

PARTY SYSTEM INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN 30 AFRICAN COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

In their study of 12 Latin American countries, Mainwaring and Scully develop a framework to assess levels of party system institutionalization and explore the impact of the degree of party system institutionalization on democratic consolidation. In this paper, we provide a description of the levels of party system institutionalization in the African context. Employing three criteria adapted from the framework of Mainwaring and Scully, we systematically measure the level of party system institutionalization in 30 African countries. More specifically, we examine (1) regularity of party competition; (2) extent to which parties manifest roots in society; and (3) institutionalization, or the extent to which citizens and organized interests perceive that parties and elections are the means of determining who governs in the 30 countries. Our findings indicate that the level of party system institutionalization is generally lower in African countries than in those of Latin America. However, we find that the length of time during which a country has experience with democracy is an important factor in determining the level of party system institutionalization. The difference in performance between the five long-standing African democracies and those countries new to multipartyism was notable on all of the criteria.

KEY WORDS ■ Africa ■ party system institutionalization ■ party systems ■ political parties

Introduction

In the 1990s, democratic movements have emerged to challenge authoritarian rule in countries across Africa. However, many of the democratic advances remain vulnerable. The events have led observers to ask: 'Will the new democratic regimes survive?' Yet, this begs a more general question: what factors facilitate the survival and consolidation of democratic regimes?

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One factor thought to affect the establishment and survival of democratic forms of government is the level of party system institutionalization. Yet, does party system institutionalization facilitate the establishment of democratic processes? Mainwaring and Scully (1995) explore the impact of the degree of institutionalization of party systems on democratic consolidation in Latin America. On the basis of their 12-country study, they conclude that a high level of institutionalization fosters democratic consolidation. However, attention to this question has been scant and erratic with reference to Africa.¹ In order to begin to fill this lacuna in the literature we provide a description of the level of party system institutionalization in the African context. To accomplish this goal, we apply the framework developed by Mainwaring and Scully to a sample of African countries.

Theoretical Foundations

Political parties have long been recognized as a requisite for any democratic political system (e.g. see Schattschneider, 1942; Duverger, 1954; Downs, 1957; Key, 1964; Aldrich, 1995). Political parties are thought to perform numerous roles critical to the functioning of a democracy. They are said to aggregate interests, thereby translating ‘. . . mass preferences into public policy’ (Key quoted in Sartori, 1988: 254) and serve as both tools of representation and ‘channels of expression’ (p. 253). Key notes that it is only through party competition that governmental successions have occurred as a function of popular decision (1964: 200). Hence, parties allow diverse groups to pursue their interests in a peaceful, systematic fashion within a political system.

Mainwaring and Scully define a party system as ‘. . . the set of patterned interactions in the competition among parties’ (1995: 4). According to Key, a party system must, ‘. . . extend its leadership over considerable areas or over large numbers of people’ (1964: 200). Initially, political parties were seen as potentially divisive forces for the very fact that they provide citizens with a mechanism through which they can pursue their particular interests. Parties were perceived as being capable of undermining the unity of a nation and encouraging the myopic pursuit of particular interests on the part of a citizenry to the detriment of the general welfare of society.

Slowly, the perception of parties as being inherently threatening to the political order began to recede, and people realized that the expression of diverse and dissenting views would not necessarily have destructive effects on society (Sartori, 1988: 253). Yet, this does not negate the possibility that the existence of multiple political parties can generate political and social disorder. It is the consensus around the political system’s rules and norms for settling differences that prevents parties from exhibiting some of their more noxious effects (Sartori, 1988). Nonetheless, whatever dangers the existence of multiple political parties poses, the critical role political parties

play in promoting political stability (e.g. see Huntington, 1968) and democratic consolidation has been affirmed and reaffirmed by scholars through the present time (e.g. see Dix, 1992; Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). Mainwaring and Scully contend that 'building a party system' is *necessary*, but not *sufficient*, for the maintenance of democratic stability (1995: 27). The key features of institutionalized party systems, such as stability in party competition, allow democracies to operate smoothly, yet do not guarantee democratic governance.

Political Parties in Africa

The democratization movements throughout Africa in the early 1990s gave rise to multifarious political associations and parties. New political parties have emerged in large number in many of the democratizing countries. This onslaught of political activity is reminiscent of that which preceded independence in many sub-Saharan African countries. The importance attached to the parties burgeoning at that time is reflected in the literature on African politics which emerged in the immediate post-independence period. Observers of Africa during the period duly followed and noted the activities of political parties. Morgenthau observes that political parties are one of the oldest national political institutions in West Africa² and constitute one of the first political institutions to be 'wholly Africanized' (1964: 330). Apter sees political parties as one of the most important 'instruments of modernization' (1965: 3).

The political configuration that emerged during the struggle for independence reflected the tendency of various political groups to rally around a dominant party in an effort to defeat a common enemy. The tendency for the leading parties to use their prominent role in these movements to eliminate political competition and consolidate power after achieving independence was the subject of a great deal of the scholarship on Africa. Apter attributes the high frequency with which distinctions between governments and ruling parties were quickly blurred to the 'multiplicity of functions' taken on by parties both before and following independence (1965: 167). Zolberg (1969) aptly describes the way the *Parti Democratique de Côte d'Ivoire* consolidated its hold on state power in Côte d'Ivoire:

The *Parti Democratique de Côte d'Ivoire* began its career as a protest movement within a framework that afforded but limited opportunities for political participation by Africans (1946–1951); it was transformed into a political party during the period of terminal colonialism (1952–1958); and it became synonymous with government when the Ivory Coast Republic was founded (1959–).

(1969: 322–3)

This pattern seems reflective of the evolution of one-party rule in many other African countries. However, Lewis observes that single-party dominance did

not emerge as a result of consensus during the movements for independence (1965: 17). In fact, many of the parties that monopolized power during the past couple of decades in Africa were voted into office in free elections. Once in office, these parties seized power and many went so far as to ban any opposition in an effort to maintain a monopoly on power (1965: 34–5). Early on, Lewis perceived the one-party state's inability to fulfil its purported roles: 'The single-party thus fails in all its claims. It cannot represent all the people; or maintain free discussion; or give stable government; or above all, reconcile differences between various regional groups' (1965: 63). Observers note that, for the most part, these parties were not seamless monoliths, but were composed of diverse political groupings and tendencies (Bienen, 1978). They also find that there was not one particular type of single-party state (e.g. Lewis, 1965; Bienen, 1978), and many scholars have attempted to build classificatory schemes of the systems.

Many have questioned the depth and significance of the regime changes which have taken place during the 'third wave' of democratization in Africa. For example, Claude Ake observed that multi-party elections provided well-known autocrats with the opportunity to engage in a democratic credentialing process (1996). Few observers are optimistic about the prospects for democratic consolidation in those African countries touched by the third wave of democratization. According to Crawford Young, 'In only a handful of instances can one speak with reasonable confidence of a beginning of consolidation . . .' (1996: 60). Bratton and van de Walle note that the organizational weakness of parties in those African countries having undergone transitions 'bodes poorly for the consolidation of democracy' (1997: 252).

Nonetheless, even if the prospects for democratic consolidation do not seem especially propitious, most do not dispute the importance of the recent wave of democratic liberalizations and transitions. Given the tenuous nature of democratic consolidation in Africa, those factors that could facilitate or impede consolidation are of acute interest. Today, however, our level of understanding of the way in which party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation relate to each other in the African context remains low. In this paper, we lay out a framework that can be used to track the relationship between different aspects of party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation so that we can better understand the magnitude and nature of the relationship between these phenomena.

