Autocratic Legislatures and Party Institutionalization

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Abstract

What explains the institutionalization of political parties in non-democratic settings? Drawing on the work of scholars who portray institutions as a response to credible regime threats, I argue that institutional choice in non-democracies depends in large part on the extent to which the masses are mobilized. In countries in which citizens posed little threat to state formation, regimes were significantly less likely to rely on party institutionalization to gain legitimacy— instead, they focused on building institutions that co-opted individual elites, which is accomplished in part through nonpartisan legislatures. In contrast, the credibility of threats presented by mass groups prompted the emergence and strengthening of party-based rule, which did not necessarily connote democratization. Using newly released data from the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem) I evaluate the determinants of party institutionalization, showing that internal armed conflict is a positive predictor of greater party institutionalization in less democratic states. The same is not true of the most intense conflicts, however, underscoring the difference between the threat versus the realization of large-scale revolution. By focusing on mass opposition and party institutionalization, this study supports policymakers' endeavors to better understand the relationship between power asymmetries, commitments, and institutions.

Introduction

The world has seen steady progress from non-institutionalized rule to a predominance of countries with legislatures and institutionalized political parties, although such changes have not been perfectly correspondent. This is illustrated by Figure 1, which shows average levels of party institutionalization and electoral democracy and the proportion of countries with a legislature over the last 100 years based on data from the Varieties of Democracy Project (Coppedge et al. 2015). The figure reveals several interesting trends: Concurrent with the 'second wave of democracy' (Huntington 1991), the creation of legislatures outpaced the rate at which party systems were developing. What is more, the global average for electoral democracy did not catch up to the level of party institutionalization until the 1990s. The patterns suggest that there have been differences in the timing of legislatures, parties, and democratization, a question that has attracted increased scrutiny among scholars studying autocratic institutions (Pepinsky 2014).
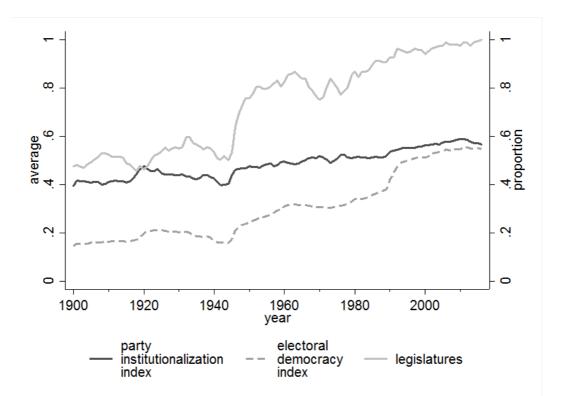

Figure 1 Levels of party institutionalization and electoral democracy, and proportion of countries with legislatures

What explains the institutionalization of political parties in non-democratic settings? Scholars have theorized that institutions emerge as a response to credible threats posed by opposition groups (AcemogluRobinson 2006, Slater 2010, Smith 2007). Such arguments receive

empirical support from studies that demonstrated the relationship between parties and legislatures and authoritarian persistence (Boix and Svolik 2013, Gandhi 2008, Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, Wright and Escriba-Folch 2012). To date, however, few studies have directly tested whether domestic opposition makes political institutions more likely. Scholarship on party institutionalization has nonetheless advocated research on party stregthening outside of established democracies, to which this study contributes (Hicken and Kuhonta 2011, Levitsky 1998, Randall and Svåsand 2002a, b).

Using newly released data from the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem) I evaluate the determinants of party institutionalization in less democratic states. I argue that the timing of institutional choice in non-democracies depends in large part on the extent to which the masses were mobilized. In countries in which citizens posed little threat to state formation, regimes were significantly less likely to rely on party institutionalization to gain legitimacy—instead, they focused on building institutions that co-opted individual elites, which is accomplished in part through nonpartisan legislatures. In contrast, a robust finding is that mass unrest—as represented by internal armed conflict—positively predicts greater party institutionalization. The analysis adds to the literature on institution building in both autocracies and democratization by linking the source of regime threats to different institutional responses. In focusing on mass opposition and party institutionalization, the study supports policymakers' endeavors to better understand the relationship between power asymmetries, commitments, and institutions (World Bank 2017).

In the following sections, I outline a theory linking legislatures and political parties to distinct problems facing authoritarian rulers and propose a research design for testing whether popular mobilization explains increasing party institutionalization in non-democracies. I then show preliminary results from a set of regressions estimating party institutionalization for a sample of 166 countries bewteen 1900 and 2015. The study contributes to the expanding literature on authoritarian institutions by considering the independent effects of parties and legislatures in a historical context, highlighting the relationship between the source of regime threat and its institutional response.

I.   Theory

Mainwaring and Torcal (2006) argued that the level of party system institutionalization is a critical dimension of party systems that was largely ignored until the mid-1990s. Party systems refer to the set of parties that interact, while institutionalization concerns the extent to which

practices and expectations become the norm. The institutionalization of party systems—or the formation and entrenchment of political parties and the system of electoral competition in which they operate—does not happen instantaneously, but tends to develop slowly and can be shaped by a number of factors (Hicken and Kuhonta 2011). There are also several ways in which party-based competition can be said to be institutionalized. Huntington (1968), for example, argued that there were four dimensions along which party system institutionalization occurred, which concerned the adaptability, coherence, complexity, and autonomy of political parties. Similarly, Mainwaring and Scully (1995) and Mainwaring (1999) conceptualized variations among party system based on the degree of party competition, party roots in society, legitimacy afforded to the party system, and party autonomy from specific leaders.

