

Ruling Parties in Authoritarian Regimes: Rethinking Institutional Strength

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Abstract:

A key finding in the literature on authoritarian regimes is that leaders frequently rely on ruling parties to stay in power, but we lack systematic ways to measure autocratic party strength. As a result, it is not clear how often ruling parties are actually strong and capable of carrying out important functions. This article demonstrates that strong ruling parties are much rarer than typically assumed. Using a global sample of dictatorships from 1946-2008, I show that most ruling parties are unable to survive the death or departure of the founding leader. This is true even of many parties that have been coded as part of single-party regimes. While strong parties may be key to durable authoritarianism, relatively few parties are actually strong.

1. Introduction

The recent literature on comparative authoritarianism has taken an “institutional turn”¹. A significant finding that has emerged is that autocratic leaders commonly adopt political institutions, such as ruling parties, in order to stay in power.² Scholars argue that parties are valuable institutions because they are particularly well suited to manage intra-elite conflict and allow dictators to make credible inter-temporal power-sharing deals.³ Regimes led by single or dominant parties are believed to be especially resilient. Despite this implicit emphasis of the importance of strong parties, the literature on comparative authoritarianism has not developed systematic ways in which to evaluate the institutional strength of autocratic parties. As a result, it is not clear *how often* ruling parties are actually strong and capable of carrying out these important functions.

This article strives to put the comparative literature on authoritarian parties on more solid empirical foundations. In doing so, I show that *strong* ruling parties are much rarer than we currently think. I argue that strong parties must contain established rules, procedures, and hierarchies that shape the distribution of power and resources among elites. The institutionalization of these structures de-personalize the ways in which the organization is run. When parties are transformed into autonomous organizations, they are capable of functioning regardless of who is in power. Since institutions are especially prone to predation by leaders in autocratic settings, ruling parties are strengthened when rules and procedures guaranteeing the organization’s autonomous existence are put into

¹ Phrase borrowed from Pepinsky 2014.

² Blaydes 2010; Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Geddes 1999b; Greene 2007; Levitsky and Way 2010; Lust-Okar 2006; Malesky and Schuler 2010; Slater 2010.

³ Brownlee 2007; Boix and Svolik 2013; Magaloni 2008; Reuter 2017; Svolik 2012.

place. A strong autocratic party is one that can perpetuate itself beyond the lifespan of a single leader.

I show that when we define autocratic party strength in this way, strong ruling parties are much rarer than typically assumed. By examining leadership changes in all non-democratic states from 1946 to 2008, I find that most ruling parties are unable to survive multiple leadership transitions – 57 percent of all ruling parties fail to survive more than a year past the first leader’s death or departure from power. Even conditioning on cases where the first leader experienced a non-violent exit from power, 52 percent of ruling parties do not survive the peaceful departure of the founding leader. Furthermore, 32 percent of ruling parties that are coded as part of single-party regimes fail to survive a year past the departure of the first leader. In sum, these findings challenge the notion that most ruling parties are capable of enforcing inter-temporal promises because the existence of many parties seem to rely heavily on the influence of a single leader. While strong parties may be key to durable authoritarianism, relatively few parties are actually strong.

A key implication from this study is that scholars may be generating broader theories of party-dictatorships based on the experiences of a small number of parties, such as the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) in Mexico or Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in China. Yet as this article demonstrates, these cases look more like outliers, rather than the typical ruling party. The ways in which ruling party strength is conceptualized and operationalized affect our understanding of the distribution of strong parties across autocratic regimes as well as the accuracy of empirical tests that use quantitative proxies of institutional strength in dictatorships. Instead, this article

advocates for more nuanced measures that better reflect the bureaucratization of ruling parties, ideally moving beyond the use of discrete regime types.

2. Conceptualizing Ruling Party Strength

A key argument that has emerged in the literature on authoritarian regimes is that ruling parties⁴ play a critical role in maintaining and promoting autocratic regime stability. Ruling parties can control and contain elite conflict, providing an institutional channel for members of the ruling coalition to be in power.⁵ Parties can also funnel state benefits to elites⁶ or help to co-opt opposition groups.⁷ On the mass level, parties can monitor citizens and provide patronage to social groups⁸ or provide information for the regime.⁹

However not all ruling parties are capable of achieving these important aims – and this point is often overlooked by the functionalist literature on authoritarian institutions. Many ruling parties are quite weak and lack the institutional infrastructure, rules, and organizational autonomy required to carry out functions of elite management, rent distribution, cooptation, or monitoring. The *Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution* (MPR) under the rule of Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire, for example, lacked institutionalized rules and served only to amplify the ruler’s arbitrary power during his 28-year tenure.

⁴ Ruling parties, also known as “regime parties”, are the officially sanctioned party of the regime. Despite the name, this article demonstrates that some ruling parties are quite weak and do not actually rule much at all; however, I retain the use of this term to be consistent with much of the existing scholarship.

⁵ Brownlee 2007; Magaloni 2006; Reuter 2017; Svobik 2012.

⁶ Greene 2007; Slater 2010.

⁷ Gandhi 2008; Lust-Okar 2007.

⁸ Blaydes 2010; Levitsky and Way 2010.

⁹ Malesky and Schuler 2010.

The MPR manifesto declared that the party “will adhere to the political policy of the Chief of the State and not the reverse.” Mobutu used the party as a mouthpiece for this rhetoric, and the MPR disintegrated upon his death.¹⁰

How should ruling party strength be assessed? I argue that, within autocracies, party *institutionalization* should be considered a critical component of ruling party strength. Party institutionalization is defined as the creation of hierarchical positions and implementation of rules and procedures that structure the distribution of power and resources within the ruling coalition. Importantly, the creation of such rules and procedures depersonalize the ways in which the party organization is run by constraining the leader’s ability to make arbitrary decisions in the future. Institutionalized ruling parties are autonomous organizations, capable of functioning regardless of which leader is in power.

This focus on organizational autonomy is of particular importance in autocratic settings because one of the key features of authoritarian states is that power is concentrated in the hands of a small group of elites – and often times – in the hands of a single leader. Since institutions are especially prone to predation by autocratic leaders, rules, procedures, and structures that promote organizational autonomy result in institutional *durability*. When we think about the quality of parties in autocratic regimes, the extent to which there are structures and procedures in place to guard against personalist rule and maintain the survival of the party organization are of critical importance. In autocratic settings, a strong ruling party is one that can perpetuate its own existence, beyond the influence of individual leaders.

¹⁰ Jackson and Rosberg 1982.

Importantly, this organizational permanence is a necessary condition if ruling parties are to serve an inter-temporal commitment function. Though autocratic parties often perform multiple regime-stabilizing functions, scholars have stressed that a key purpose of ruling parties is to act as inter-temporal commitment devices that help manage elite conflict.¹¹ Elites are willing to invest in a ruling party only if they believe that they will continue to receive a steady stream of benefits and political appointments. For ruling parties to truly serve this commitment function, the party must remain in power for multiple periods and survive leadership changes. As Magaloni highlights, the credibility of power-sharing deals between the leader and party elites “crucially depends on the party’s ability to effectively control access to political positions and on the fact that *the party can be expected to last into the future*”.¹²

My conceptualization builds on existing scholarship of party institutionalization and strength.¹³ Huntington provided an early conceptualization of party institutionalization as the process by which parties become established and acquire value and stability. In particular, he argued that adaptability and the ability to outlive the founder are key characteristics of a durable organization. An institutionalized party is one that has the ability to exist independently of particular actors. An organization that is merely an instrument of a leader is not an institutionalized party.¹⁴ As Panebianco notes,

¹¹ Boix and Svobik 2013; Magaloni 2008; Reuter 2017, Svobik 2012.

