V-Dem system measure fails to capture intra-system variation in any given year. However, the stronger correlation between our system-average measure and the V-Dem measure show the validity of our measure.

Most importantly, we note that out of all the values in Figure 1, the correlations between our measures and external measures tend to be stronger than correlations between different external measures. This fact is the greatest testament to our measures' validity; our measures out perform several prominent and high quality measure of party institutionalization and strength, suggesting that our measures better capture the two concepts.

To further demonstrate the distinction between institutionalization and strength we plot the Institutionalization and Strength scores for each party in Figure 2. In Figure 2 we also distinguish between democracies and autocracies to visualize some clustering that occurs by regime type.<sup>28</sup>

Figure 2 demonstrates that, while there is a strong correlation between Institutionalization and Strength, there is clearly a large number of parties that are higher in one dimension than the other. If there were less distance between the two operationalized concepts, the distribution of scores would be tighter around the mean.

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<sup>28</sup>To produce Figure 2 we pull the V-Dem polyarchy score and differentiate between democracies and autocracies. The scores presented in the figure are not the democracy/autocracy party scores.

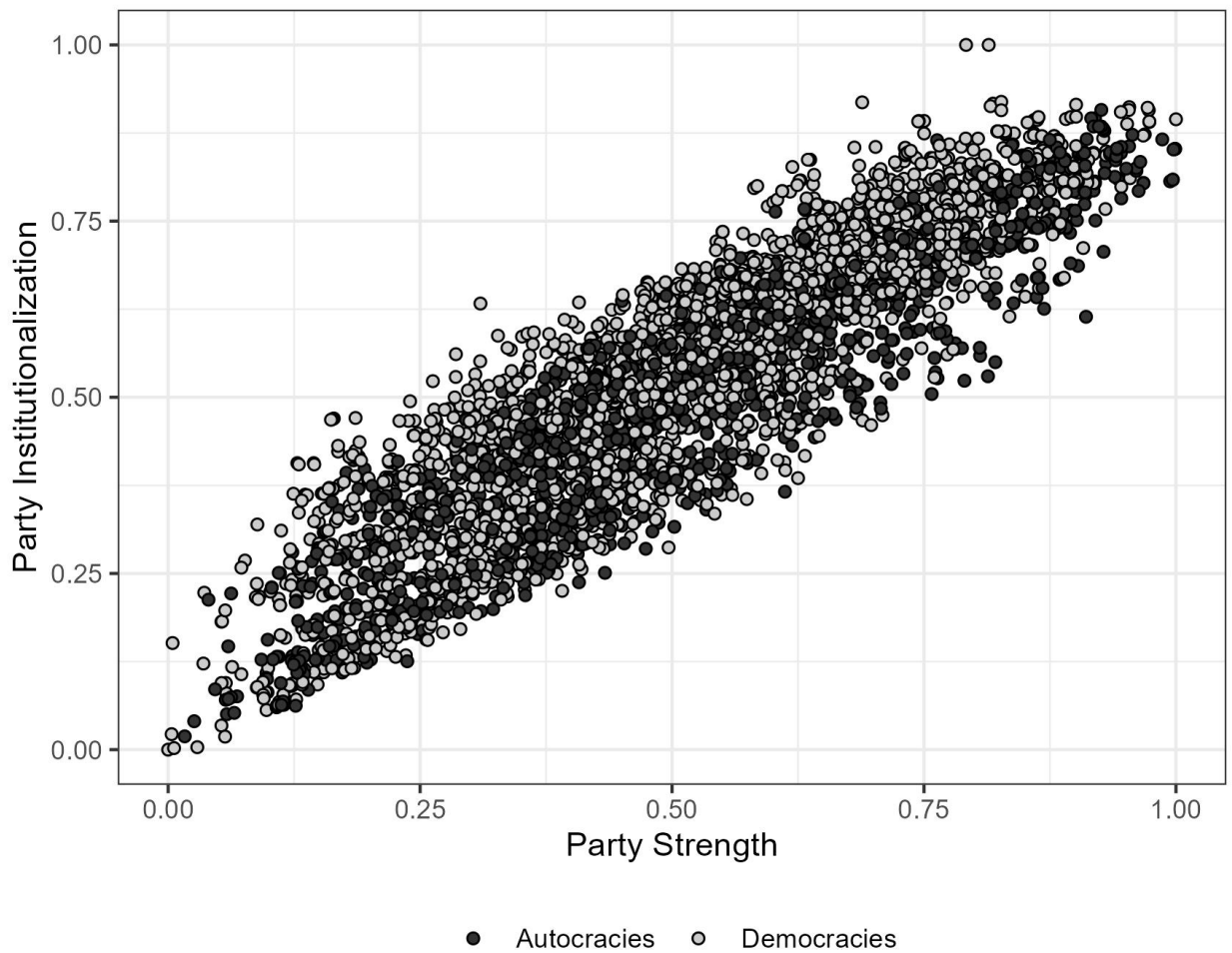


Figure 2: PI Between Regime

We can also use the data to produce Figure 2 to identify some of the specific parties that are high on Institutionalization and lower on Strength or visa-versa. For example, the set of parties that score highest on Institutionalization, but not as relatively high on Strength, is the Icelandic Social Democratic Party from 1971-1995. While this party is also a strong party, it scores lower than the strongest parties in the sample such as the Polish United Worker’s Party from 1972-1985. Likewise, there are also strong parties that score relatively lower on Institutionalization. One such example is the National Democratic Party of Egypt, which boasted a broad organization but was highly personalized and lacked value infusion.