Scholars have attempted to build on the conceptualization of party institutionalization in several ways. For example, in contrast to Sartori (1976), who compared between consolidated party systems and non-systems, Mainwaring and Torcal (2006) claimed that party system institutionalization could instead be thought of as a continuum. Other scholars have argued that the concepts that comprise party system institutionalization should be considered separately because it refers to multiple dimensions, and that party system institutionalization and party institutionalization refer to different concepts (Basedau and Stroh 2008, Luna and Altman 2011, Randall and Svåsand 2002, Yardımcı-Geyikçi 2015). Others suggest that current levels of party system institutionalization can be traced to legacies left by the origin of party systems in authoritarian regimes, encouraging research that looks beyond the effects of party formation and interparty competition on democratization and democratic consolidation (Hicken and Kuhonta 2011, Levitsky 1998, Randall and Svåsand 2002a, b).

Noting that modern autocracies frequently exhibit institutional features commonly associated with democracy such as parties and legislatures, a substantial body of research has amassed that aims to explain the purpose and functions of authoritarian institutions. Such interest stemmed from the longstanding assumption that greater competition and inclusiveness ultimately drove countries toward democracy, which was invalidated by the emergence of 'hybrid regimes' and 'competitive authoritarianism' that seemed emboldened by democratic façades (Diamond 2002, Levitsky 1998, Levitsky and Way 2002). As noted by Diamond (2002), "an unprecedented proportion of the world's countries...have the form of electoral democracy but fail to meet the substantive test, or do so only ambiguously" (pg. 22). Subsequent research has thus considered the role that parties and legislatures may play in supporting regime stability across levels of democracy (Brownlee 2007, Conrad 2011, Gandhi 2008, Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, Magaloni 2006, Svolik 2012). In doing so, research that aims to explain the emergence of

political institutions in non-democracies highlights the importance of regime threats for motivating institutional change.

Scholars argue that institutionalizing opposition helps to resolve threats and contributes to regime stability in several ways. Bureaucratic offices provide channels for distributing personal rents and represent institutionalized opportunities for advancement for those who would otherwise be excluded (Conrad 2011, Gandhi 2008, Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). The interactions provided by political office also help to resolve information assymetries, enhance monitoring, and lower the threshold for collective action (Svolik 2009, Svolik 2012). By adding credibility to the promises made by a dictator, the proliferation of organizations tied to the regime can help to co-opt dissidents and invest them in the government's continued survival (Haber 2008). Additional effects of political institutions include enhancing legitimacy, intimidating rival groups, and signaling credible commitments to foreign investors (Gehlbach and Keefer 2011, Jensen et al. 2014, Magaloni 2006, Wright 2008).

By adding credibility to commitments made by the dictator to her ruling coalition, or the core group of individuals who are able to guarantee the continuation of the regime, parties and legislatures help to resolve the problem of powersharing (Svolik 2009, Svolik 2012). Similar institutions also support the extension of control over popular masses by directing the provision of services and benefits, overseeing political appointments, and making recruitment and repression more selective (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, Svolik 2012). The ability of parties and legislatures to resolve problems stemming from the dictator's relationship to both elites (power sharing) and non-elites (control) may differ, however, making the source of regime threat an important determinant of the timing and manner in which opposition becomes institutionalized. In places affected by high inequality, for example, mass-based threats are a less likely concern relative to challenges launched by elites (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, Boix 2003, North et al. 2009).

In various theoretical accounts, mass mobilization may plays an important role in supporting the emergence of political parties and institutionalized party systems. Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) and Boix (2003) argued that where non-elites gained sufficient *de facto* power to credibly threaten elites and repression was too costly, a logical outcome is for elites to establish institutionalized participation to credibly signal their commitment to future redistribution. According to the authors, elites democratize to demonstrate their committment to continued mass participation in order to avert revolution. Others have pointed to parties as elite reactions to mass-based threats, in which they form broad coalitions and support institutions to reinforce control (Slater 2010, Smith 2007). For example, Smith (2007) argued that when countries

experience late development in the absence of natural resource wealth, rulers institutionalize coalitions in response to mass unrest.

Conflict associated with radical social change has often encouraged cohesive ruling parties by engendering greater party discipline and stronger partisan identities, which contributes to the durability of authoritarian regimes (Huntington 1968, Levitsky and Way 2012, Levitsky and Way 2013). Two examples that support this observation are Malaysia and Singapore, which experienced civil unrest after the end of Japanese occupation. In both cases, mass movements with radical demands promoted elite coalitions that supported state centralization and the emergence of cohesive ruling parties. Though it did not constitute democratization, the case of Malaysia illustrates well the potential for domestic conflict to spur the institutionalization of political parties (Brownlee 2008, Levitsky and Way 2013, Slater 2010, Smith 2007, Stockwell 1977).