¹² Magaloni 2008, 2 emphasis added.

¹³ See Basedau and Stroh (2008) and Randall and Svasand (2002) for overviews of the existing literature on comparative party institutionalization. This discussion is also related to, but distinct from, research on party *system* institutionalization (see Mainwaring and Scully 1995).

¹⁴ Huntington 1968, 12-20.

“Institutionalization entails a “routinization of charisma,” a transfer of authority from the leader to the party, and very few charismatic parties survive this transfer.¹⁵

Other scholars have focused on the aspect of ‘value infusion’ where “actors’ goals shift from the pursuit of particular objectives through an organization to the goal of *perpetuating the organization*”.¹⁶ Levitsky adds an additional dimension of “behavioral routinization” to this concept, noting that “[i]nstitutionalization is a process by which actors’ expectations are stabilized around rules and practices. . . The entrenchment of ‘rules of the game’ tend to narrow actors’ behavioral options by raising the social, psychic, or material costs of breaking those rules”.¹⁷ An institutionalized party “is one that is reified in the public mind so that ‘the party’ exists as a social organization *apart from its momentary leaders*”.¹⁸ Similarly, Levitsky and Murillo argue that strong parties are organizations that are stable in that they must survive “not only the passage of time *but also changes in the conditions – i.e., underlying power and preference distributions – under which they were initially created*”.¹⁹

It is important to note that most existing scholarship on party institutionalization focus on parties that exist within democratic systems. Despite differences in regime type, much of the conceptualization of democratic party institutionalization can be imported to analyses of authoritarian ruling party strength. Yet there is one important difference: the effect of “infrastructural power²⁰” in promoting the institutionalization of democratic versus authoritarian ruling parties. Scholars of democratic party institutionalization often

¹⁵ Panebianco 1988, 53.

¹⁶ Levitsky 1998, 79; Selznick 1957; Selznick and Broom 1955.

¹⁷ Levitsky 1998, 80.

¹⁸ Janda 1980, 19.

¹⁹ Levitsky and Murillo 2009, 117 emphasis added.

²⁰ Phrase borrowed from Slater 2003.

stress the importance of parties that can build “roots in society” with functioning local branches that raise revenue and establish the party’s presence outside of the capital.²¹ Yet, as Slater argues, such infrastructural capabilities can actually lead to the *personalization* of power if effective constraints on the leader are absent.²² If, for instance, an autocratic leader has *absolute* control over a ruling party that has wide reach over state and society, the leader can simply use the party to shut out potential regime challengers or persecute potential opposition in civil society without being constrained by his own party elites. In an autocratic context, pervasive roots in society *without* effective executive constraints can lead to personalized forms of dictatorship.

In sum, within authoritarian regimes, ruling party strength hinges critically on the creation of elite-level rules and procedures that structure the distribution of power and resources between the leader and elites. This emphasis on elite-level institutionalization does not necessarily exclude other possible dimensions of party strength. What this article is stressing, however, is that organizational autonomy is a *baseline minimal condition* that a ruling party must meet in order for it to possibly be considered a strong and durable organization. At the very least, a strong ruling party must have the ability to survive and function as an independent organization. It is not the only component of a strong party, but it is a fundamental one. Although this criterion sounds simple, most ruling parties fail this litmus test. As the data in Section 4 will show, most ruling parties are unable to survive leadership transitions.

3. Operationalizing Ruling Party Strength: Problems with existing approaches

²¹ Mainwaring and Scully 1995.

²² Slater 2003.

Developing high quality cross-national indicators of authoritarian institutions pose some real challenges. Dictatorships are frequently closed off, restricting or completely eliminating access to reliable and accurate information. Moreover, conventional measures of institutional strength in democracies simply cannot be imported to autocracies due to the lack of free and fair political competition. For example, while electoral results from presidential or legislative elections can serve as credible measures of incumbent or party strength in democracies, the same approach cannot be reliably applied in autocracies because election results are often either falsified or do not reflect the true preferences of citizens.

In light of these data challenges, perhaps the most common dataset that researchers have used as a proxy for ruling party strength is regime typology data. In a seminal study, Geddes classifies all autocratic regimes into one of the following regime types: military, single-party²³, personalist, or hybrids of these categories.²⁴ These classifications are based on whether control over “policy, leadership selection, and the security apparatus is in the hands of a ruling party (dominant-party dictatorships), a royal family (monarchy), the military (rule by the military institution), or a narrow group centered around an individual dictator (personalist dictatorship)”.²⁵

Single-party regimes are defined as regimes in which the “party has some influence over policy, controls most access to political power and government jobs, and has functioning local-level organizations”.²⁶ By contrast, in personalist regimes, “access

²³ Single-party regimes are sometimes also referred to as dominant-party regimes or party-based regimes.

²⁴ Geddes 1999a.

²⁵ Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014, 318.

²⁶ Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014, codebook p. 31.

to office and the fruits of office depend much more on the discretion of an individual leader. The leader may be an officer and may have created a party to support himself, but neither the military nor that party exercises independent decision-making power insulated from the whims of the ruler”.²⁷ Regimes coded as primarily military mostly seem to reflect the absence of a ruling party (though this is not explicitly discussed). In other words, ruling parties that are coded as part of a single-party regime are implicitly considered strong parties.

Geddes’ study and associated datasets have made immense contributions to scholarship on authoritarian politics. It was one of the first studies to codify differences in the institutional makeup of dictatorships. The paper renewed interest in the study of non-democratic regimes outside of the industrialized world and stimulated a large body of recent work on the policies, institutions, and consequences of autocratic rule.²⁸ However, I argue that regime typologies serve as a poor indicator of ruling party strength due to the aggregate nature of the scoring mechanism. As a result, this measurement problem biases our substantive understanding of the distribution of strong parties across all autocratic regimes.

Since regime typologies are a composite index that aggregates various dimensions of leaders, institutions, and military structures into a single category, it is difficult to isolate cases where the ruling party is strong.²⁹ Ruling parties can appear to be resilient

²⁷ Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014, codebook p. 7.

²⁸ According to Google Scholar, Geddes (1999a) has been cited over 300 times. Geddes (1999b), an annual review article covering much of the same material as Geddes (1999a), has been cited over 1,700 times.

²⁹ Pande and Udry (2006) provide a thorough discussion on how composite indices of institutional quality (such as Polity IV or Freedom House) reduce the researcher’s ability to identify the effects of individual institutions.

for a number of different reasons unrelated to the strength of the actual organization itself. The regime, for instance, can benefit from an abundance of natural resources, a charismatic leader, or external support (such as from the United States or the Soviet Union during the Cold War). Under these circumstances, a ruling party can remain in power for decades – especially if the founding leader is still in office. Yet, these factors reveal very little about the party’s underlying degree of institutionalization.

Without examining each individual dimension directly, it can be difficult to determine whether the regime appears strong because it has a strong leader or a strong party. Some regimes appear to be party-based, when in actuality the party is attached to a strong and charismatic leader who merely exploits the party as a personal vehicle to amplify his authority. Without separating party strength from leader strength, it can be unclear whether the primary source of resilience comes from the party or the leader.