Theoretical Form for the Study

In *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*, Mainwaring and Scully follow an institutional approach, looking at the characteristics of party systems as opposed to only the characteristics of the component parties. They devise a framework to assess the level of party system institutionalization in individual countries. Mainwaring and Scully

outline four criteria against which they evaluate level of party system institutionalization in 12 Latin American countries: (1) regularity of party competition, (2) the extent to which parties have 'stable roots in society', (3) the extent to which citizens and major political actors accept that 'parties and elections are the means of determining who governs', and (4) the extent to which parties are organized (1995: 5, 14).

According to their first criterion, in order for a party system to be institutionalized, 'Patterns of party competition must manifest some regularity . . .' (1995: 5). With the second criterion Mainwaring and Scully assert that the principal parties must have at least fairly stable roots in society. In an institutionalized party system, one would expect parties to remain consistent with respect to platform and ideology and therefore maintain a fairly stable level of citizen support. Hence, one would not expect parties to appear and disappear from election to election (1995: 5). According to the third criterion, ' . . . citizens and organized interests must perceive that parties and elections are the means of determining who governs, and that the electoral process and parties are accorded legitimacy' (1995: 14). The fourth criterion they lay out is party organization. That is, in an institutionalized party system, parties are generally not subordinate to other political or private entities, have routinized procedures, are relatively cohesive, have an independent and sufficient resource base, and are 'territorially comprehensive' (1995: 5).

Based on these four criteria, the authors create a classification scheme with two principal categories: institutionalized party systems and inchoate party systems. These two classifications, institutionalized and inchoate, should not be viewed as discrete categories, but rather as the endpoints of the continuous variable, institutionalization. A third, residual category, labeled hegemonic systems in transition, is created for countries which can be appropriately categorized neither as institutionalized nor inchoate.

Institutionalized versus Inchoate Party Systems

In reference to the criteria outlined by Mainwaring and Scully, an institutionalized party system implies a high degree of stability in interparty competition, the existence of parties that have 'somewhat stable roots in society', the acceptance of parties and elections as the means of transferring political power and determining who governs, as well as political parties that are highly organized with reasonably stable rules and structures (1995: 5). In an institutionalized party system, populist or demagogic leaders are normally shunned by parties, and citizens tend to vote on the basis of parties. Institutionalized parties tend to employ peaceful, democratic means in their quest for power (1995: 23).

Mainwaring and Scully note that in inchoate systems, ' . . . party organizations are generally weak, electoral volatility is high, party roots in society

are weak, and individual personalities dominate parties and campaigns' (1995: 20). Mainwaring and Scully point out that citizens do not have strong party attachments and hence, parties do not drive the vote in the way that they do in institutionalized systems.

Hegemonic Party System in Transition

For Mainwaring and Scully, 'hegemonic party system in transition' constitutes a residual category because, they claim, it implies a type of system as opposed to the level of institutionalization (1995: 20). In the case of Africa, this category is important. While the level of true electoral competition may not be that high in several of these countries, they may achieve fairly high scores on level of institutionalization, given the way this concept is operationalized. Mainwaring and Scully note that 'the existence of old, well-established, and well-organized parties means that in some respects the process of institutionalizing a party system is more advanced than in several countries that already have competitive politics' (1995: 21). However, Mainwaring and Scully also point out that hegemonic systems cannot be considered completely institutionalized because of the lack of party competition (1995).

Extension of Mainwaring and Scully's Party System Institutionalization Study to Africa

We employ the party system institutionalization framework to assess the level of party system institutionalization in the 30 African countries that use multiparty competitive elections to determine who governs. More specifically, we use three of the four criteria employed by Mainwaring and Scully in their study of 12 Latin American countries to evaluate the level of party system institutionalization in these countries. Thus, we look at (1) regularity of party competition, (2) extent of societal roots, and (3) institutionalization or the extent to which, in the words of Mainwaring and Scully, 'citizens and organized interests perceive that parties and elections are the means of determining who governs' (1995: 14). While we assess the above criteria in a systematic fashion, we were only able to examine our fourth dimension of interest, level of party cohesion and organization, in an impressionistic manner.³ Hence, we have decided not to include this variable in our analysis.

Since our goal was to replicate Mainwaring and Scully's study in the context of Africa, we adhered to their framework as closely as possible. However, we found the way in which they assessed some of their concepts of interest problematic. They do not make explicit their method of scoring the countries on the various indicators, nor do they fully operationalize all of the criteria. We therefore use different indicators than they do in certain

cases and make explicit our method of scoring. Hence, our study is more an extension of Mainwaring and Scully's study than a replication.

Criteria of Party System Institutionalization and their Operationalization

Mainwaring and Scully score institutionalization on a scale from one to three. The scale is as follows:

- 3.0 = high level of institutionalization
- 2.5 = medium high level of institutionalization
- 2.0 = medium level of institutionalization
- 1.5 = medium low level of institutionalization
- 1.0 = low level of institutionalization

Each country is assigned one of the above scores on each criterion, and then the scores on the criteria are summed to yield the aggregate scores, which are used to classify the 12 Latin American party systems as institutionalized, inchoate or hegemonic.

Selection of Cases

In this study, we look at the 30 African countries that have had at least two multiparty elections, including those that have recently undergone transitions to democracy as well as the five long-standing democracies. While we decided that our analysis should focus on those sub-Saharan African countries that have had two consecutive elections, we recognize that in some of our countries of interest no alternation of power has ever occurred, and the competitiveness of the elections and extent to which political rights and liberties are extended to the citizenry are questionable. We include all of those countries which have had at least two consecutive multiparty elections because we think it is important to track party system institutionalization in countries at different stages of the democratization and democratic consolidation processes. This allows us to discern how party systems evolve and shape democratization and democratic consolidation. As Mainwaring and Scully (1995) observe, 'In order to move toward a democracy, some aspects of party politics – especially the intertwining of hegemonic party and state – must be deinstitutionalized' (20).

A few of the countries experienced democratic reversals subsequent to the elections included in our study. For example, despite a democratic reversal in 1994, Gambia's long history of competitive democratic elections since independence warrants its inclusion. Indeed, Gambia's past experience with democratic elections may reveal important points about the process of party system institutionalization.⁴ Congo is now under military rule and Côte

d'Ivoire has just experienced a democratic reversal. However, we feel that these countries' recent interludes with democratization and multipartyism are potentially illuminating.

We were concerned that some of our indicators, such as legislative volatility, might be measuring different underlying phenomena in the more democratic systems. For example, within a democratic system low legislative volatility may reflect quite stable patterns of party competition. On the other hand, in a less democratic system, a low level of volatility may indicate a lack of competitiveness. We, therefore, decided to separate the countries according to the level of democracy and then compare party system institutionalization across these different categories. In order to assess the levels of democracy, we looked at the quality of their last two elections and their Freedom House Score. However, we found that our variables of interest behaved in much the same way among the more democratic countries and less democratic countries. Although level of democracy proved to offer little analytic leverage with regard to party system institutionalization, length of experience with democracy does appear to be important, as we shall show.