After the Japanese surrender of Malaya in 1945, elites who had remained in office during the occupation faced continued threats from nationalist resistance fighters. The British Military Administration passively supported communal violence "in the hope that political parties would emerge and achieve a balance of power among themselves" (Stockwell 1977, pg. 485). British plans to redesign settlements involving the Malay states fomented a more united national movement, however, which in 1946 became subsumed into a party led by traditional elites (Brownlee 2008, Stockwell 1977). The emergence of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) "brought elite cohesion within the regime and electoral control in the public arena" (Brownlee 2008, pg. 98). In its early years the UMNO concentrated on responding to growing labor unrest by establishing a department of labor in consultation with the British government. Ongoing collaboration with the British government by the UMNO invited attacks from more radical groups such as the Malayan Communist Party, but it nevertheless helped the party to secure a dominant position (Clutterbuck 1985, Stockwell 1977).

Insofar as democratization is a larger concept, of which party-based competition is but one facet, the threat of violence posed by non-elites can spur the institutionalization of political parties in competitive authoritarian regimes that do not necessarily democratize (Diamond 2002, Levitsky 1998, Levitsky and Way 2002, North et al. 2009, Schmitter and Karl 1991). Whether it results in democratization or reinforced autocracy, the literature that explains variations in state institutional outcomes points to mass unrest as being propitious for the emergence of political parties and coalitional politics. The predominance of single-party rule demonstrates the ability of a political party to establish hegemonic control by increasing connections to elites and to broader segments of society, becoming more entrenched or 'anchored' (Brownlee 2007, Magaloni

2008b). Separating the concept of institutionalization from democracy emphasizes focusing on the degree of party institutionalization, or party roots in society (Mainwaring and Scully 1995, Ufen 2008). Party institutionalization can be understood as "the process by which *the party* becomes established in terms both of integrated patterns of behaviour and of attitudes" (Randall and Svåsand 2002, pg. 12, emphasis mine). This definition underscores the increasing organizational stability and value of political parties (Basedau and Stroh 2008).

The extent to which parties are institutionalized are particularly important in autocratic settings, as the depth of organization, coherence of ideology, and connections to civil society greatly shape the ruling party's ability to co-opt and defuse potential opposition (Geddes 1999, Gandhi and Przeworski 2006, Way 2008). In one of the earliest typologies of authoritarian regimes, Geddes (2003) distinguished party-based regimes from other forms of authoritarianism and suggested that ruling parties shape incentive structures that extend the longevity of the regime. There is a considerable amount of work that bears this out by examining the effect of party-based rule on conflict risk and regime survival. Scholars have demonstrated that single-party regimes are distinguishable from other forms of dictatorship in terms of lower risk of civil conflict and terrorism, while others have linked party-based rule to longer leader tenures and regime longevity (Fjelde 2010, Gandhi 2008, Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, Magaloni 2008b, Wilson and Piazza 2013). Such research supports one implication of the theory, which is that political parties mollify regime threats stemming from mass unrest.

Another implication that has received far less empirical attention is that the threat of conflict represented by mass unrest makes the institutionalization of political parties more likely. This can be expressed in the following hypotheses:

H$_1$: *Domestic conflict is associated with greater levels of party institutionalization.*

At the same time, the potential for internal unrest to induce party institutionalization should be greater at lower levels. Theoretical explanations for the turn to institutions highlight the *threat* of violence posed by actors rather than the realization of rebellion (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, Gandhi 2008, Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). The damage to persons and property caused by high levels of conflict severity should hinder the ability of parties to effectively form and compete, which warrants a qualification in the form of the following statement:

H$_2$: *Civil war is associated with lower levels of party institutionalization.*

In sum, scholars have argued that party system institutionalization can be explained, in part, by historical legacies left by the formation of party systems under authoritarianism (Hicken and Kuhonta 2011). Predominant explanations for autocratic institutions argue that they reinforce credible commitments made as a result of threats to the regime (Gandhi 2008). Specifically, the establishment of autocratic parties and political liberalization in dictatorships may stem from threats posed by non-elites, thereby helping to resolve the problem of authoritarian control (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, Svolik 2012). As a result, party institutionalization should be affected by threats to the regime that take the form of domestic unrest (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, North et al. 2009).

II.   Research Design

To examine the impact of internal unrest on party institutionalization, I utilize recently created data from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project (Coppedge et al. 2015). According to the codebook, party institutionalization is based on a number of attributes such as the extent of organization and links to civil society, the size of party activism and supporters, and party unity. The project represents party institutionalization as an index by combining estimates from factor analysis of data on party organizations, party branches, party linkages, distinct party platforms, and legislative party coehsion (Coppedge et al. 2015). The index, which covers 166 countries between 1900 and 2015, ranges between zero and one and has a mean and median of roughly 0.46. Due to the continuous nature of the variable for party system institutionalization, I use ordinary least squares estimation with country-fixed effects and robust standard errors.

To denote internal unrest, I use a dichotomous indicator of internal armed conflict created by Clio and supplemented by V-Dem (Coppedge et al. 2015). The variable covers roughly 112 countries between 1900 and 2012, of which about ten percent of the observations experienced internal armed conflict. As Slater (2010) noted, "contentious politics encompasses a wide range of transgressive, collective mass actions—from labor strikes to ethnic riots, from rural rebellions to student protests, from urban terrorism to street barricades, and from social revolutions to separatist insurgencies" (pg. 5). Like Slater (2010), I argue that a binary indicator of internal armed conflict is useful "as an umbrella term capturing the diverse types of internal conflict" (pg. 5).