Consider the following case. The *Parti Democratique de Guinee* (PDG) under the rule of Ahmed Sekou Toure in Guinea is coded as part of a single-party regime. Sekou Toure was a self-proclaimed socialist who portrayed Guinea as a one-party state. Yet national policies were determined at the discretion of the leader alone, and the PDG lacked institutionalized rules and permanent structures. In fact, the ruling party was used primarily as a mouthpiece to promote Sekou Toure’s ideology and policies, rather than as a forum for elite power-sharing. Upon the leader’s death, the military seized power in a coup and the PDG was immediately disbanded.³⁰

The reasons why leader strength and party strength are likely to be confounded within the regime typologies framework can be seen in the way that countries were

³⁰ Adamolekum 1976; Camara 2005.

coded. In her 2003 book Geddes outlined a clear set of guidelines that were employed to categorize regimes into different types.³¹ A list of questions was used to assess a country's fit with each regime type (single-party, military, and personalist).³² Countries were then sorted into regime types according to the following instructions:

“Each regime used in the data analysis receives a score between zero and one for each regime type; this score is the sum of “yes” answers divided by the sum of both “yes and no” answers. A regime's classification into a nominal category depends on which score is significantly higher than the other two.”³³

As the coding instructions describe, countries were assigned to regime categories based on an *aggregate* score of multiple criteria. This is problematic for the separation of leader strength and party strength due to the heterogeneous mix of questions within the single-party category: some criteria reflect ruling party strength while others gauge the leader's influence and power.

For example, two criteria used to evaluate the single-party regime category include: “Does the party control access to high government office?” and “Are members of the politburo (or its equivalent) chosen by routine party procedures?” These questions clearly address issues of organizational autonomy and the party's ability to function according to set rules. Regimes that score a “yes” on these questions, such as the Soviet Union under the Communist Party (CPSU) or Singapore under the People's Action Party (PAP), are likely to have strong ruling parties.

³¹ Geddes 2003, 225-227.

³² Examples of criteria to assess whether a regime is a single-party regime include “Does the party have functioning local-level organizations that do something reasonably important, such as distribute seeds or credit or organize local government?” or “Has rule of law been maintained?”.

³³ Geddes 2003, 225. Regimes that received similar scores for two or more regime types were classified as hybrid regimes.

Now consider two other criteria used to evaluate the single-party regime category: “Did the first leader’s successor hold, or does the leader’s heir apparent hold, a high party position?” and “Is party membership required for most government employment?” Regimes that score a “yes” on these questions do not necessarily have parties that are institutionalized or organizationally autonomous. Many leaders appoint their cronies or supporters to prestigious party positions, this can be done without a meritocratic promotion structure within the party organization. Leaders also often require party membership of all government employees, but this does not necessarily reflect the institutionalization of the party organization itself.

Consider the Dominican Republic under Rafael Trujillo. All adults were essentially required to be card-carrying members of the ruling *Partido Dominicano* (PD). The party was “synonymous with almost everyone in the country who was anyone. Membership was practically a routine procedure... No Dominican in public life, business, the professions, or the arts could survive outside the ranks”.³⁴ Yet, the PD was founded and controlled entirely by Trujillo. He appointed all local, provincial, and national level party officials, and he was the single authority on all party-related decisions. In such circumstances, the party existed largely to amplify the leader’s personal influence.

A country that only passes the first set of criteria (that reflects party strength) and a country that only passes the second set of criteria (that reflects leader strength) *may both be placed in the same single-party category* due to the aggregate nature of the scoring mechanism. Yet because it is unclear what the individual responses to these

³⁴ Crassweller 1966, 99. Similarly, in Zaire under the rule of Mobutu, all citizens were declared to be members of the ruling MPR by birth (Young and Turner 1985, 70).

criteria were, scholars cannot differentiate between regimes with strong parties and regimes with weak parties (but strong leaders) within the single-party category. As a result, China under the rule of the CCP and Mexico under the rule of the PRI are placed in the same category as Guinea under the rule of Sekou Toure or Mali under the rule of Modibo Keita.³⁵

It is important to note that this critique does not necessarily focus on the discrete nature of regime typologies.³⁶ Scholars often make categorical distinctions between countries and regimes, with the understanding that discrete labels, such as “democracy” and “dictatorship” may obscure some variation within categories. However, I am arguing that regimes with highly institutionalized parties and those with weak parties are currently being lumped together under the same single-party category. This is highly problematic if scholars use the category of single-party regimes as an indirect indicator for ruling party strength.

4. How common are strong ruling parties?

This next section presents evidence that parties with organizational autonomy are much rarer than typically assumed. Importantly, I show that *most* ruling parties are unable to survive past the death or departure of the founding leader. This is true, even of parties that are coded as part of single-party regimes or when we condition on peaceful

³⁵ In the cases of Guinea and Mali, the ruling party was immediately disbanded following the death or departure of the leader.

³⁶ Although other scholars have highlighted some important shortcomings associated with the use of discrete regime categories. See Gandhi and Sumner 2017; Lucardi 2017; Magaloni, Chu, and Min 2013; Svobik 2012.

leader exit. Ruling parties are very common – in fact, most leaders have them. *Strong* ruling parties, however, are much rarer.

Using data from Svobik, I identify a global sample of 156 ruling parties and the corresponding regime leader in power for all country-year observations that are coded as authoritarian from 1946-2008.³⁷ A few parties, such as the PRI in Mexico or Communist Party in the Soviet Union, took power prior to 1946, so the variables for those parties are calculated from the time they took office.³⁸ For parties that were still in office in 2008, I updated the dataset to reflect the most accurate end date. For instance, the National Democratic Party was in power until 2011 in Egypt, and the Communist Party of Vietnam is still in power. The complete set of ruling parties is listed in Appendix Table 1.

Most authoritarian regimes have ruling parties. Out of 351 autocratic regimes (as defined by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz³⁹) from 1946 to 2008, 63 percent of regimes maintained a ruling party at some point, and only 12 percent of regimes banned political parties the entire time the regime was in power. In fact, 46 percent of regimes maintained a ruling party the entire time the regime was in power. The median party was in power

³⁷ Svobik 2012, “Institutions in Dictatorship, 1946-2008” dataset. Dictatorships are defined as a country that fails to satisfy at least one of the following two criteria for democracy: (1) free and competitive legislative elections (2) an executive that is elected either directly or indirectly by a legislature in free and competitive presidential elections.

³⁸ Following existing conventions set by Geddes 1999a and others, I require that a ruling party must be in power for at least three years to be included. This ensures that parties that are present merely during transitional periods are excluded from the analysis. It is helpful to note that this requirement presents an even stricter test of my analysis. Even though my sample *excludes* the weakest set of parties – those that are in power for less than three years – I still find that most parties are unable to survive leadership transitions.

³⁹ Geddes, Wright, Frantz 2014.