Criterion One: Regularity of Party Competition

Like Mainwaring and Scully, we use Pedersen's index of volatility to calculate legislative volatility and presidential volatility for the 30 African cases. Pedersen's index measures the net change in each party's seat or vote share from election to election. It is calculated by summing the net changes in the percentage of seats (or votes) won or lost by all of the parties from election to election and dividing by two (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995: 6).⁵

However, we add a third indicator under this criterion: the difference between the percentage of votes captured by a party in a presidential election and the percentage of lower chamber seats won by that same party in the corresponding legislative election (presidential/legislative difference). Mainwaring and Scully use this indicator to measure the extent of party penetration into society under their second criterion. They claim that small sum total differences in presidential and legislative voting reflect a tendency for voters to identify with a particular party label. While we agree that this indicator reflects a tendency for people to vote on the basis of party labels, we feel that it belongs with the first criterion. Voting on the basis of party label is integrally related to the regularity of party competition. We would expect greater regularity in cases where people tend to identify with a particular party label than in cases where they do not.

To assess the extent to which our intuition was correct, we examined the inter-item correlations between the other two indicators of criterion one (presidential and legislative volatility), the two indicators of criterion two (see description of this criterion below), and this indicator. We found that the inter-item correlations for the three indicators we propose to use for

Table 1

		<i>Legislative volatility</i>	<i>Presidential volatility</i>	<i>Pres./leg difference</i>	<i>Mean age of parties with 10% seats</i>	<i>Percent of seats won by parties founded by 1970</i>
Legislative volatility	Pearson correlation	1.000	.589*	.889*	-.131	-.173
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004	.000	.491	.360
	N	30	22	26	30	30
Presidential volatility	Pearson correlation	.589*	1.000	.639*	-.235	-.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.	.002	.294	.750
	N	22	22	22	22	22
Pres./leg. difference	Pearson correlation	.889*	.629*	1.000	-.307	-.217
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.	.127	.287
	N	26	22	26	26	26
Mean age of parties with 10% seats	Pearson correlation	-.131	-.235	-.307	1.000	.847*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.491	.294	.127	.	.000
	N	30	22	26	30	30
Percent of seats won by parties founded by 1970	Pearson correlation	-.173	-.072	-.217	.847*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.360	.750	.287	.000	.
	N	30	22	26	30	30

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

criterion one are extremely high (see Table 1). However, presidential/legislative difference is not highly correlated with the indicators of criterion two. A factor analysis further confirmed our notion that the three indicators we use for criterion one all measure one underlying dimension, whereas those for criterion two measure a different dimension.

We are able to look only at one electoral period for the majority of our cases, since most of the African countries have only had two consecutive democratic elections.⁶ For those five countries considered long-standing 'polyarchies', we included data on all of the multiparty, competitive legislative elections since independence. We allocated points for mean electoral volatility and mean presidential/legislative difference as follows:

- 3.0 = 0-10%
- 2.5 = 11-20%
- 2.0 = 21-30%

1.5 = 31–40%

1.0 = over 40%

Each country was assigned two scores, one based on its mean electoral volatility, the other on its mean presidential/legislative difference. These two scores were then averaged to give an overall score for criterion one.⁷

Criterion Two: Stable Roots in Society

One variable Mainwaring and Scully employ is age of party to indicate the extent to which parties have stable roots in society. As noted earlier, a party's ability to survive reflects its ability to maintain support in the population. In order to measure this variable, they look at percentage of lower-chamber seats held by parties founded by 1950. Second, they look at the age of the parties that have received more than 10 percent of the vote in the most recent legislative election. They also include the presidential/legislative difference, which, as noted above, we placed among the other indicators for criterion one. For the first indicator of age, we look at the percentage of lower-chamber seats held by parties formed by 1970. This slight departure from Mainwaring and Scully was necessary for a couple of reasons. Very few parties were formed by 1950 in the African cases. In order to capture the parties with roots on or around independence, which the majority of the African countries obtained around 1960, we set our date at 1970. Had we set the date earlier, we would have had very little variance on this indicator. Since making intra-African comparisons is an important part of our task, we use the date of 1970 as our cut-off point. Should one want to conduct a study that includes countries from multiple world regions, this indicator may need to be adjusted accordingly. We scored the countries on this indicator as follows:

3.0 = 80–100%

2.5 = 60–79%

2.0 = 40–9%

1.5 = 20–39%

1.0 = below 20%

We alter the second measure of age slightly so that we look at average age of the parties that obtained 10 percent or more of the seats in the last election *or* the average age of the top two competitors. It was necessary to do so because of the hegemonic nature of many of Africa's party systems. Had we not made the provision to look at the top two competitors in cases where no or only one party received at least 10 percent of the vote, there would have been many cases where we looked at the age of only one party.

We scored the countries as follows:

3.0 = above 30 years

2.5 = 25–30 years

2.0 = 19–24 years

1.5 = 13–18 years

1.0 = below 13 years

In order to come up with a final score on the second criterion, we added the two scores for each country and calculated the average.

Criterion Three: Institutionalization

Mainwaring and Scully do not operationalize their third criterion, institutionalization, or the extent to which ‘citizens and organized interests perceive that parties and elections are the means of determining who governs’ (1995: 14). They contend that survey data would best allow one to measure this concept, and then go on to make impressionistic determinations of how countries rank on this criterion. However, we wanted to evaluate this variable in a systematic fashion with reference to the 30 African countries. We use three indicators which allow us to ascertain the level of acceptance of parties and elections as the primary routes to power. For the past two elections, we look at: (a) whether the opposition boycotted the election, (b) whether the losers accepted the results, and (c) whether the elections were deemed free and fair by international observers.

For each election, we then used our indicators to assign a point value. First, one point was assigned if there was not an opposition boycott to an election, and zero points were assigned if there was. Second, if the losers accepted the results of a particular election, a point of one was assigned, while zero points were assigned if they did not.⁸ Third, one point was assigned if an election was free and fair, and zero points were assigned if it was not. Therefore, for each election, points were allocated as follows:

- (1) Did any major party boycott the election?
 - yes = 0 points
 - no = 1 point
- (2) Did the losers accept the results?
 - yes = 1 point
 - no = 0 points
- (3) Was the election free and fair?
 - yes = 1 point
 - no = 0 points

In order to calculate the percentage of possible points each country’s respective party system earned, we divided the points associated with each country by the total number of points possible, which was six. Based on these percentages, we assigned the final scores on the third criterion according to the following scale:

- 3.0 = 100% (6/6)
- 2.5 = 83% (5/6)
- 2.0 = 66% (4/6)
- 1.5 = 33–50% (2/6 – 3/6)
- 1.0 = below 33% (0 or 1/6)

Aggregate Score

Finally, we summed the scores on our three criteria for each country. We then ranked the countries according to these aggregate scores and categorized the countries as institutionalized, hegemonic and inchoate.

Results

Criterion 1: Regularity of Party Competition

As noted above, our indicators for regularity of party competition are legislative volatility, presidential volatility and the difference in presidential/legislative voting. Table 2a shows the mean electoral volatility of the 30 African countries. Included in this table are the mean legislative volatility, the mean presidential volatility and the mean electoral volatility, which is the average of legislative and presidential volatility.⁹ The election periods range from 1966 to 1999 (see Appendix A for the elections included in our study). The countries in Table 2a are arranged from lowest to highest mean electoral volatility, where a lower volatility score indicates a higher level of party system institutionalization. The range of values on these indicators is quite large. The difference between Cape Verde, which reports the lowest legislative volatility, and Lesotho, which reports the highest legislative volatility, is 98 percent. While the range of values for presidential volatility is not nearly as dramatic, it is still close to 60 percent. The high variability in volatility scores in the 30 African countries reflects the varying levels of stability in party competition in these countries. The electoral volatility for four countries, Malawi, Botswana, Burkina Faso and Gambia, is equal to or less than 10 percent. In these countries, electoral competition exhibits a high degree of regularity.