The effect of conflict on party institutionalization may be explained, in part, by other aspects of democracy. I therefore include a measure of democracy from the V-Dem dataset,

represented by the electoral democracy index (*v2x_polyarchy*). According to the codebook, the concept concerns holding rulers accountable to citizens, which is "acheived through electoral competition for the electorate's approval under circumstances when suffrage is extensive; political and civil society organizations can operate freely; elections are clean and not marred by fraud or systematic irregularities; and elections affect the composition of the chief executive of the country" (pg. 44). The index is a weighted averaged of indices representing freedom of association, suffrage, clean elections, elected executive, and freedom of expression. For more information on the composition of this measure, refer to the codebook (Coppedge et al. 2015).

Party institutionalization is correlated with the V-Dem index of polyarchy at 0.749. Despite their rather strong correlation, the democracy index is nevertheless a meaningful component of the model; as shown by Figure 4 in the Appendix, there is greater variation in the level of party institutionalization at lower levels of democracy, which is of central concern to this paper. The marginal impact of a threat of mass-based violence may also be greater among more autocratic countries and new democracies, for which I include an interaction term between the electoral democracy index and internal conflict. Legislatures and the party institutionalization index are strongly collinear, for which I am unable to control for the independent effects of a legislature.

I also included several additional variables that may constitute extraneous but influential factors. First, party system institutionalization should be greater in states that are more economically developed. To account for the potential effect of confounding attributes associated with socioeconomic development, I include logged values of per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from the Maddison Project (Bolt and Zanden 2014). Population demographics such as size and ethnic diversity may also exert impetuses on institutional change. To measure population size, I include logged values of the population in millions as coded by Clio, for which Coppedge et al. (2015) interpolated missing data using a linear model. As a measure of ethnic diversity, I include an average of the largely time-invariant measure of ethnic fractionalization coded by Fearon (2003), which reflects the probability that two randomly selected individuals belong to different ethnic groups. To denote divergent institutional trajectories possibly influenced by different historical and regional experiences, I control for the date in which each country obtained independence and include dummy variables from Teorell and Hadenius (2005) specifying the region of the world. I also include splines for the duration of peace (Beck et al. 1998).

In additional robustness tests, I account for other correlates of development. First, I include the average number of years of education for citizens older than 15 (Clio). Missing values

were interpolated using additional sources, the list of which is available in the codebook (Coppedge et al. 2015). I also control for the potentially negative effects of natural resource dependency by including logged per capita values of oil and natural gas production (Haber and Menaldo 2011). In alternative specifications I include a one-year lag of the dependent variable and compare the effects of the model on conflicts that reached at least 1,000 battle deaths in each year (Haber and Menaldo 2011). Table 3 in the Appendix provides summary statistics for the variables used in the analysis.

III. Results

Table 1 shows the results of a linear regression with country-fixed effects, estimating the level of party system institutionalization. In the analyses all of the independent variables are lagged by one year. Models 1 shows the model without an interaction term or the lagged dependent variable. Model 2 includes the interaction between the electoral democracy index with internal conflict, while Model 3 also includes a one-year lag for the dependent variable. According to the results of the regression, a one-unit increase in the level of electoral democracy increases party system institutionalization by roughly 28 percent. Accounting for the level of party institutionalization in the previous year, however, the democracy index ceases to be a meaningful predictor.

Countries with higher levels of per capita GDP and larger populations, as well as more ethnically heterogenous societies, are all positively associated with party institutionalization. Notably, ethno-linguistic fractionalization shows a large effect on party institutionalization which is dramatically reduced when the prior value of party institutionalization is included in the model. In addition to significant regional differences, the timing of independence is also linearly associated with party institutionalization. The likelihood of internal conflict appears to exhibit a negative U-shaped relationship to the duration of peace, gradually increasing and then decreasing with each additional year.

In all three specifications, internal armed conflict in the prior year is positively associated with an increase in party institutionalization. Including an interaction term between conflict and democracy level shows that the effect is greater in less democratic countries. Holding the democracy index at zero, internal armed conflict in the prior year is associated with a roughly 2.5-percent increase in party institutionalization in the next. The effect of armed conflict is slight—the decrease in the effect of conflict on party institutionalization at higher levels of democracy is actually larger than its estimated effect. Nevertheless, it is a significant predictor of

party institutionalization despite controlling for variation in a number of domestic features as well as controlling for the previous value of party institutionalization.

Table 1 Linear regression predicting party institutionalization

(with country-fixed effects)

	(1)		(2)		(3)	
electoral dem.	0.284	(0.011)***	0.287	(0.011)***	-0.001	(0.003)
internal conflict	0.013	(0.006)**	0.024	(0.009)***	0.006	(0.003)*
ln(GDPpc)	0.041	(0.004)***	0.041	(0.004)***	0.001	(0.001)
ln(population)	0.053	(0.004)***	0.053	(0.004)***	0.004	(0.001)***
ethno-ling. frac.	0.708	(0.029)***	0.706	(0.028)***	0.023	(0.011)**
L.America	1.089	(0.034)***	1.086	(0.034)***	0.039	(0.013)***
M.East/N.Africa	0.575	(0.038)***	0.57	(0.038)***	0.019	(0.013)
S.S.Africa	0.417	(0.030)***	0.418	(0.030)***	0.014	(0.013)
W.Europe/N.A.	0.809	(0.026)***	0.806	(0.026)***	0.023	(0.012)**
E.Asia	1.92	(0.056)***	1.913	(0.056)***	0.075	(0.022)***
S.E.Asia	-0.027	(0.025)	-0.026	(0.025)	-0.017	(0.010)*
S.Asia	0.676	(0.042)***	0.673	(0.042)***	0.029	(0.015)*
Caribbean	0.701	(0.035)***	0.697	(0.035)***	0.019	(0.014)
independence	0.004	(0.000)***	0.004	(0.000)***	0.000	(0.000)***
peace years	0.002	(0.000)***	0.002	(0.000)***	0.000	(0.000)*
peace years^2	0.000	(0.000)***	0.000	(0.000)***	0.000	(0.000)
peace years^3	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(0.000)
dem. x conflict			-0.038	(0.022)*	-0.011	(0.006)*
party inst.					0.964	(0.005)***
Intercept	-9.234	(0.290)***	-9.198	(0.292)***	-0.459	(0.099)***
N	7336		7336		7201	
R^2	0.854		0.854		0.988	