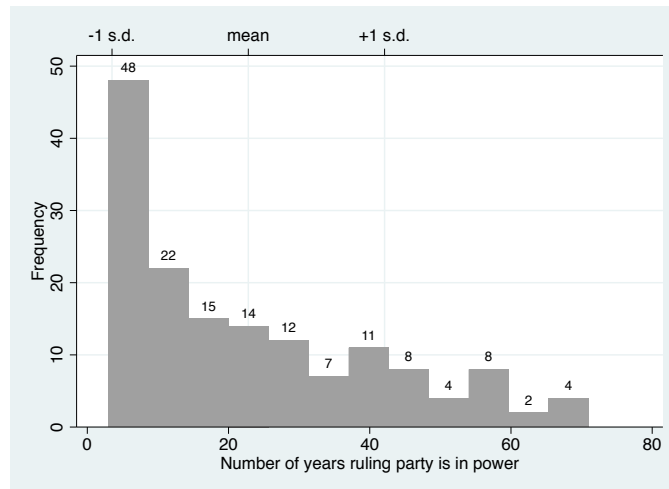


Figure 1. Duration of autocratic ruling parties

Note: Histogram displays the number of years for which each ruling party was in power. A count of the number of parties in each bin is listed above the bins. One outlier (the True Whig Party in Liberia, which was in power for 102 years) was excluded from this figure, and parties that were in power for less than three years are excluded from the analysis.

for 16 years, however there is a lot of variation in the data. 33 parties survived in power for only three to five years, and 45 parties were in power for over 30 years, with the longest ruling party in power for 102 years.⁴⁰ Figure 1 presents a histogram that displays the number of years ruling parties in my sample were in power.

To illustrate a baseline level of institutionalization, I focus on the party’s ability to survive leadership changes. Leadership transitions are critical junctures that provide a clear test of the party’s ability to function independently of the incumbent. In fact, leadership succession is considered to be one of the most significant challenges for the survival of authoritarian regimes.⁴¹

For every ruling party in this sample, I count the number of different leaders who took power.⁴² However, leadership changes that occur too frequently may also be a sign

⁴⁰ The True Whig Party in Liberia was in power from 1878 until 1980.

⁴¹ Brownlee 2007.

⁴² If the party has not undergone a leadership transition as of 2018, then it is excluded from the analysis.

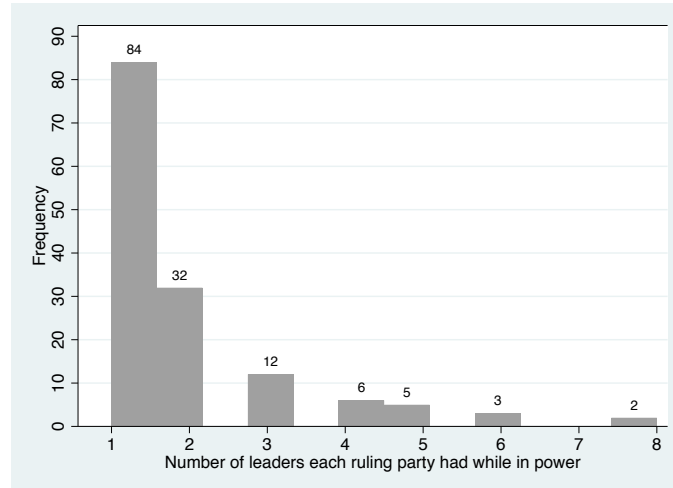


Figure 2. Leader turnover in autocratic ruling parties

Note: Histogram displays the number of different leaders each party had while in power. A count of the number of parties in each bin is listed above the bins. Two outliers (the True Whig Party in Liberia, which had 12 different leaders and the PRI in Mexico, which had 15 different leaders) are excluded from the figure.

of instability. To guard against this, I only consider leaders who remain in power for three or more consecutive years as a complete leadership cycle. Figure 2 presents a histogram that displays the number of different leaders each ruling party had while in power.

The data reveals that *most* ruling parties are *unable* to survive any kind of leadership transition. This point is really driven home when we count the number of years the party is able to remain in power past the death or departure of the founding leader.⁴³

Founding leaders tend to be highly influential figures with mass support and high levels of legitimacy upon taking power.⁴⁴ Felix Houphouet-Boigny, for instance, the first post-independence president of the Ivory Coast, founded the *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI) in 1946. From the start of his presidency in 1960 through his death

⁴³ Ten founding leaders are still in power as of 2018, so these observations are excluded, as the outcome is unobserved.

⁴⁴ See Bienen and van de Walle 1989. I use “founding leader” and “first leader” interchangeably, and I define the term to be the first leader of the regime. First leaders are often also founders of the ruling party. In my sample, 43 percent of first leaders were also party founders.

in 1993, Houphouet-Boigny kept tight control of authority within the party. In 1995, Houphouet's favored successor, Henri Konan Bedie, won the presidential election but was overthrown in a coup six years later.⁴⁵

Even when a leader did not create the party, the first leader of the regime often takes over party structures. Mao, for instance, was not an original founder of the CCP, but he quickly rose through the ranks and led the party and regime to power.⁴⁶ In sum, because the first leader of an authoritarian party tends to be highly influential, we can infer that a party that can remain in power past the first leadership transition has much higher levels of organizational autonomy.

The data shows that the average ruling party is unable to survive past the first leader. In fact, 57 percent of parties fail to survive more than a year past the first leader's death or departure from power. Figure 3 presents a histogram that displays the number of years the ruling party was able to remain in power past the death or departure of the founding leader.

This argument remains robust even if we exclude cases where the first leader is forcibly removed, most notably through a coup. To identify how the first leader left office, I rely on the Archigos coding of leader exit.⁴⁷ I exclude all parties that had first leaders who were deposed through assassination, popular protest, a military coup, rebel groups, or foreign governments from this analysis. The resulting subsample includes 65 parties with a first leader who died of natural causes, retired due to ill health, or stepped down through established conventions (such as voluntary retirement or term limits). Even

⁴⁵ Akindes 2004; Jackson and Rosberg 1982.

⁴⁶ Meisner 1986.

⁴⁷ Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009.

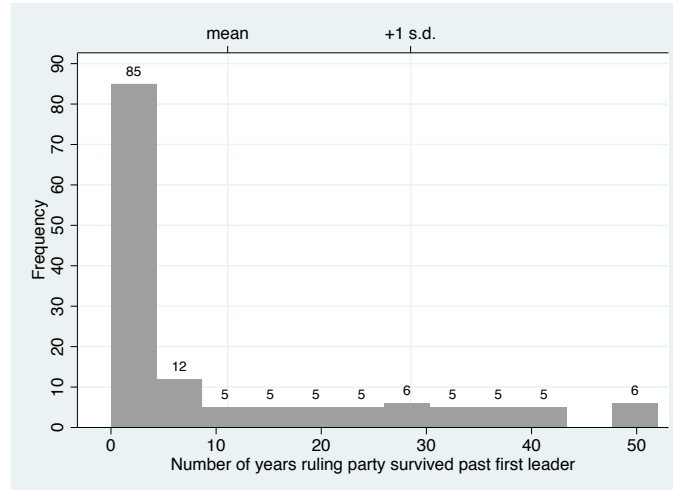


Figure 3. Autocratic ruling party survival beyond founding leader

Note: Histogram displays the number of years each ruling party remained in power past the departure of the first leader. A count of the number of parties in each bin is listed above the bins. One outlier (the True Whig Party in Liberia, which remained in power for 96 years after the departure of the first leader) is excluded from the figure.

conditioning on cases where the first leader experienced a non-violent exit from power, 52 percent of ruling parties were not able to survive beyond the founding leader’s *peaceful* departure. Appendix Figure 1 displays the number of years the ruling party was able to remain in power past the death or departure of the founding leader, conditional on a peaceful leader exit.