With mean electoral volatility for 13 countries falling between 10 and 20 percent, 'moderately stable' constitutes the modal category for criterion one. As noted earlier, presidential volatility and legislative volatility are highly correlated, and so we are not surprised that most of the countries falling in this range have moderate levels on both indicators of volatility. It is telling that in over a third of our cases, 11 of the 30 countries, patterns of party competition can be described as extremely unstable. In these countries, the parties that gain access to power change dramatically from one election to the next.

Table 2a. Electoral volatility in thirty African countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>Time span</i>	<i>No. of electoral periods¹</i>	<i>Mean legislative volatility (A)</i>	<i>Mean presidential volatility (B)</i>	<i>Mean electoral volatility (A+B)/2</i>
Malawi	1994-99	1	4	2	3
Burkina Faso	1992-97	1	12	8	10
Botswana	1969-94	5	10	NA	10
Gambia	1966-92	5	9	11	10
Cape Verde	1991-95	1	1	23	12
Senegal	1983-98	3	12	13	13
Côte d'Ivoire	1990-95	1	9	18	13
Djibouti	1992-97	1	17	11	14
Congo	1992-93	1	14	NA	14
Zimbabwe	1980-95	3	10	19	14
Equatorial Guinea	1993-99	1	15	NA	15
Seychelles	1993-98	1	9	23	16
CAR	1993-98	1	16	NA	16
Mauritania	1992-96	1	3	32	17
South Africa	1994-99	1	18	NA	18
Namibia	1989-94	1	19	NA	19
Zambia	1991-96	1	12	28	20
Ghana	1992-96	1	33	9	21
Kenya	1992-97	1	28	35	31
Gabon	1990-96	1	25	42	33
Sao Tomé	1991-98	2	24	47	35
Mali	1992-97	1	32	52	42
Niger	1993-97	2	46	52	49
Togo	1994-99	1	56	45	50
Madagascar	1993-98	1	64	39	51
Cameroon	1993-97	1	43	60	51
Comoros	1992-96	2	81	30	56
Benin	1991-99	2	59	54	56
Mauritius	1976-95	5	72	NA	72
Lesotho	1993-98	1	99	NA	99
Mean			28.36	29.60	29.44
Coefficient of variation			0.8931	0.5831	0.7614

¹ The number of electoral periods refers to legislative electoral periods.

Sources: *Africa South of the Sahara* (1990-9); Bratton and van der Walle (1996); Day and Degenhardt (1996); *Europa World Year Book* (1996); *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*; Nohlen, Krennerich and Thibaut (1999); *Political Handbook and Atlas of the World* (1996).

The pre-eminence of Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) in Zimbabwean politics in the post-independence period accounts for its low legislative volatility score of 10.28 percent. After Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, ZANU-PF has consistently captured an overwhelming majority of the seats in the National Assembly, while opposition parties routinely win only a few seats per election. Like Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire has a fairly low level of legislative volatility. Given the late entrance of opposition parties onto the political landscape it is not surprising that the PDCI-RDA won a huge majority of the seats in both the 1990 and 1995 elections. In both these countries, presidential volatility scores are higher than legislative volatility scores, reflecting the fact that opposition parties fared better in presidential elections than in legislative elections. Nonetheless, Mugabe still drew over 75 and 90 percent of the vote in Zimbabwe's 1990 and 1996 presidential elections, respectively.

The fluid nature of coalition politics provides a reasonable explanation for Mauritius's legislative volatility score of 72 percent.¹⁰ In 1990, an electoral alliance between the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien* (MMM), the *Mouvement Socialiste Militant* (MSM) and the *Mouvement des Travailleurs Démocrates* (MTD) secured 57 of the 62 elective seats. In 1995, a shift in coalition partners resulted in a MMM and Mauritian Labor Party (MLP) alliance which won 60 of 62 seats, while the MSM lost all of its representation in the National Assembly. Hence, the tendency toward broad shifts in electoral alliances in Mauritian politics accounts for the high volatility score.

Lesotho's phenomenally high legislative volatility rate of 99 percent deserves some attention.¹¹ In the case of Lesotho, the Basotho Congress Party (BCP) won all of the seats in the 1993 founding election. However, prior to the 1998 election, one of the BCP leaders resigned from the BCP and launched the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD). The LCD then captured all but two seats in the 1998 election. Clearly, votes appear to be driven by personal as opposed to party attachments in Lesotho.

At 59 percent, Benin perhaps best exemplifies the dynamics of instability in party competition. In the 1991 legislative election, none of the 24 parties that contested the election attained a majority of seats. In this election, 12 parties won seats, and 18 parties won seats in the 1995 election. However, many of the parties that won seats in the 1991 election failed to do so in the 1995 election. Hence, its legislative volatility for the first electoral period was 85 percent. Benin's electoral volatility for its second electoral period was much lower, at 33 percent. While it is too early to say with any certainty, this decrease in volatility could indicate a trend toward greater regularity in party competition.

In their study of 12 Latin American countries, Mainwaring and Scully have similar results on this criterion. These authors find patterns of party competition are quite stable in three of the Latin American countries, moderately stable in five countries, quite unstable in only one country and extremely unstable in four countries. The length of time a country has had

experience with democracy appears to have some important implications for the regularity of party competition. If one separates long-standing democracies from third-wave democracies, some differences become visible. For example, the mean volatility for the five long-standing democracies is 23.89 percent, which is notably lower than the mean of the other 25 countries (30.55 percent). If we exclude Mauritius, which is an outlier due to the nature of coalitional politics, the mean volatility drops to only 12 percent for the long-standing democracies. Our findings may reflect a scenario in which party platforms and party preferences stabilize over time, resulting in consistent voting patterns.

We were concerned that forces other than voting patterns, such as institutional design, might drive legislative volatility. While likely a contributing factor, institutional design is unlikely to be the primary force that drives electoral volatility for a couple of reasons. If legislative volatility were calculated using votes, we would need to assess the potential effect of electoral formula on legislative volatility. However, since we use seats to calculate legislative volatility, district magnitude is the primary factor that must be considered. First, we do not see any type of consistent relationship between the countries' district magnitude and legislative volatility levels. If the district magnitude is the primary determinant of volatility scores, then those countries with plurality single-member districts should have very high volatility scores, while those with large, multimember districts and proportional representation should have lower volatility scores.¹² In order to assess the effects of district magnitude on volatility, we divided the countries into four categories¹³ based on district magnitude and calculated the median volatility.¹⁴ The categories were:

- 1 Single-member districts
- 2 District magnitudes ranging from 2 to 5
- 3 District magnitudes ranging from 11 to 19
- 4 District magnitudes of or greater than 20

The median volatility levels were 14, 12, 31.5 and 18.5, respectively. These results do not correspond to what we would expect to find were there a relationship between district magnitude and legislative volatility.

Moreover, if party system institutionalization was driven by the institutional design, we would not expect legislative seat volatility and presidential vote volatility to be highly correlated. However, as mentioned earlier, these indicators are indeed highly correlated (see Table 1).