Imposing additional constraints by accounting for the potential effects of natural resource dependence and education (Table 4 in the Appendix) diminishes the sample size and reduces the strength of the association between internal armed conflict and party system institutionalization. When they are included separately, both oil and natual gas exert significant negative impacts of party institutionalization; overall, natural gas production exerts a stronger effect. Higher rates of education, by contrast, are positively associated with party institutionalization. The estimated effect of internal armed conflict on party institutionalization is robust to the inclusion of the additional controls, although it does not continue to be a

meaningful predictor when I control for the prior value of party institutionalization, nor when I include year-fixed effects. Thus, while internal armed conflict does not perfectly explain party institutionalization, it is an important explanatory factor.

As Model 4 and 5 show in Table 2, accounting for internal conflicts that reached more than 1,000 battle deaths in each year shows divergent results. Lower levels of internal armed conflict are associated with a roughly four-percent increase in party institutionalization, while the more severe conflicts are negatively associated with party institutionalization. Though neither estimate is significant above a ninety-percent level of confidence when I include the previous value of the dependent variable, the expected direction of each measure remains consistent. The results therefore confirm the positive effect of internal armed conflict on party institutionalization, while at the same time showing that more severe conflicts can have deleterious effects.

Table 2 Linear regression predicting party institutionalization

(with country-fixed effects)

	(4)		(5)	
electoral dem.	0.280	(0.013)***	0.000	(0.004)
internal conflict	0.042	(0.010)***	0.005	(0.003)
civil war	-0.024	(0.008)***	-0.001	(0.003)
ln(GDPpc)	0.056	(0.004)***	0.001	(0.001)
ln(population)	0.047	(0.005)***	0.005	(0.001)***
ethno-ling. frac.	0.773	(0.029)***	0.024	(0.012)**
L.America	1.154	(0.037)***	0.048	(0.016)***
M.East/N.Africa	0.630	(0.042)***	0.032	(0.016)**
S.S.Africa	0.449	(0.032)***	0.006	(0.012)
W.Europe/N.A.	0.873	(0.027)***	0.028	(0.014)**
E.Asia	2.057	(0.059)***	0.089	(0.025)***
S.E.Asia	0.021	(0.025)	-0.017	(0.012)
S.Asia	0.738	(0.044)***	0.038	(0.018)**
Caribbean	0.793	(0.037)***	0.029	(0.016)*
independence	0.004	(0.000)***	0.000	(0.000)***
peace years	0.002	(0.000)***	0.000	(0.000)
peace years^2	0.000	(0.000)***	0.000	(0.000)
peace years^3	0.000	(0.000)*	0.000	(0.000)
dem. x conflict	-0.066	(0.023)***	-0.011	(0.006)*
party inst.			0.965	(0.006)***
Intercept	-9.632	(0.324)***	-0.560	(0.116)***
N	6484		6367	
R^2	0.872		0.989	

The basic model presented in Table 1 passes most specification tests. Variance inflation factors suggest that multicollinearity among the variables in the model is not an issue. The errors are also normally distributed—as shown by a plot of the residuals in Figure 5 in the Appendix— though they are more leptokurtic when the prior value of the dependent variable is included (Figure 6). Tests for constant variance highlight the potential problem of heteroskedasticity, but visual inspection suggests that it is not a major issue (Figures 7 and 8 in the Appendix). Dropping country-year observations with high residuals does not have a strong effect on the findings. Additional tests suggest that the model does not suffer from omitted variable bias and that it is an appropriate fit, thereby lending credibility to the results.

IV. Discussion

Figure 2 shows the marginal effect of internal armed conflict based on a model that includes an interaction with time (Table 5 in the Appendix). Holding other variables at their means, internal conflict is associated with a roughly 28-percent increase in party institutionalization. Figure 3 also shows that the effect of internal conflict on party institutionalization has diminished over time, the estimate for which is significant below a ten-percent probability of error. The relationship between internal unrest and party institutionalization was thus strongest in earlier years of the sample. This finding supports claims that revolutionary threats helped to explain extensions of suffrage along class lines, which historically occurred earlier (Przeworski 2009). In more recent years, as average levels of party institutionalization have increased—and potentially resulting from the involvement of non-government organizations—internal armed conflict has had less of an effect on party institutionalization.