Moreover, even many parties that are coded as part of single-party regimes do not outlive the death or departure of the founding leader. 32 percent of ruling parties that are coded as part of single-party regimes by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz fail to survive a year past the departure of the first leader.⁴⁸ 33 percent of ruling parties that are coded as part of *any* type of party-based regime (single-party, party-military, party-personal, or triple-hybrid) do not outlive the founding leader. Appendix Figure 2 displays the number of years a ruling party that was coded as part of a single-party regime was able to remain in power past the death or departure of the founding leader.

⁴⁸ Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014. Appendix Table 2 provides a list of parties that may have been mischaracterized according to regime type.

To summarize, the data reveals three important lessons. First, if a ruling party has not yet undergone an initial leadership change, it is too soon to determine whether the party organization is durable. The data underscores how difficult it is for parties to outlive their founders, and the first leadership change constitutes a key critical juncture. The fact that the majority of parties cannot be expected to last beyond the tenure of a single leader calls into question whether most parties truly have the capacity to act as inter-temporal commitment devices that can manage elite conflict.

Second, strong ruling parties are *much less common* than we would currently expect. For instance, if we compare these proxies against the regime typologies framework, a third of party-based regimes do not meet basic thresholds of organizational autonomy.⁴⁹ These findings are consistent with studies that emphasize the difficulty of building strong and credible organizations in weakly institutionalized environments.⁵⁰

Third, these proxies of party institutionalization highlight the danger of conflating regime *duration* (the number of years the regime was in power) with the *organizational strength* of the ruling parties. For instance, 37 parties were in power between 20 to 40 years. Yet almost a third of these parties (27 percent) failed to survive beyond the tenure of the founding leader. This comparison reveals that many parties that seem to be durable and long-lived appear so only because they are attached to strong and charismatic leaders. Such strong leaders are frequently able to remain in power for long periods of time. Once the leader dies, however, the weakness of the party organization is often revealed.

⁴⁹ The dataset lists 43 regimes as party-based and 68 regimes total if we also include party-military or party-personal. Out of these 68 regimes, only 30 parties were able to remain in power 20 or more years past the founding leader's death or departure. Furthermore, only 22 parties out of the 72 regimes had at least three different leaders while the party was in power.

⁵⁰ Boix and Svobik 2013; Levitsky and Way 2013.

To be clear, *I am not proposing that scholars use the data presented in this section as new proxies for party institutionalization*. My goal in this section is to use easily observable data to illustrate that most parties are not able to pass very conservative baseline tests of organizational autonomy. I, however, do not propose that scholars simply use the raw count of leadership turnovers or survival years past the founders as proxies for party institutionalization. To use these counts would conflate the *outcome* of party institutionalization with the measures themselves.

5. Substantive Implications

What are some of the substantive implications of decoupling party strength from leader strength? Section 4 demonstrated that many parties that have been coded as part of single-party regimes are likely not very strong organizations and are not able to survive past the departure of the founding leader. This section will show that important differences emerge when we separate out parties that can and cannot survive the death of the founding leader within the single-party regimes category. Parties that are coded as part of single-party regimes but *fail* to survive past the founding leader perform significantly worse on outcomes such as economic growth and regime stability compared with parties that are labeled as part of single-party regimes that *do* survive past the founding leader. These findings suggest that strong parties do indeed matter for regime stability, even if they are rarer than we currently assume.

One of the central findings in the recent literature on authoritarian stability is that party-based regimes tend to be the most stable form of dictatorship. In their review article on one-party rule, Magaloni and Kricheli note that “compared to other types of

dictatorships, one-party regimes last longer⁵¹, suffer fewer coups⁵², have better counterinsurgency capacities⁵³, and enjoy higher economic growth⁵⁴”.⁵⁵

Scholars have attributed a number of causal effects of strong parties on regime stability. While some functions, such as creating a superficial party brand, can be carried out via weak organizations,⁵⁶ economic growth and conflict prevention require strong and autonomous parties. One core mechanism that drives economic growth in party-based regimes is the ability of institutionalized parties to attract private investment and promote technological innovation.⁵⁷ North and Weingast famously argued that economic growth cannot occur when ruling sovereigns have no method of credibly committing to not expropriate future earnings.⁵⁸ Institutionalized parties that function independently of any particular leader provide a forum for elites to organize collectively, therefore creating de facto constraints on the leader. Rulers who renege on promises not to expropriate can expect to be sanctioned by elites, creating conditions that encourage private investment.⁵⁹ Institutionalized parties can also regularize interactions between leaders and elites, resulting in greater transparency regarding policy changes, government revenue, and spending. Having access to more information makes it more difficult for autocrats to

⁵¹ Huntington 1968; Geddes 2003; Magaloni 2008.

⁵² Cox 2008; Geddes 2008; Kricheli 2008.

⁵³ Keefer 2008

⁵⁴ Keefer 2007; Gandhi 2008; Gehlbach & Keefer 2011, 2012; Wright 2008.

⁵⁵ Magaloni and Kricheli 2010, 124.

⁵⁶ Alberto Fujimori of Peru, for instance, frequently “cobbled together” parties out of thin air prior to elections. After Fujimori won the election, the party was often left to atrophy (Levitsky and Way 2010, 163).

⁵⁷ Gehlbach and Keefer 2011, 2012; Simmons 2016; Wilson and Wright 2017.

⁵⁸ North and Weingast 1989.

⁵⁹ Gehlbach and Keefer 2011, 2012.

obfuscate rent-seeking behavior.⁶⁰

Strong parties also play an important role in preventing the outbreak of conflict, whether through coup attempts or civil war onset. Coup d'états pose a significant risk to autocratic stability and are the most frequent way in which autocratic leaders are deposed.⁶¹ Coups arise within autocracies largely due to the inability of autocratic leaders to credibly commit to *not* abuse their “loyal friends”.⁶² Institutionalized parties solve this commitment problem by creating a parallel organization, out of the arbitrary control of the leader, that distributes spoils, benefits, and jobs to party elites.⁶³ Shifting control of access over benefits to the party organization reassures elites that they will continue to receive a steady stream of benefits, uninterrupted by leadership change.

These mechanisms also extend to the prevention of civil wars. Keefer argues that armed conflict arises when incumbents cannot make credible promises to distribute public or private goods to large segments of society.⁶⁴ This problem is often exacerbated by the fact that leaders without credible ruling organizations cannot rely on loyal civilian or military elites to safeguard the regime.⁶⁵ Conversely, when leaders rule through institutionalized parties, they can make credible promises to provide public services or distribute benefits to social groups.⁶⁶ By increasing accountability towards citizens and promoting elite cohesion around regime maintenance, regimes with strong ruling parties should experience fewer outbreaks of civil conflict.

⁶⁰ Boix and Svolik 2013.

⁶¹ Svolik 2012.

⁶² Magaloni 2008, 1.

⁶³ Magaloni 2008; Svolik 2012.

⁶⁴ Keefer 2008.

⁶⁵ Magaloni 2008.

⁶⁶ Blaydes 2010.

Finally, institutionalized ruling parties can also facilitate peaceful leadership transitions.⁶⁷ Since conflict over leadership succession is a common cause of coups⁶⁸ and civil wars⁶⁹, regimes that can solve succession challenges through the party are more likely to remain stable over the long run.

To summarize, regimes with strong parties should indeed perform better on outcomes, such as economic growth or the prevention of coups and civil wars. However, as Section 4 demonstrated, many parties that have been coded as part of single-party regimes do not survive past the departure of the first leader, and therefore are unlikely to be truly strong.