Table 2b reports the results for the third indicator for criterion one, the difference in presidential and legislative voting.¹⁵ Table 2b is arranged in ascending order, where a small difference in presidential/legislative voting corresponds to a high level of party system institutionalization. Looking at the table we see that the range of values on this indicator is only 64% compared to 96 percent for mean electoral volatility. Despite this, the percentage difference in presidential/legislative voting is quite close to volatility

Table 2b. Presidential/legislative difference in 30 African countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>Time span</i>	<i>No. of electoral periods</i>	<i>Mean pres./leg difference</i>
Malawi	1994-99	1	4
Namibia	1989-94	1	5
Burkina Faso	1992-97	1	11
Zimbabwe	1980-95	3	11
Zambia	1991-96	1	12
Congo	1992-93	1	13
Senegal	1978-98	3	13
Côte d'Ivoire	1990-95	1	14
Equatorial Guinea	1993-99	1	14
Cape Verde	1991-95	1	15
Kenya	1992-97	1	16
Mauritania	1992-96	1	16
Gambia	1966-92	5	17
Mali	1992-97	1	22
Sao Tomé	1991-98	2	23
Seychelles	1993-98	1	23
CAR	1993-98	1	24
Ghana	1992-96	1	25
Gabon	1990-96	1	27
Djibouti	1992-97	1	31
Cameroon	1993-97	1	38
Niger	1993-97	2	47
Togo	1994-99	1	50
Comoros	1992-96	2	53
Madagascar	1993-98	1	56
Benin	1991-99	2	68
Botswana	1969-94	5	NA
Lesotho	1993-98	1	NA
Mauritius	1976-95	5	NA
South Africa	1994-99	1	NA
	Mean		24.89
	Coefficient of variation		0.6817

Sources: Africa South of the Sahara (1990-9); Bratton and van der Walle (1996); Day and Degenhardt (1996); Europa World Year Book (1996); Keesing's Contemporary Archives; Nohlen, Krennerich and Thibaut (1999); Political Handbook and Atlas of the World (1996).

for most countries. In general, the ordinal placement of countries across the two tables is similar. At 68 percent, Benin reports the largest presidential/legislative difference. Benin also has one of the highest mean electoral volatility scores, as shown in Table 2a. The strong relationship between the different indicators of this criterion increases our confidence that we are capturing the patterns of party competition in these 30 countries.

Consistent with our other observations on this criterion, we find that there is a notable difference between the performance of the long-standing democracies and the rest of the countries on this indicator. The mean difference between presidential votes and legislative seats for the five long-standing democracies is only 13.6 percent, while the remaining 25 countries have a mean difference that is almost twice as high (24 percent).

Criterion 2: Societal Roots

As noted earlier, we use two indicators to tap our second criterion, the extent to which parties have fairly stable roots in society. Table 3a shows the percentage of lower-chamber seats obtained by parties founded by 1970 in the most recent election in the 30 African countries. In Table 3a, countries are arranged from highest to lowest percentage, where a higher percentage indicates a higher level of institutionalization.

As one might expect in Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mauritius, older parties held over 90 percent of the lower-chamber seats in the last election. However, in almost half of our cases, 13 of the 30 countries, older parties failed to win any seats, indicating that the leading parties in these countries are still quite young and have yet to develop stable roots in society. For all but four of our cases, the percentage shown in Table 2 represents the legislative block of only one party.¹⁶ For example, the percentages for Zimbabwe (98.3 percent) and Namibia (73.6 percent) reflect the percentage of seats won by the leading party of each country (ZANU-PF and SWAPO, respectively). The large percentage of seats held by a single party in these countries reflects the electoral dominance of the parties that ushered in independence.

The early founding dates of major parties in several of the countries is due in large part to a ban on all political parties and organizations which, in many cases, spanned from just after independence to the early 1990s. In Congo, only one party that won seats was founded before 1970. With the exception of the *Parti Congolais du Travail* (PCT), political parties were banned in Congo until 1990. In Benin, none of the legislative seats were won by parties founded by 1970. Benin's former ruling party, the *Parti de la Revolution Populaire du Benin* (PRPB), was the only legal party since its inception in 1975 until it voted for its own dissolution in 1990, thereby opening up political competition. As a result, all of the parties gaining representation in the National Assembly in 1992 are quite young, formed in 1990 or thereafter.

Mainwaring and Scully's results for this indicator contrast sharply with those reported in Table 2. In 10 of the 12 Latin American countries, older parties held more than 20 percent of the seats (1995: 13). While older parties in nine African countries held at least 70 percent of seats, as noted above, in 13 African countries, older parties held none. In Mainwaring and Scully's study, only Brazil, where 0.6 percent of the seats were won by a party founded before 1950, had a percentage near zero.

Table 3a. Lower-chamber seats held by parties founded by 1970

<i>Country</i>	<i>Parties</i>	<i>Election year</i>	<i>% of seats held</i>
Botswana	BDP, BNF	1994	100
Zimbabwe	ZANU-PF	1995	98
Togo	RPT	1999	97.5
Mauritius	MMM, MLP	1995	97
Côte d'Ivoire	PDCI-RDA	1995	85
Namibia	SWAPO	1994	74
South Africa	ANC, NP	1994	73.5
Gabon	PDG	1996	71
The Gambia	PPP	1992	70
Senegal	PS	1998	66
Cameroon	RDPC, UPC	1997	65
Kenya	KANU	1997	51
Malawi	MCP	1999	34
Cape Verde	PAICV	1995	29
Congo	PCT	1993	12
Burkina Faso	UDV/RDA	1997	1.8
Lesotho	BNP	1998	1.3
Benin	–	1999	0
CAR	–	1998	0
Comoros	–	1996	0
Djibouti	–	1997	0
Equatorial Guinea	–	1999	0
Ghana	–	1996	0
Madagascar	–	1998	0
Mali	–	1997	0
Mauritania	–	1996	0
Niger	–	1997	0
Sao Tomé	–	1998	0
Seychelles	–	1998	0
Zambia	–	1996	0
	Mean		34.18
	Coefficient of variation		1.1488

Sources: *Africa South of the Sahara* (1990–9); Bratton and van der Walle (1996); Day and Degenhardt (1996); *Europa World Year Book* (1996); *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*; Nohlen, Krennerich and Thibaut (1999); *Political Handbook and Atlas of the World* (1996).

The long-standing African democracies exhibit notably higher levels of party system institutionalization on this indicator than the other countries. The mean percentage of seats held by older parties for long-standing democracies is 86.1 percent, while the mean percentage for the other 25 countries is only 23.8 percent.

Our second indicator for societal roots, the average age of parties with 10 percent of the lower-chamber seats, is presented in Table 3b. As noted

above, in circumstances where only one party captured over 10 percent of the seats, we calculated the average age using the top two competitors. This was the case in 14 of the 30 countries. Those parties that were included in the calculation of the average age, but that did not win at least 10 percent of the seats, are marked on Table 3b with an asterisk. Table 3b is arranged from the highest to lowest average age, which corresponds to increasing levels of societal-party linkages. Once again, there is tremendous variation. For example, the average age of parties with at least 10 percent of the seats in South Africa is 48.5, the highest reported. Mauritius, not surprisingly, has the second highest average, 46.5 years. Because many of these countries underwent democratic transitions only in the early 1990s, their political parties are very young. Hence, in eight of our cases, the average age of parties winning more than 10 percent of the seats is less than eight years, and they therefore occupy the lowest positions on the table.

In many cases, the reported average age is not reflective of the age of most parties in the particular country. The number for this indicator is often an average of the age of a party founded around independence and the age of a party founded in the early 1990s. As of 1999, the average age for the top two competitors in Côte d'Ivoire was 29 years. The PDCI-RDA, which captured 85 percent of the seats in 1995, was formed in 1946. The PDCI-RDA's closest competitor, the *Rassemblement des Republicains* (RdR), which won 8 percent of the seats, was formed in 1994. Like RdR, most of Côte d'Ivoire's opposition parties were formed during or after 1990, and hence the average age (27 years) is not representative of party age in general.