The robustness of internal conflict to a number of controls and alternative specifications supports rejecting the null hypothesis in favor of the expectation that it makes party institutionalization more likely. The results of the quantitative analysis are consistent with arguments that credible mass threats induce party development, either through the mobilization of civil groups or the formation of elite coalitions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, Slater 2010, Smith 2007). Both sets of arguments imply that in the face of unrest, party institutionalization should be more likely. The results do not indicate, however, whether party institutionalization is due to elite reactions or to the appeasement of mass groups.
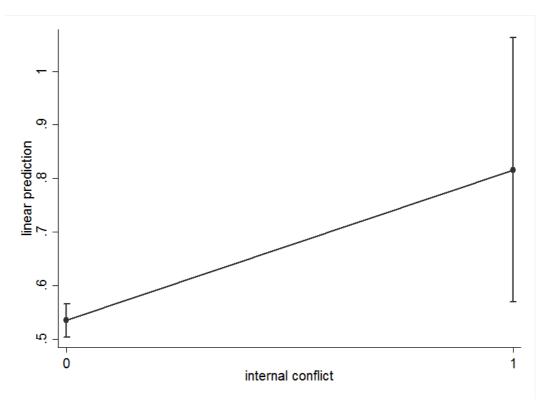
Figure 2 Predictive margins with 95-percent confidence intervals
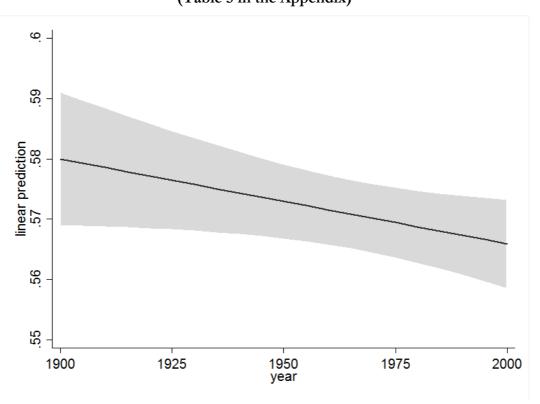
(Table 5 in the Appendix)

Figure 3 Predictive margins with 95-percent confidence intervals

(Table 5 in the Appendix)

My focus on internal armed conflict also did not discriminate between forms of conflict such as violent strikes, riots, or rebel activity. Insofar as internal armed conflict can be thought of as a product of popular discontent, it is an appropriate measure of mass unrest (Gurr 1970, Tilly 1978). Future research on the relationship between conflict and party institutionalization may still want to consider the ways in which different forms of unrest affect party formation. An additional area for progress concerns the threshold of violence for affecting institutional changes. As this study demonstrated, internal armed conflict may spur party institutionalization, but civil war exerts a negative effect. Civil conflict is a complex problem for which scholars have found a number of consistent relationships, and party institutionalization is strongly autocorrelated (Hegre and Sambanis 2006). Still, identifying the relationship between conflict and institutionalization is important for explaining regime change and understanding successful patterns of statebuilding.

Though it represents just a piece of a larger research agenda, this study has valuable implications for comparative research, as well as for policymaking. Despite a number of studies showing that party-based rule lowers conflict risk and lengthens leader tenures, few have tested the reciprocal relationship to identify whether patterns of contention induce party institutionalization. By utilizing the party institutionalization index measured by the V-Dem project, this study provided a direct test of the impact of conflict on party institutionalization. In doing so, the analysis heeds calls to disaggregate the concept of party system institutionalization (Luna and Altman 2011, Randall and Svåsand 2002, Yardımcı-Geyikçi 2015). Moreover, my use of the index across all polities goes beyond Sartori (1976)'s dichotomous conceptualization of party system institutionalization and includes autocracies and less democratic states (Hicken and Kuhonta 2011, Mainwaring and Torcal 2006).

One important finding is that the impact of internal armed conflict on party institutionalization is greater in less democratic countries. This is consistent with research on the timing of institutions in dictatorships, in which scholars argue that dictators establish parties and legislatures as a response to credible threats (Gandhi 2008, Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, Svolik 2012). Przeworski (2009) notes that "in countries where no single party was able to organize and discipline the new entrants, workers or peasants, extensions of suffrage to the lower classes was not sufficient to prevent disruptive political conflicts" (pg. 308). In the literature on authoritarian regimes, however, there are examples in which a single party successfully absorbed and mitigated regime threats, potentially decreasing the likelihood of future conflict (Brownlee 2007, Magaloni 2006).

It is also important to remember that legislatures and party systems do not necessarily emerge simultaneously in non-democratic contexts, encouraging scholars to further consider the independent roles that each plays in helping to perpetuate authoritarian regimes. If party institutionalization in non-democratic regimes is prompted by mass-based unrest, then the inverse expectation is that party systems should not be more institutionalized in non-democracies in which citizens do not pose a credible threat to the regime. The independent success of authoritarian legislatures in settings with a weakly institutionalized ruling party, therefore, may be explained by the focus of regimes with largely inert masses on co-opting and containing threats from elites. One difference in the function of non-democratic legislatures and parties, therefore, may be their roles in helping to resolve the "problem of authoritarian power-sharing" versus the "problem of authoritarian control" (Svolik 2012).