I show that within the category of single-party regimes, parties that remain in power past the departure of the founding leader perform significantly better on these various outcomes compared with parties that do not remain in power past the departure of the founding leader. It is important to note that I am not necessarily making a causal argument here. I am simply taking established arguments that single-party regimes perform better on certain outcomes, and I am showing *descriptively* that when we decouple party strength from leader strength, there is important variation *within* the category of single-party regimes. This provides additional evidence that parties that do not remain in power after the departure of the founding leader are likely to be weak organizations that cannot function independently.

For this analysis, I focus on the subset of 49 regimes that have been coded as single-party by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz. Out of these 49 single-party regimes, I create

⁶⁷ Brownlee 2007.

⁶⁸ Frantz and Stein 2017.

⁶⁹ Kokkenon and Sundell 2017.

a dummy variable, *Party survived*, that takes a value of 1 if the ruling party remained in power past the departure of the founding leader, and a 0 otherwise. Parties that do not survive the departure of the founding leader can be interpreted as weak parties, and parties that do survive can generally be interpreted to be stronger parties.⁷⁰

I create three main dependent variables that reflect key regime outcomes: economic growth, coup vulnerability, and the outbreak of civil conflict. The first variable, *Economic growth*, is calculated as the average yearly GDP growth rate for the regime. The second variable, *Coup attempts*, is calculated as the percentage of years for which a coup attempt occurred in the regime. The third variable, *War onset*, is calculated as the percentage of years for which the regime experienced an onset of civil conflict.⁷¹

Table 1 summarizes key differences between parties that survive past the founding leader and those that do not. Parties that do *not* survive past the departure of the first leader perform significantly worse on all three outcomes compared with parties that do remain in power past the founding leader. Out of the 49 regimes that are labeled as single-party, 18 of these regimes include ruling parties that fail to remain in power past the departure of the founding leader. On average, these weaker parties experience

⁷⁰ We can be confident in our interpretation of parties that do *not* survive past the founding leader as weak parties. This category of ruling parties does not pass the minimum threshold of organizational strength or independence. However, researchers should be careful in their interpretation of parties that *do* survive the departure of the founding leader. Although parties that do survive are likely stronger, this category of parties should not be interpreted as *uniformly* strong organizations.

⁷¹ Yearly economic growth was first calculated as $\log(\text{GDP}(t)) - \log(\text{GDP}(t-1))$, and then the mean yearly growth was taken for each regime. The war onset and coup attempt variables were calculated by dividing the number of years for which an event occurred by the total length of the regime's rule. For example, if a regime experienced one coup attempt throughout its ten-year rule, then this regime would score 0.1 for the coup attempt variable. The data on GDP per capita and war onset comes from the Ethnic Power Relations dataset (Vogt et. al 2015). The data on coup attempts comes from Powell and Thyne 2011.

Table 1. *Party Strength and Regime Outcomes*

Party survived past the founding leader	Mean	SE	N	P-value of t-test
<i>DV: Economic growth</i>				
Yes (strong parties)	0.028	0.004	34	0.000
No (weak parties)	-0.017	0.009	15	
<i>DV: Coup attempts</i>				
Yes (strong parties)	0.039	0.015	34	0.078
No (weak parties)	0.090	0.025	15	
<i>DV: War onset</i>				
Yes (strong parties)	0.017	0.004	34	0.020
No (weak parties)	0.074	0.035	15	

Note: Sample includes only regimes that are coded as single-party by Geddes, Wright, Frantz. Economic growth is calculated as the average yearly growth rate for each regime. Coup attempts and war onset are calculated as the mean number of coup attempts and mean number of years with new war onset for each regime.

significantly lower levels of economic growth, more coup attempts, and more civil conflict onset, and the differences are statistically significant.

These relationships remain consistent even when we consider other possible drivers of economic growth and conflict. Appendix Table 3 presents results from regression analyses, which allow me to control for a number of other possible explanatory factors. Model (1) demonstrates that strong parties, as proxied by parties that survive past the founder leader, are positively associated with higher levels of economic growth, even when we control for GDP, oil production, ongoing civil wars, and levels of democracy.⁷² Models (2) and (3) show that strong parties are negatively associated with coup attempts and the outbreak of civil wars, even when controlling for poverty, oil, and ethnic fractionalization.⁷³ The results generally remain statistically significant, even with a limited number of observations.

Altogether this analysis demonstrates that when we differentiate parties within the

⁷² Or rather, levels of non-democracy, as measured by POLITY.

⁷³ Fearon and Laitin 2003; Londregan and Poole 1990.

single-party category according to survival beyond the founding leader, important substantive differences emerge along key regime outcomes. This provides additional evidence that parties that do survive multiple leadership transitions are more likely to be strong parties, and those that do not may have been miscategorized as part of single-party regimes. Moreover, these findings lend support for the argument that strong parties *are indeed* associated with better regime outcomes when we take into account the organization's ability to survive independently of the leader.

6. Conclusion

As the field of authoritarian politics has expanded, researchers have put forth a number of theories and hypotheses about the institutions and processes that drive authoritarian stability. Due to the scarcity of detailed cross-national data on the strength of authoritarian party organizations, researchers often turn to data on the existence of ruling parties or data on regime typologies as a proxy for strong parties. This article provides a cautionary tale about the accuracy of these indicators as proxies for ruling party strength.

Strong ruling parties should be able to survive their “founding fathers,” yet most ruling parties do not. Even many parties that have been classified as part of single-party regimes fail to survive the departure of the founding leader. This impermanence provides prima facie evidence that existing classifications of regime type may be an inaccurate reflection of the true underlying configuration of power between leaders and institutions. The mere existence of a ruling party does not guarantee its effective power or organizational capacity.

By demonstrating the relative rarity of strong ruling parties that can outlast particular leaders, this article also highlights an important limitation to arguments about the role of parties in dictatorships. Strong ruling parties, such as the PRI in Mexico or the CCP in China, may play a key role in promoting autocratic stability, *however* only a limited number of parties are up to the task.

What is the way forward for future empirical research on authoritarian parties? One of the main takeaways from this article is that the first leadership change is a critical juncture for authoritarian regimes, and this provides a good litmus test for assessing the baseline organizational independence of ruling parties. This also suggests that scholars should be cautious of forming assessments of institutional strength when the regime is still in the term of its first leader. Founding leaders often promote their ruling parties as a way to amplify their own personal authority and such regimes can appear to be single-party dictatorships. It is often not until the death or departure of the leader, does the fragility of the party organization become revealed.

Moreover, as scholars continue to develop new datasets on authoritarian institutions, future measures of ruling party strength should consist of disaggregated indicators that reflect the bureaucratization of the organization. Some possible criteria include whether there are there formal rules that determine promotion within the party hierarchy and to what extent such rules are followed. These types of disaggregated indicators will help distinguish party strength and leader strength, as well as move beyond the use of discrete regime types, which often obscures variation within categories. Moreover, researchers should be encouraged to rely more on objective indicators that can be replicated and verified. For instance, data that is collected from party constitutions can

be cross-checked across multiple coders. Either the document has a particular rule in place regarding party promotion or it does not, and such an indicator does not rely on the judgement of particular coders.

Finally, since this article focused on elite-level politics, researchers can also collect additional indicators of party strength that reflect lower-level institutionalization and the ability of the party to fulfill other tasks not covered in this study. Some examples include building an organizational presence in rural areas, developing mass-level membership, establishing official forums to increase transparency for policymaking, or establishing a system of dues or self-financing. Doing so will continue to help scholars better test theories, discover empirical trends, and complement qualitative and formal scholarship that examines the origins, logic, and consequences of stable authoritarian rule.