One might assume that the pattern of electoral dominance of the former ruling party has been successfully broken by new opposition parties in the countries that occupy the lowest positions on our table. However, we caution against an overly optimistic interpretation of these results. In some cases the results may only reflect the replacement of one dominant party by another. The case of Zambia, where the MMD appears to have supplanted the UNIP as a dominant party, is illustrative. In Mauritania and Benin, the former ruling parties (the *Parti du Peuple Mauritanien* (PPM) and the *Parti de la Revolution Populaire du Benin* (PRPB), respectively) were dissolved and hence did not compete in the most recent elections.

Our results differ considerably from Mainwaring and Scully's. In 9 of the 12 Latin American countries, the average age of parties winning more than 10 percent of the seats was over 30 years. However, in only 7 of the 30 African countries was the average age at least 30. The averages for Colombia and Uruguay were 144 years and 112 years, respectively (1995: 15). These averages are almost three times the average ages of Africa's *most* institutionalized party systems. Likewise, while 8 of our 30 countries had an average age of less than 8 years, no Latin American country had an average age of even less than 10, and only Brazil had an average age of less than 20.

Once again, if we compare the results on this indicator for the long-standing democracies with the results for the other 25 African countries, the

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Table 3b. Years since founding of parties with 10 percent of chamber seats, 1999

<i>Country and election year</i>	<i>Parties</i>	<i>Years since founding</i>	<i>Average age</i>
South Africa, 1999	ANC	87	48.5
	DP*	10	
Mauritius, 1995	MMM	30	46.5
	MLP	63	
Botswana, 1994	BDP	37	34.5
	BNF	32	
Senegal, 1998	PS	41	33
	PDS	25	
Gambia, 1992	PPP	41	32.5
	NCP	24	
Namibia, 1994	SWAPO	42	32
	DTA of Namibia	22	
Togo, 1999 ¹	RPT*	30	30
Côte d'Ivoire, 1995	PDCI-RDA	53	29
	RdR*	5	
Zimbabwe, 1995	ZANU-PF	36	29
	ZANU-N*	22	
Cape Verde, 1995	PAICV	43	26
	MPD	9	
Lesotho, 1998	LCD	2	21.5
	BNP*	41	
Cameroon, 1997	RDPC	33	21
	SDF	9	
Gabon, 1996	PDG	31	20
	PGP*	9	
Malawi, 1999	MCP	40	18
	UDF	7	
Kenya, 1997	AFORD	7	17
	KANU	39	
CAR, 1998	DP	8	16
	NDP	5	
Congo, 1993	MLPC	20	16
	RDC	12	
Madagascar, 1998	UDAPS	8	15
	MCDDI	9	
Sao Tomé, 1998	PCT	30	15
	AREMA	24	
Djibouti, 1997	Fanilo	6	14
	MLSTP	28	
Seychelles, 1998	ADI	7	13.5
	PCD	9	
FRUD	RPP	20	14
	FRUD	8	
OU*	FPPS	21	13.5
	OU*	6	

Table 3b. *continued*

<i>Country and election year</i>	<i>Parties</i>	<i>Years since founding</i>	<i>Average age</i>
Equatorial Guinea, 1999	PDGE	12	9.5
	UP*	7	
Benin, 1999	PRB	7	7.5
	PRD	9	
	FARD	5	
Zambia, 1996	PSD	9	7.5
	MMD	9	
Ghana, 1996	NP*	6	7
	NDC	7	
Burkina Faso, 1997	NPP	7	6.5
	CDP	10	
Mali, 1997	PDP*	3	6.5
	ADEMA	9	
Mauritania, 1996 ²	PARENA*	4	6
	PRDS	8	
	AC*	4	
Comoros, 1996	RND	3	5
	FNJ*	7	
Niger, 1997	UNIRD	3	5
	ANDP*	7	

¹ In Togo's 1999 legislative elections, only one party, the RPT, won seats.

² In Mauritania's 1996 legislative elections, only the PRDS won more than 10% of the seats. Two parties tied with 1.3% and we chose one of those two parties in our calculations of the average age. Both parties winning 1.3% of the seats were formed recently.

Sources: *Africa South of the Sahara* (1990-9); Bratton and van der Walle (1996); Day and Degenhardt (1996); *Europa World Year Book* (1996); *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*; Nohlen, Krennerich and Thibaut (1999); *Political Handbook and Atlas of the World* (1996).

differences between the two groups are quite substantial. The five long-standing democracies have a mean age that is markedly higher than that of the other countries. The mean age of the long-standing democracies is 35.1 years, compared to only 16.5 for the remaining 25 countries.

Criterion 3: Acceptance of Parties and Elections

We have three indicators for the third criterion, the extent to which parties and elections have been accepted as the means of determining who governs: whether the opposition boycotted the election, the election was deemed free and fair, and the losers accepted the results.

The degree to which citizens and political actors perceive parties and elections as the principal method of gaining political power varies considerably across the 30 African countries (see Table 4). In fact, 13 of our 30 cases

Table 4. Acceptance of parties and elections

<i>Country</i>	<i>Boycott election 1</i>	<i>Boycott election 2</i>	<i>Free and fair election 1</i>	<i>Free and fair election 2</i>	<i>Loser accepts election 1</i>	<i>Loser accepts election 2</i>	<i>Criterion 3 score</i>
Benin	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Botswana	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Cape Verde	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
CAR	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Gambia	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Madagascar	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Malawi	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Mauritius	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Namibia	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Sao Tomé	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Senegal	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Seychelles	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
South Africa	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	3
Zimbabwe	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	2.5
Ghana	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	2
Lesotho	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	2
Côte d'Ivoire	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	2

Table 4. *continued*

<i>Country</i>	<i>Boycott election 1</i>	<i>Boycott election 2</i>	<i>Free and fair election 1</i>	<i>Free and fair election 2</i>	<i>Loser accepts election 1</i>	<i>Loser accepts election 2</i>	<i>Criterion 3 score</i>
Niger	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	2
Burkina Faso	N	N	N	N	Y	N	1.5
Congo	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	1.5
Djibouti	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	1.5
Equatorial Guinea	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	1.5
Kenya	N	N	N	N	Y	N	1.5
Mali	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	1.5
Mauritania	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	1.5
Zambia	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	1.5
Cameroon	Y	N	N	N	N	N	1
Comoros	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	1
Gabon	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	1
Togo	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	1

Sources: Africa South of the Sahara (1990–9); Bratton and van der Walle (1996); Day and Degenhardt (1996); Europa World Year Book (1996); Keesing's Contemporary Archives; Nohlen, Krennerich and Thibaut (1999); Political Handbook and Atlas of the World (1996).

scored highly on all three indicators for both elections, which suggests that parties and elections have not been widely accepted as the means of gaining political power in many of the 30 African countries. In these 13 countries, opposition parties did not boycott either election, the elections were deemed free and fair, and losing parties accepted the results. However, in another seven cases, the quality of the second elections decreased and thus the degree to which elections and parties are perceived as the means of determining who governs remains uncertain. Although the point totals for five countries increased between the first and second elections, only in Ghana does the change appear to be large enough to indicate a meaningful increase in the degree of acceptance of parties and elections. No comparison can be made with the work of Mainwaring and Scully on these indicators, as they did not operationalize criterion three.