The research also contributes to an important question regarding the manner in which different types of accountability form (Mechkova et al. 2017). Among policymakers, there is an impetus to understand the relationship between institutional functions, power assymmetries, and rule of law. As pointed out by the World Bank (2017), "[j]ust as exclusion may lead to violence, mechanisms that encourage power sharing—such as legislatures that guarantee the respresentation of all factions—can reduce the incentives to engage in the use of force by raising the benefits of security" (pg. 15). The results of this study underscore the value of understanding the ways in which the balance of power affects bargaining, and the ability of institutions to reinforce commitments. By expanding the focus on party institutionalization beyond established and new democracies, research on institutional responses to opposition helps to further distinguish between statebuilding and democracy (Andersen et al. 2014). Disentangling the impacts of legislatures and political parties in non-democracies and considering their relationship to different sources of regime threats may also help to identify the way in which the structure of each institution contributes to peacebuilding (Chenowith and Stephan 2014, Tomsen 2014, World Bank 2017).

Conclusion

This study contributes to the research on authoritarian institutions by linking explanations for the establishment of political parties in non-democracies to the institutionalization of party systems under authoritarian rule. Noting that legislatures and political parties do not perfectly covary in non-democracies, I argued that legislatures and parties may differ in the type of opposition that they are able to successfully co-opt. Specifically, autocratic legislatures may facilitate authoritarian power sharing by encouraging elites to work with the regime, thereby lessening threats stemming from elites. Explanations for liberalization under autocracy also emphasize the potential for non-elites to credibly threaten the regime, which may be moderated by the creation and institutionalization of political parties. As a result, the independent success of legislatures in settings with a weakly institutionalized ruling party may be explained by the absence of credible mass-based threats. Conversely, the institutionalization of political parties under authoritarianism may be encouraged by domestic unrest.

Using newly collected data from the Varieties of Democracy Project, I examined the prevalence of legislatures in authoritarian countries with varying levels of party institutionalization across 1900 and 2015. An analysis of party institutionalization demonstrated that prior internal unrest—as represented by the observation of internal armed conflict—is significantly and positively related to party institutionalization and that the effect is larger in less democratic states. As noted by Levitsky (1998) and Randall and Svåsand (2002), institutionalization refers to a complex concept, and the entrenchment of individual parties may be different from party *system* institutionalization. The results nevertheless support research into the development of party systems under authoritarianism, which may have lasting effects (Hicken and Kuhonta 2011). The findings, which lend support to the hypotheses and bear out the broader expectations regarding the relationship between threats and institutional responses in non-democracies, encourage scholars to further consider the role of the masses in the development of authoritarian party systems and democratization.

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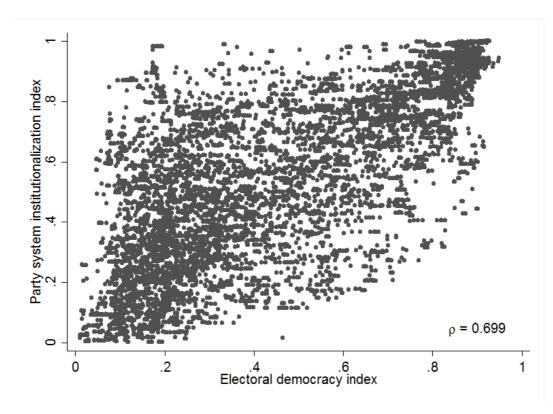
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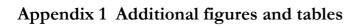
Appendix

Appendix 1 Additional figures and tables

Figure 4 Correlation between party institutionalization and

electoral democracy index

Table 3 Summary statistics

variable	mean	std. dev.	N
party inst.	0.504	0.288	12915
electoral dem.	0.319	0.279	16883
internal armed conflict	0.105	0.306	11738
electoral dem x conflict	0.028	0.107	11550
peace years	26.697	26.068	11631
peace years^2	1392.214	2308.047	11631
peace years^3	93809.540	214059.400	11631
ln(GDPpc)	4360.332	5275.724	10670
ln(population)	15.145	1.938	15562
ethno-ling. frac.	0.481	0.264	16691
E.Europe	0.096	0.294	17289
L.America	0.128	0.335	17289
M.East/N.Africa	0.103	0.304	17289
S.S.Africa	0.308	0.462	17289
W.Europe/N.A.	0.150	0.357	17289
E.Asia	0.031	0.174	17289
S.E.Asia	0.069	0.254	17289
S.Asia	0.047	0.212	17289
Pacific	0.027	0.161	17289
Caribbean	0.041	0.197	17289
independence	1881.874	185.126	20144
civil war	0.065	0.246	10184
ln(oil)	1.544	2.450	10386
ln(natural gas)	0.740	1.580	11635
avg. education	4.478	3.267	13548

Table 4 Linear regression predicting party institutionalization (with country-fixed effects)