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Appendix Table 1. Autocratic Ruling Parties, 1946-2008

Country	Party	Start	End
Afghanistan	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan	1988	1991
Albania	Party of Labor of Albania	1948	1991
Algeria	National Liberation Front	1962	1991
Angola	People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola - Labor Party	1975	
Azerbaijan	New Azerbaijan Party	1993	
Bangladesh	Awami League	1972	1976
Bangladesh	Bangladesh Nationalist Party	1978	1981
Bangladesh	Jayita Party	1986	1990
Benin	Dahomey Democratic Rally (RDD)	1960	1963
Benin	People's Revolutionary Party of Benin (PRPB)	1975	1991
Bolivia	Socialist Republican Union Party	1947	1951
Bolivia	Revolutionary Nationalist Movement	1952	1963
Bolivia	Popular Christian Movement	1964	1968
Brazil	National Renewal Alliance Party (ARENA)	1964	1979
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Communist Party	1946	1990
Burkina Faso	Volatic Democratic Union (UDV)	1960	1965
Burkina Faso	Organization for Popular Democracy - Labour Movement	1991	1995
Burkina Faso	The Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP)	1996	2014
Burundi	Union for National Progress	1966	2002
Cambodia	Cambodian People's Party	1988	
Cameroon	Cameroonian Union/Cameroon People's Democratic Movement	1960	
Central African Republic	Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa	1960	1978
Central African Republic	Central African Democratic Rally	1987	1993
Chad	Progressive Party of Chad	1960	1972
Chad	National Union for Independence and Revolution	1984	1989

Chad	Patriotic Salvation Movement	1990	
China	Communist Party of China	1949	
Republic of Congo	National Revolutionary Movement	1963	1968
Republic of Congo	Congolese Labor Party	1969	
Cote d'Ivoire	Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI)	1960	1998
Cuba	Union Action Party (PAU), Progressive Action Party (PAP)	1952	1958
Cuba	Communist Party of Cuba	1960	
Czechoslovakia	Communist Party of Czechoslovakia	1948	1989
DRC	Popular Revolutionary movement	1967	1991
DRC	People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy	2003	2006
Dominican Republic	Dominican Party	1946	1961
Dominican Republic	Reformist Party	1966	1978
Egypt	Liberation Rally	1954	1961
Egypt	Arab Socialist Union	1962	1976
Egypt	National Democratic Party	1977	2011
El Salvador	Revolutionary Party of Democratic Unification	1950	1960
El Salvador	Party of National Conciliation	1962	1978
Eritrea	Eritrean People's Liberation Front/ PFDJ	1993	
Ethiopia	Ethiopian Workers' Party	1984	1990
Ethiopia	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front/EPRDF	1992	
Gabon	Gabonese Democratic Party	1960	
Gambia	People's Progressive Party (PPP)	1965	1993
Gambia	Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC)	1994	2016
Georgia	Union of Citizens of Georgia	1992	2004
East Germany	Socialist Unity Party of Germany	1954	1989
Ghana	The Convention People's Party (CPP)	1958	1965
Guatemala	National Democratic Movement	1954	1957
Guatemala	Institutional Democratic Party	1963	1966

Guinea	Democratic Party of Guinea-African Democratic Rally (PDG-RDA)	1958	1983
Guinea	Unity and Progress Party (PUP)	1991	2008
Guinea-Bissau	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC)	1974	2000
Haiti	Party of National Unity	1963	1985
Hungary	Hungarian Working People's Party	1948	1955
Hungary	Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party	1957	1989
Indonesia	Golkar	1966	1998
Iran	Resurgence Party	1975	1978
Iraq	Iraqi Arab Socialist Union Party	1963	1967
Iraq	Baath Party	1963	2003
Kazakhstan	Nur Otan	1999	
Kenya	Kenya African National Union	1963	2002
Laos	Lao People's Revolutionary Party	1975	
Lesotho	Basotho National Party	1970	1985
Liberia	True Whig Party (TWP)	1878	1979
Liberia	National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL)	1980	1989
Liberia	National Patriotic Party (NPP)	1997	2002
Madagascar	Social Democratic Party of Madagascar	1960	1971
Madagascar	Association for the Rebirth of Madagascar (AREMA)/ FNDR	1975	1993
Malawi	Malawi Congress Party	1964	1994
Malaysia	United Malays National Organization - Alliance Party/National Front	1957	1972
Malaysia	Barsian National Front	1973	1980
Malaysia	United Malays National Organization	1981	
Mali	The Sudanese Union-African Democratic Rally (US-RDA)	1960	1968
Mali	Democratic Union of the Malian People (UDPN)	1976	1991
Mauritania	Mauritanian People's Party/Parti du Peuple Mauritanien (PPM)	1960	1978
Mauritania	Republican Party for Democracy and Renewal (PRDR)	1993	2004
Mexico	Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)	1929	2000

Mongolia	Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party	1924	1989
Mozambique	Liberation Front of Mozambique	1975	
Myanmar	Burma Socialist Programme Party	1962	1987
Nicaragua	Liberal Nationalist Party	1936	1978
Nicaragua	Sandinista National Liberation Front	1981	1984
Niger	Nigerien Progressive Party-African Democratic Rally (PPN-RDA)	1960	1973
Niger	National Movement for the Development of Society (MNSD)	1989	1993
Nigeria	Social Democratic Party/National Republican Convention	1989	1992
North Korea	Workers' Party of Korea	1948	
Pakistan	Muslim League	1962	1968
Pakistan	Pakistan Muslim League	2001	2018
Paraguay	Republican National Alliance/Colorado Party (ANR-PC)	1949	2008
Peru	Cambio 90	1992	2000
Philippines	Nationalista Party	1972	1977
Philippines	New Society Movement	1978	1986
Poland	Polish United Worker's Party	1948	1990
Portugal	National Union	1934	1969
Portugal	Popular National Action	1970	1973
Romania	Communist Party of Romania	1946	1989
Russia	United Russia	2004	
Rwanda	Parmehutu Democratic Republican Movement	1962	1972
Rwanda	Nat'l Republican Movement for Development and Democracy (MRND)	1974	1994
Rwanda	Rwandan Patriotic Front	1995	
Senegal	The Socialist Party of Senegal (PS)	1960	2000
Serbia and Montenegro	Socialist Party of Serbia	1992	2000
Sierra Leone	All People's Congress (APC)	1968	1991
Singapore	People's Action Party	1965	
Somalia	Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party	1976	1990

South Africa	National Party	1948	1993
South Korea	Liberal	1950	1960
South Korea	Democratic Republican	1963	1978
South Korea	Democratic Justice Party	1981	1988
Spain	FET-JONS	1934	1975
Sri Lanka	United National Party	1977	1989
Sudan	Sudanese Socialist Party	1971	1984
Sudan	National Congress Party	1993	
Syria	Baath Party	1963	
Taiwan	Kuomintang	1949	2002
Tajikistan	People's Democratic Party	1992	
Tanzania	Tanzanian African National Union/ Chama Cha Mapinduzi	1961	
Togo	Togolese People's Movement	1963	1966
Togo	Rally of the Togolese People	1969	2012
Tunisia	Neo-Destour party/Destourien Socialist Party	1957	1986
Tunisia	Constitutional Democratic Rally/ Destourien Socialist Party	1987	2011
Turkey	Democratic Party	1950	1959
Turkmenistan	Democratic Party of Turkmenistan	1992	
U.S.S.R.	Communist Party of the Soviet Union	1917	1990
Uganda	Uganda People's Congress	1966	1971
Uruguay	National Party	1948	1993
Uzbekistan	People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan	1991	2007
Viet Nam	Communist Party of Vietnam	1954	
Vietnam, South	National Salvation Front	1954	1963
Yemen	General People's Congress	1993	
South Yemen	National Liberation Front	1962	1978
South Yemen	Yemeni Socialist Party	1978	1989
Yugoslavia	Communist Party of Yugoslavia	1946	1989

Zambia	United National Independence Party	1964	1991
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)	1980	

Note: List of parties taken from Svobik (2012), "Institutions in Dictatorship, 1946-2008" dataset.