## Exploratory Analysis

We now move to demonstrate how these measures perform when employed in observational analysis. To do so, we select several hypotheses widely used in the literature which incorporate party institutionalization and/or party strength. Namely, we assess how institutionalization and strength are correlated with economic performance.

Stable and strong parties have been associated with improved economic performance. More institutionalized and strong parties have longer-time horizons and are better equipped to coordinate on economic policy (Pitcher, 2012; Bizzarro et al., 2018; Simmons, 2016). Thus, as parties become more developed, we should observe stronger economies in the form of higher wealth.

We should also observe better monetary policy where parties are more stable and strong. Weaker or unstable parties are more likely to maximize short-term economic output in order to win the next election, with little concern for the future. These parties prioritize more government spending, which increases inflation. If this is true, we should observe more institutionalized and strong parties, which survive multiple electoral rounds, to be associated with lower inflation.

Lastly, some have found domestic investment to be positively correlated with party institutionalization and strength. Strong parties are more likely to prioritize public goods and services that benefit the wider population Bizzarro et al. (2018); Rasmussen and Knutsen (2021). On the party institutionalization side, elites from institutionalized parties provide credible commitments to investors, which brings in more domestic and foreign capital Gehlbach and Keefer (2011). Increased institutionalization also makes party collective action easier, which leads members to feel safer investing money into the party and economy Gehlbach and Keefer (2012).

To perform our analysis, we use measures of GDP per capita, inflation rates, and investment as our outcome variables. To simplify our models and make them comparable, all economic performance variables are logged. We select GDP per capita (`e_gdppc`) from the Coppedge et al. (2024) dataset, which is a point estimate from a latent variable model of GDP per capita. We also draw our measure of inflation (`e_miinflat`) from the Coppedge et al. (2024) dataset which is an indicator of the annual inflation rate, as

a percentage. Finally, we measure investment using an indicator from the IMF, which compiles public, private, and PPP investments and standardizes them across time and countries (International Monetary Fund, 2015).

## Models

To conduct our analysis of our institutionalization and strength measures, we use OLS to model our indices with the above-mentioned outcomes. We also include a set of different control variables for our economic outcomes. For models with economic performance as the outcome, we control for fuel income per capita (V-Dem's *e* total fuel income per capita), population (a logged version of V-Dem's *e\_pop*), and capital stock from the World Bank (Nehru and Dhareshwar, 1993).

Results for the regressions for the exploratory analysis are found in Table 2. The results from these models show some support for what is found elsewhere in the literature. Using OLS with fixed effects we find a positive correlation between *Institutionalization* and *Strength* for our outcome on GDP per capita – albeit that *Strength* has a weaker correlation and smaller coefficient. The difference in these results likely demonstrate that organizational strength improved economic performance (in terms of GDP per capita) but that stable parties take it a step further, and improve economic performance beyond what strong parties can provide.

Surprisingly, we do not find a significant correlation between *Institutionalization* and *Strength* for Inflation or Investment in the global sample. This is largely driven by the use of fixed effects. In the Appendix, we provide replications of these same models, but without the fixed effects. The coefficients in Models 1 & 2 do not change when removing fixed effects, but the coefficient for Model 5 becomes positive and statistically significant without fixed effects.

Moving on, we provide tests of the correlation between *Institutionalization* and *Strength* contingent on whether the sample is limited to democracies or autocracies. In Table 3 we present the results for democracies. As the reader can see, the results are largely in line with what we observe for the global sample. The only substantive difference is that the coefficient for *Institutionalization* in Model 1 attenuates. When compared to the results for Model 1 in Table 4, we can infer that the positive and statistically



Table 2: Exploratory Analysis

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	GDP Per Capita		Inflation		Investment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Institutionalization	0.34*** (0.13)		-0.39 (0.83)		-0.15 (0.23)	
Strength		0.24* (0.13)		-0.43 (0.79)		-0.05 (0.16)
Fuel Income	0.0000*** (0.0000)	0.0000*** (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0000** (0.0000)	-0.0000** (0.0000)
Population	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0001** (0.0000)	0.0001** (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)
Capital Stock	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	-0.0004 (0.0002)	-0.0004 (0.0002)	0.0000* (0.0000)	0.0000* (0.0000)
Observations	1,004	1,004	846	846	826	826
Country & Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table 3: Exploratory Analysis: Democracies