Benin's perfect score on criterion three may appear surprising given the low scores on the previous criteria. However, Benin's score is consistent with its score on criterion one. Benin exhibited a high level of electoral volatility because there is a substantial amount of inter-party competition. There is no hegemonic party manipulating the election results strongly in its favor. The possibility of winning seats through elections in Benin explains the high level of acceptance of elections indicated by Benin's score on criterion three. Perhaps Benin represents a situation in which a hegemonic system has had to 'deinstitutionalize' and experience electoral instability before being able to institutionalize a democratic party system.

Such a scenario could imply that there is a curvilinear relationship between level of democracy and party system institutionalization. When the level of democracy is relatively low, aspects of party system institutionalization can appear fairly high. That is, competition may seem very regular because it is tightly controlled. As countries begin to democratize, the party system may enter a period of flux as people have yet to develop party attachments and parties have yet to establish stable platforms. On the other hand, in countries which have a highly legitimate, revolutionary party, democratization may not inspire much electoral volatility as citizens continue to loyally support the revolutionary party at elections. This scenario seems consistent with the experiences of South Africa and Namibia.

Level of Party System Institutionalization

The aggregate scores reported in Table 5 represent the summation of the scores each country's party system received on the three criteria. As was the case with the 12 Latin American countries, there was wide variation in the level of party system institutionalization. The aggregate scores range from 9 (Botswana) to 3 (Comoros). Setting rigid cut-off points in order to demarcate the three different categories of institutionalization would be arbitrary. On the other hand, we did think trying to establish general guidelines for how the countries might be classified would be of heuristic value.

Table 5. Level of party system institutionalization

<i>Country</i>	<i>Criterion one</i>	<i>Criterion two</i>	<i>Criterion three</i>	<i>Aggregate</i>
Botswana	3	3	3	9
Gambia	2.75	2.75	3	8.5
Namibia	2.75	2.75	3	8.5
Senegal	2.5	2.75	3	8.25
South Africa	2.5	2.75	3	8.25
Zimbabwe	2.5	2.75	2.5	7.75
Cape Verde	2.5	2	3	7.5
Malawi	3	1.5	3	7.5
Côte d'Ivoire	2.5	2.75	2	7.25
Mauritius	1	3	3	7
CAR	2.25	1.25	3	6.5
Seychelles	2.25	1.25	3	6.5
Sao Tomé	1.75	1.25	3	6
Burkina Faso	2.75	1	1.5	5.25
Congo	2.5	1.25	1.5	5.25
Kenya	2	1.75	1.5	5.25
Madagascar	1	1.25	3	5.25
Benin	1	1	3	5
Eq. Guinea	2.5	1	1.5	5
Gabon	1.75	2.25	1	5
Ghana	2	1	2	5
Mauritania	2.5	1	1.5	5
Zambia	2.5	1	1.5	5
Djibouti	2	1.25	1.5	4.75
Togo	1	2.75	1	4.75
Cameroon	1.25	2.25	1	4.5
Lesotho	1	1.5	2	4.5
Mali	1.5	1	1.5	4
Niger	1	1	2	4
Comoros	1	1	1	3

The countries with aggregate scores of 8 or above can be classified as 'institutionalized'. Five of the countries fall into the institutionalized category: Botswana, Gambia, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa.¹⁷ For the most part, party competition in these countries is stable. The major parties in these countries have early founding dates and long-standing constituencies. In these countries, elections tend to be free and fair.

Two of the countries with scores falling between 6 and 8 can be categorized as 'hegemonic in transition'. In both Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe, one party has monopolized power for the past couple of decades. While both these countries have tried to introduce multipartyism, many elections have not been deemed free and fair. Hence, the opposition has only had limited opportunities to obtain power. In fact, Zimbabwe falls just below

the institutionalized category with a score of 7.75. Although some might be surprised at this outcome, given the hegemonic nature of its party system, it is in fact the hegemonic nature of the leading party (ZANU-PF) which caused it to score so highly on our criteria. Not only has the ZANU-PF been in existence for a long time, but its role in the independence movement elicited the long-term loyalty of many. On the other hand, Mauritius with a score of 7 cannot be considered hegemonic in transition. While party competition has a long history in Mauritius and there appears to be widespread acceptance of the democratic rules of the game, voters do not have strong attachments to particular parties. Instead, citizens tend to vote for the electoral alliance whose policy platform most closely matches their own policy preferences. Given the fluid nature of party alliances throughout Mauritian history, voters have little party loyalty.

Finally, the majority of our cases score 6 or below and fall into the 'inchoate' category. In these countries, party competition tends to be extremely unstable, party roots tend to be shallow and acceptance of elections and parties as the route to power is low.

The contrast between the long-standing 'democracies' or polyarchies and the countries that have only recently transited to democracy are quite striking. None of the long-standing democracies fall into the inchoate categories. Moreover, three out of the five countries with institutionalized systems are long-standing democracies.

Since we did not include criterion four in our study, we cannot directly compare our aggregate scores with those of Mainwaring and Scully. However, we can compare the proportion of party systems falling into the different categories across these two studies. Mainwaring and Scully find that 6 of the 12 Latin American countries (50 percent of the cases) fall into the institutionalized category, while only 4 of the 12 fall into the inchoate category (33 percent of the cases). In our study of African democracies, the most populous category is inchoate. We find that 17 of our 30 cases (56.7 percent) are inchoate, while only 5 of the cases (16.7 percent) are institutionalized.

Implications and Conclusion

Just as Mainwaring and Scully set out to create a 'conceptual map of Latin American party systems' (1995: 33–4), our purpose was to measure party system institutionalization in Africa. That party systems in African countries are far less institutionalized than those in Latin American countries is not surprising given that most African countries achieved independence much later than did those of Latin America. Even though some parties in the African countries predate independence, most of them had their roots around the time of independence. Since the age of political parties is an important criterion of party system institutionalization, the recent founding

dates of many of the parties in the African countries under study at least partly explains the low levels of party institutionalization. Moreover, the length of time during which a country has experience with democracy is an important factor in determining the level of party system institutionalization, a conclusion also supported by our intra-African comparisons. The difference in the performance between the five long-standing polyarchies and the countries new to multipartyism was notable on all of the criteria.

What are the implications of the intensified party activity in Africa? Ihonvbere questions the extent to which the new political parties and movements can generate true political change (1996). He points out that many of the leaders of these new parties were affiliated with the previous regimes. Moreover, these parties have largely failed to establish anything but 'opportunistic relations' with the traditionally disempowered and alienated constituencies. Another limitation of the new parties and movements, according to Ihonvbere, is the 'excessive personalization of politics' (1996: 356). The prognoses are generally not bright. According to Segal, 'Contested elections featuring managed outcomes and co-opted opposition parties are becoming the new norm in much of Africa' (1996: 382). Further, many of the forces that militated against the establishment of democracy in the immediate post-independence period still exist today. For example, as early as 1965, Lewis noted, 'The unreasonable behavior of the government and opposition parties to each other has sprung also from the fact that so much hangs on who is in and who is out' (pp. 78-9). Yet the zero-sum nature of politics persists in many African countries.

Still, we come back to the point that an institutionalized party system is a requisite for democratic government, and renewed party activity is a precursor, albeit an early one, to an institutionalized party system. In countries where political activity appeared nearly extinguished for several decades, the growth of political activity can largely be seen as positive. Moreover, the probability that democracy will take root in some of the countries with relatively institutionalized party systems seems fairly high. For example, Segal claims that it is 'highly probable' that democracy and capitalism will be institutionalized in Botswana and Mauritius (1996: 381). Huntington notes that predictions often prove embarrassing, and so we will abstain from making grandiose predictions about the future of Africa's nascent democracies. We feel that applying the framework we have adapted from Mainwaring and Scully can help us better understand the processes of party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation in Africa. Looking at some of our indicators over time can give an idea of how party system institutionalization is evolving. For example, looking at the rise and fall in electoral volatility over time may help us to assess the emergence of the tendency to vote the basis of party labels. The study of parties and party systems can do much to illuminate the prospects for democratic governance in the African countries that appear to have embarked on a path to democracy.