Appendix Table 2. Parties that may have been mischaracterized according to regime type

Regime Type	Party	Criteria
<i>Weak parties categorized as party-based regimes</i>		
Party-based	PLA (Albania) RNM (Bolivia) PDCI (Cote d'Ivoire) PPP (Gambia) PDG (Guinea) BNP (Lesotho) PSD (Madagascar) US (Mali) FSLN (Nicaragua) PPN (Niger) Parmehutu (Rwanda) APC (Sierra Leone) UNP (Sri Lanka) DP (Turkey) UNIP (Zambia)	Failed to remain in power at least 10 years past first leader
<i>Strong parties categorized as non party-based regimes</i>		
Military	ARENA (Brazil)	Remained in power 13 years past first leader
Party-military	PCT (Congo) UPRONA (Burundi) PCN (El Salvador) RPF (Rwanda)	Remained in power at least 12 years past first leader
Party-personal	Communist Party (Cuba) PDG (Gabon) WPK (North Korea) PCR (Romania) TPD (Turkmenistan)	Remained in power at least 10 years past first leader
Personal	YAP (Azerbaijan) CPDM (Cameroon) PCT (Congo) PAIGC (Guinea-Bissau) National Unity (Haiti) Baath (Iraq) Liberal (Nicaragua) National Union (Paraguay)	Remained in power at least 13 years past first leader
Party-personal-military	NDP (Egypt) ANR (Paraguay) Baath (Syria)	Remained in power at least 29 years past first leader

Note: Once a country democratizes, it drops out of the sample, therefore autocratic successor parties are not included in this table. For instance, the PDCI was the ruling party in Cote d'Ivoire during the authoritarian period from 1960-1993. The PDCI is still involved in politics today but is not included in my dataset past 1993.

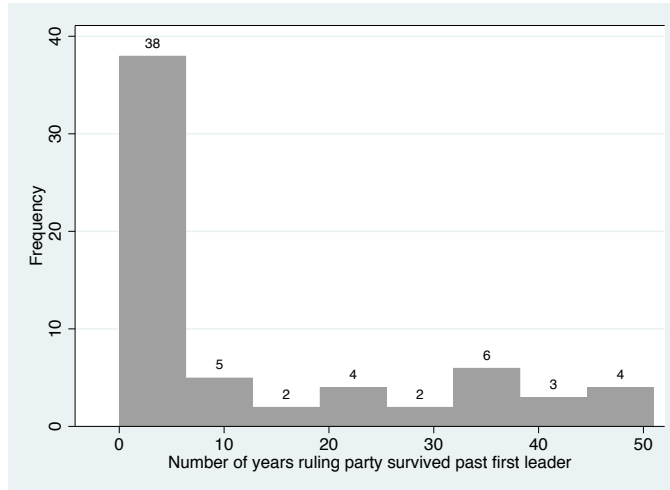
Appendix Table 2 provides a summary list of parties that may have been mischaracterized under the regime typology framework. First, the number of party-based regimes is likely overestimated in the Geddes, Wright, and Frantz dataset. Out of the 41 parties that were matched with party-based regimes, 15 (37 percent) of these parties fail to remain in office at least 10 years after the founder's death or departure.

Second, some non party-based regimes may have been mischaracterized as well. Certain regimes which are classified as military, party-military, party-personal, or even personalist are able to survive for long periods after the departure of the founder, suggesting that these seemingly personalist regimes may actually have strongly institutionalized parties. Eight parties that were matched with personalist regimes, for instance, were able to remain in power at least 13 years past the founding leader. I also identify 14 parties that were matched with military, party-military, party-personal, or party-personal-military regimes that were able to remain in office at least 10 years after the departure of the founder.

Appendix Table 3. *Party Strength and Regime Outcomes*

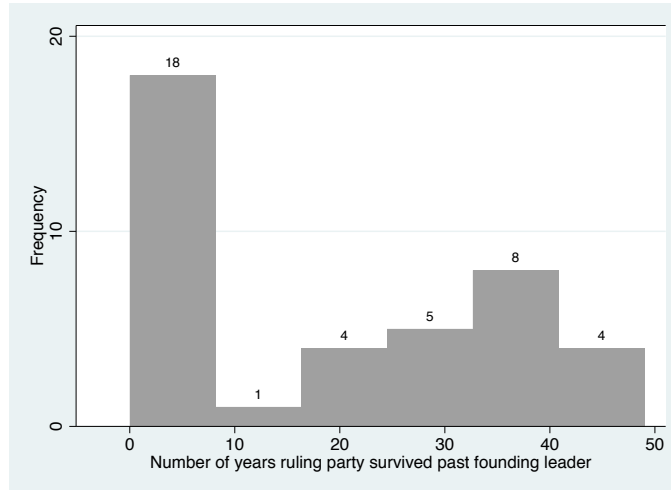
VARIABLES	(1) Economic growth	(2) Coups attempts	(3) War onset
Party survived (strong party)	0.040*** (0.010)	-0.031 (0.033)	-0.052* (0.028)
GDP per capita	0.003 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.005)
Oil production	-0.003 (0.010)	0.005 (0.029)	0.011 (0.025)
Ongoing war	0.001 (0.016)		
POLITY	-0.001 (0.001)		
population		-0.014 (0.011)	0.005 (0.009)
Ethnic fractionalization		-0.014 (0.055)	-0.034 (0.046)
Constant	-0.023** (0.009)	0.222** (0.101)	0.055 (0.084)
Observations	48	49	49
R-squared	0.406	0.111	0.144

Note: Sample includes only regimes that are coded as single-party by Geddes, Wright, Frantz. OLS model used, and standard errors are reported in parentheses. Economic growth is calculated as the average yearly growth rate for each regime. Coups attempts and war onset are calculated as the mean number of coup attempts and mean number of years with new war onset for each regime. Control variables are all calculated as the mean value for the regime. Statistical significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10



Appendix Figure 1. Autocratic ruling party survival beyond founding leader, conditional on peaceful leader exit

Note: Histogram displays the number of years each ruling party remained in power past the departure of the first leader. Sample includes only observations where the founding leader exited office peacefully, as coded by the Archigos dataset. A count of the number of parties in each bin is listed above the bins.



Appendix Figure 2. Number of years in the party remains in power past the first leader in party-based regimes

Note: Histogram displays the number of years each ruling party remained in power past the departure of the first leader. Sample includes only party-based regimes, as coded by Geddes, Wright, Frantz (2014). A count of the number of parties in each bin is listed above the bins.