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	GDP Per Capita		Inflation		Investment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Institutionalization	0.33* (0.18)		-0.90 (1.38)		0.03 (0.25)	
Strength		0.34* (0.19)		-0.57 (1.29)		0.12 (0.23)
Fuel Income	0.0000*** (0.0000)	0.0000*** (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0000 (0.0000)
Population	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)
Capital Stock	0.0000* (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.001*** (0.0002)	-0.001*** (0.0002)	0.0000** (0.0000)	0.0000** (0.0000)
Observations	507	507	485	485	462	462
Country & Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

significant result from the global sample is likely driven by some cases in autocracies, with highly institutionalized parties being associated with higher GDP per capita.<sup>29</sup>

Table 4: Exploratory Analysis: Autocracies

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	GDP Per Capita		Inflation		Investment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Institutionalization	0.19 (0.16)		0.52 (1.24)		-0.19 (0.42)	
Strength		0.01 (0.16)		0.50 (1.12)		-0.02 (0.25)
Fuel Income	0.0000* (0.0000)	0.0000* (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0001*** (0.0000)	-0.0001*** (0.0000)
Population	0.0000** (0.0000)	0.0000** (0.0000)	0.0002*** (0.0001)	0.0002*** (0.0001)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)
Capital Stock	-0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.001*** (0.0002)	-0.001*** (0.0002)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0001)
Observations	497	497	361	361	364	364
Country & Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

To end our conclusion of results, we note that we find no statistically significant results for the models when limiting the sample to autocracies. These models are presented in Table 4. This is somewhat surprising, but may be due to the significant heterogeneity of cases in autocracies. Autocracies vary wildly between highly personalized regimes with disastrous economic performance to highly institutionalized party systems with strong economies, to monarchies that capitalize on rentier states.

The purpose of this analysis was not to tease out these differences, but instead demonstrate that our indicators perform well when testing these hypotheses. We argue that we have done so. The narrow, but meaningful, differences in the results of the models<sup>30</sup> demonstrate that we have captured the differences

<sup>29</sup>Without fixed effects, *Institutionalization*, but not *Strength*, is associated with a large negative change in Inflation in democracies, but not autocracies.

<sup>30</sup>Along with the large and substantive differences in models without fixed effects.

between institutionalized and strong parties. Thus, PIPS offers much in the way to researchers seeking to test these hypotheses, along with many others.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper we set out to introduce new valid measures of party institutionalization and party strength. There is a substantial literature in comparative politics which links either institutionalization or strength to democratic health, electoral performance, economic growth, or corruption. Yet most of this literature relies on small or medium-n analysis, or large-n indicators that are limited by the number of available countries and parties, years, while also drawing on a set of democracies. Datasets which do span more years and countries do so by relying on expert ratings of parties at the system level, rather than individual parties, or focus on a particular region.

Our measures overcome much of these limitations over alternative datasets. The PIPS dataset uses party-level measures of several key dimensions of party institutionalization and organizational strength for 169 countries since 1970 and includes both democratic and autocratic regimes. In addition to individual party scores for both institutionalization and strength, we create various aggregate measures which allow users to assess party institutionalization and/or strength at system level as an average or weighted average. We also create distinct measures for parties in the government or opposition, and the degree of institutionalization and/or strength relative to all parties, other democratic parties, or other autocratic parties. Overall, PIPS allows users significant flexibility in their analysis of party institutionalization and/or strength as an explanatory variable, or as an outcome.

We found that our indicators are valid measure of both institutionalization and/or strength. Our new indicators correlate with previous measures, but capture far more of the concept of institutionalization and strength than the alternatives. For example, party age is a measure that is often used as a proxy of party institutionalization, but which only captures part of value infusion. Our new measures correlate with party age, but add far more in way of incorporating the organizational permanence of the party by also capturing routinization or the systemness of the party.

In addition to demonstrating that PIPS provides valid measures of party institutionalization and

party strength, we showed how the primary indicators perform in exploratory observational analysis. When using measures of party institutionalization, we confirmed much of the findings which link institutionalization to better democratic and economic performance. Using measures of organizational strength, however, casts doubt on previous work and further analysis needs to be done to evaluate why the divergence in findings.

Overall the new measures found in PIPS will facilitate more advanced research within the comparative political and economic development fields. Using PIPS will allow researchers to analyze the role political organizations play in various outcomes of interests in both democracies and autocracies, where they were previously limited to democracies. Furthermore, PIPS enables researchers to account for the differences between incumbent and opposition parties, and the variation in the respective institutionalization and strength. Lastly, PIPS facilitates multi-level research, as users are able to differentiate between the individual and system levels.

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