	(6)		(7)	
electoral dem.	0.263	(0.013)***	-0.003	(0.004)
internal conflict	0.019	(0.009)**	0.003	(0.003)
dem. x conflict	-0.033	(0.023)	-0.009	(0.006)
peace years	0.001	(0.000)***	0.000	(0.000)
peace years^2	0.000	(0.000)**	0.000	(0.000)
peace years^3	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
ln(GDPpc)	0.047	(0.006)***	0.000	(0.002)
ln(population)	0.027	(0.006)***	0.003	(0.001)*
ethno-ling. frac.	0.869	(0.032)***	0.027	(0.011)**
L.America	1.13	(0.036)***	0.045	(0.016)***
M.East/N.Africa	0.587	(0.044)***	0.018	(0.015)
S.S.Africa	0.46	(0.031)***	0.006	(0.012)
W.Europe/N.A.	0.871	(0.026)***	0.026	(0.013)*
E.Asia	1.993	(0.059)***	0.079	(0.024)***
S.E.Asia	0.088	(0.025)***	-0.011	(0.012)
S.Asia	0.711	(0.043)***	0.037	(0.018)**
Caribbean	0.816	(0.036)***	0.028	(0.015)*
independence	0.004	(0.000)***	0.000	(0.000)***
ln(oil)	0.002	(0.001)	0.001	(0.000)
ln(natural gas)	-0.014	(0.002)***	-0.001	(0.000)*
avg. education	0.014	(0.002)***	0.002	(0.001)***
party inst.			0.964	(0.006)***
Intercept	-8.636	(0.350)***	-0.424	(0.109)***
N	6343		6231	
R^2	0.878		0.99	

Table 5 Linear regression predicting party institutionalization (with country-fixed effects)

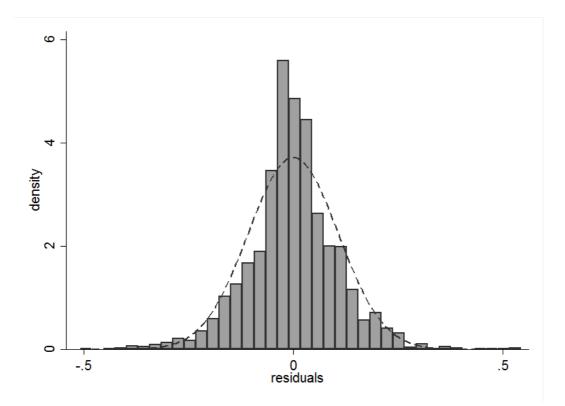|	(8)	
electoral dem.	-0.004	(0.004)
internal conflict	0.281	(0.141)**
ln(GDPpc)	-0.001	(0.001)
ln(population)	0.000	(0.001)
ethno-ling. frac.	0.028	(0.011)**
L.America	0.036	(0.013)***
M.East/N.Africa	0.001	(0.013)
S.S.Africa	0.009	(0.013)
W.Europe/N.A.	0.033	(0.012)***
E.Asia	0.072	(0.022)***
S.E.Asia	-0.009	(0.010)
S.Asia	0.017	(0.015)
Caribbean	0.01	(0.013)
independence	0.000	(0.000)***
peace years	0.000	(0.000)*
peace years^2	0.000	(0.000)
peace years^3	0.000	(0.000)
dem. x conflict	-0.008	(0.006)
party inst.	0.963	(0.005)***
year	0.000	(0.000)***
year x conflict	0.000	(0.000)*
Intercept	-0.568	(0.107)***
N	7201	
R^2	0.988	

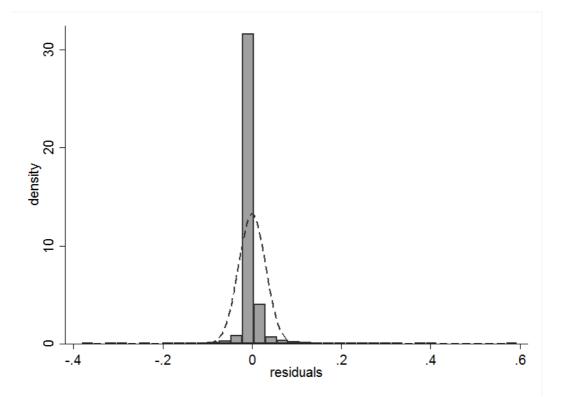**Figure 5 Distribution of residuals from Model 2 of Table 1**

Figure 6 Distribution of residuals from Model 3 of Table 1

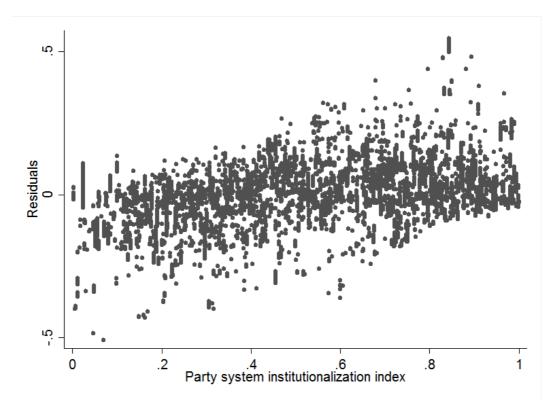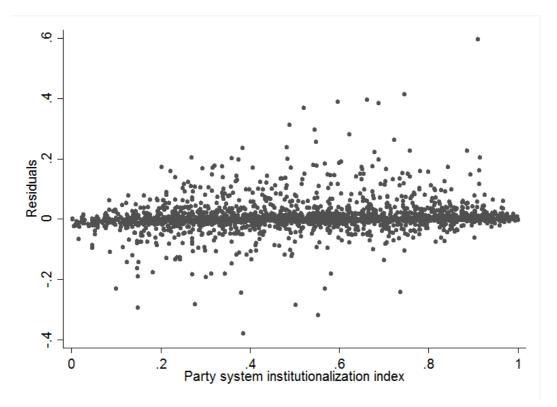**Figure 7 Scatterplot of residuals from Model 2 of Table 1**

Figure 8 Scatterplot of residuals from Model 3 of Table 1