Notes

Much of the data on which we base our analyses was drawn from the following sources: *Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1997); Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *MSU Working Paper No. 14, Political Regimes and Regime Transitions in Africa: A Comparative Handbook* (Department of Political Science, Michigan State University; Alan J. Day (ed.) with Henry W. Degenhardt (contributing ed.), *Political Parties of the World* (Chicago: St. James Press, 1996); *Europa World Year Book* (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1996); *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (London: Keesing's Ltd.); Dieter Nohlen, Michael Krennerich and Bernhard Thibaut (eds) *Elections in Africa: A Data Handbook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); *Political Handbook and Atlas of the World* (New York: published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Simon & Schuster, 1996).

- 1 Welfling's (1973) work on the institutionalization of parties and party systems in 31 African countries constitutes an early and rigorous treatment of the subject. Unfortunately, only a few scholars have pursued this line of inquiry.
- 2 However, the relative 'youth' of African political parties should still be emphasized. Morgenthau also notes that, at the time of independence, the oldest political party was only 20 years old (1964: 330).
- 3 Mainwaring and Scully do not operationalize this criterion or attempt to assess levels of party organization in a systematic manner.
- 4 Since Gambia's most recent election (January 1997) is in many ways distinct from the pre-coup elections, we have not included it in our calculations.
- 5 In calculating electoral volatility we treated coalitions as a single party in our calculations when the coalition was a true electoral coalition and votes were registered for the coalition as a whole. In cases where votes were registered for each party in the coalition, each party is counted separately.
- 6 We chose to exclude the 1992 Constituent Assembly elections in the Seychelles because the electoral system in place at the time was fundamentally different from that which was in place for the 1993 and 1998 National Assembly elections. We did, however, include Namibia's 1989 Constituent Assembly elections because the electoral rules and institutional design that governed those elections remained the same for the 1994 National Assembly elections.
- 7 In some cases, we were unable to calculate scores for presidential volatility and/or presidential/legislative difference. For those countries with parliamentary systems, the final score on criterion one is based solely on legislative volatility. Some countries have had only one presidential election. In such cases, the final score on criterion one represents an average of the two scores the country receives for legislative volatility and presidential/legislative difference.
- 8 We obtained several of our data points from the Bratton and van de Walle data set (1996). We adopt their operational definition of this indicator, which is whether the parties winning seats agree to take their seats in the legislature after the election.
- 9 As Table 2a shows, eight countries report NA, or not applicable, in the presidential volatility column. This is because four of the countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius and South Africa) do not have a presidential system or

- directly elected presidents. The other four countries that received NA on this indicator (Congo, Equatorial Guinea, CAR and Namibia) did so because at present there has only been one multiparty presidential election, and we were unable to calculate a presidential volatility score. For these countries the mean electoral volatility score reported represents only the legislative volatility.
- 10 In calculating legislative volatility for Mauritius, we treated the seat holdings of electoral alliances as those of a single party. However, many of the sources we consulted report the seat holdings of the individual parties making up the different electoral alliances. It is, therefore, possible to calculate volatility by looking at the changes in an individual party's legislative seats from election to election. When calculated in this manner, legislative volatility for Mauritius drops to 49 percent. However, this volatility score still earns Mauritius a score of one on our scale of institutionalization for this criterion.
 - 11 In calculating Lesotho's electoral volatility score, we divided by 79 rather than by 80, which is the actual number of legislative seats, because one seat was not filled due to a postponement because a candidate died during the campaign. Similarly, in calculating Madagascar's score we divided by 134 rather than by the 138 legislative seats in the first election because four seats were not filled.
 - 12 Had we used legislative votes as opposed to legislative seats, our expectations would have been the obverse: we would have expected those countries with plurality, single-member districts to have relatively low volatility levels and those with proportional electoral formulas and large, multimember districts to have high volatility levels.
 - 13 We initially constructed five categories, but found that one of our categories had no cases (i.e. no countries had district magnitude ranging from 6 to 10).
 - 14 The median is a better measure of central tendency than the mean, as the mean is greatly affected by outliers (Neto and Cox, 1997).
 - 15 In only 6 of the 30 countries were the elections used in the calculations of the difference between presidential and legislative voting concurrent. These countries are: Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Seychelles and Zambia. The presidential and legislative elections in the remaining countries were not concurrent. We considered elections concurrent only if the presidential and legislative elections were held on the same day.
 - 16 In the case of the Cameroon, one of the two older parties to win seats captured only 0.5 percent of the seats.
 - 17 The party system in Gambia before the 1994 coup would have fallen into the institutionalized category. Following the coup in 1994, the party system will most likely pass through a period of reconstruction in order to return to the level of institutionalization achieved previously.

Appendix

For the 30 countries included in our study, the elections used in our analysis are as follows:

Benin – legislative elections (1991, 1995, 1999) and presidential elections (1991, 1996).

- Botswana – legislative elections (1969, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994).
- Burkina Faso – legislative elections (1992, 1997) and presidential elections (1991, 1996).
- Cameroon – legislative and presidential elections (1992, 1997).
- Cape Verde – legislative elections (1991, 1995) and presidential elections (1991, 1996).
- Central African Republic – legislative elections (1993, 1998) and presidential elections (1993).
- Comoros – legislative elections (1992, 1993, 1996) and presidential elections (1990, 1996).
- Congo – legislative elections (1992, 1993) and presidential elections (1992).
- Côte d'Ivoire – legislative and presidential elections (1990, 1995).
- Djibouti – legislative elections (1992, 1997) and presidential elections (1993, 1999).
- Equatorial Guinea – legislative elections (1993, 1999) and presidential elections (1996).
- Gabon – legislative elections (1991, 1996) and presidential elections (1993, 1998).
- Gambia – legislative elections (1966, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997) and presidential elections (1982, 1987, 1992, 1996).
- Ghana – legislative and presidential elections (1992, 1996).
- Kenya – legislative and presidential elections (1992, 1997).
- Lesotho – legislative elections (1993, 1998).
- Madagascar – legislative elections (1993, 1998) and presidential elections (1992, 1996).
- Malawi – legislative and presidential elections (1994, 1999).
- Mali – legislative and presidential elections (1992, 1997).
- Mauritania – legislative elections (1992, 1996) and presidential elections (1992, 1997).
- Mauritius – legislative elections (1976, 1982, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995).
- Namibia – legislative elections (1989, 1994) and presidential elections (1994).
- Niger – legislative elections (1993, 1995, 1996) and presidential elections (1993, 1996).
- Sao Tomé – legislative elections (1991, 1994, 1998) and presidential elections (1991, 1996).
- Senegal – legislative elections (1983, 1988, 1993, 1998) and presidential elections (1983, 1988, 1993).
- Seychelles – legislative and presidential elections (1993, 1998).
- South Africa – legislative elections (1994, 1999).
- Togo – legislative elections (1994, 1999) and presidential elections (1993, 1998).
- Zambia – legislative and presidential elections (1991, 1996).
- Zimbabwe – legislative elections (1980, 1985, 1990, 1995) and presidential elections (1990, 1996).

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