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RETHINKING PARTY SYSTEMS THEORY IN THE THIRD WAVE OF DEMOCRATIZATION
The Importance of Party System Institutionalization

Scott Mainwaring

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Scott Mainwaring, Eugene Conley Professor and former chair of the Department of Government and International Studies, is Director of the Kellogg Institute. His most recent book, *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave: The Case of Brazil*, will be published by Stanford University Press in early 1999.

Marjorie Castle, Michael Coppedge, Frances Hagopian, Herbert Kitschelt, Kevin Krause, Leonardo Morlino, Robert Moser, Guillermo O'Donnell, Andrew Reynolds, John Rieger, Richard Rose, Matthew Shugart, Alfred Stepan, Gábor Tóka, and Mariano Torcal made helpful comments on this paper. Marta Lagos of Latinobarometro provided survey data.

ABSTRACT

In this paper I argue that we need to rethink some important theoretical and comparative issues related to our broad understanding of party systems with a view to the experience of new democracies around the world. In particular, in light of what Huntington (1991) called the "third wave" of democratization, i.e., the period of democratization beginning in 1974, I argue that we must pay more attention to variance in levels of party system institutionalization. I propose analyzing party system institutionalization in four dimensions: (1) the stability of patterns of electoral competition, (2) the strength of party roots in society, (3) the legitimacy of parties, and (4) the structuring of party organization. Party systems vary significantly in their levels of institutionalization; most of the advanced industrial democracies have quite institutionalized systems, while most third-wave democratizers have less institutionalized systems. Weakly institutionalized party systems function in very different ways from well-established systems, and this has significant implications for democracy.

RESUMEN

En este texto sostengo que necesitamos repensar algunas importantes cuestiones teóricas y comparativas relacionadas con nuestro entendimiento general de los sistemas de partidos tomando en consideración la experiencia de las nuevas democracias. En particular, a la luz de lo que Hungtinton (1991) llamó la "tercera ola" de democratización—esto es, el período de democratización que comenzó en 1974—sostengo que debemos prestar más atención a la variación en los niveles de institucionalización de los sistemas de partidos. Propongo analizar la institucionalización de los sistemas de partidos en cuatro dimensiones: (1) la estabilidad de los patrones de competencia electoral, (2) la fuerza de las raíces de los partidos en la sociedad, (3) la legitimidad de los partidos, y (4) la estructuración de la organización partidaria. Los sistemas de partidos varían significativamente en sus niveles de organización; la mayoría de las democracias industriales tienen sistemas bastante institucionalizados, mientras que la mayoría de las democracias de la tercera ola tienen sistemas menos institucionalizados. Los sistemas de partidos débilmente institucionalizados funcionan de modos muy distintos de los sistemas bien establecidos, y esto tiene consecuencias importantes para la democracia.

In this paper, I argue that we need to rethink some important theoretical and comparative issues related to our broad understanding of party systems with a view to the experience of new democracies around the world. In particular, I argue that, in light of what Huntington (1991) called the "third wave" of democratization, i.e., the period of democratization beginning in 1974, we must pay more attention to variance in levels of party system institutionalization.

The theoretical and comparative literature on parties and party systems has been dominated by analyses of Western Europe and the United States. This literature on the advanced industrial democracies has made major contributions that are relevant for understanding party systems in new democracies. In terms of theoretical, methodological, and comparative sophistication, the literature on the party systems of the advanced industrial democracies often surpasses that which exists in later democratizing regions. Indeed, a crucial challenge for those working on third-wave party systems is to master the literature on the advanced industrial democracies; only then is one strongly positioned to contribute to an understanding of the democratic party systems of the late democratizers. But this does not suggest that we can merely transport to the study of Latin American or Eastern European party systems approaches that have been used in Western Europe, without paying attention to differences between the party systems in old, established democracies and those in new, unconsolidated regimes. These differences present opportunities to ask new questions that theoretically advance our thinking about comparative party systems.

Sartori's influential study (1976) suggested that party systems be compared in terms of the number of their parties and the degree of their polarization. For the study of the Western European party systems that were Sartori's concern, these axes of comparison represent excellent choices. However, Sartori's two axes omit the dimension of institutionalization crucial to the study of most third-wave party systems.

Weakly institutionalized party systems function in very different ways from well-established systems, and this has significant implications for democracy. For analyzing the range of contemporary democratic party systems in Latin America or Eastern Europe, the level of institutionalization is just as important as the number of parties and the degree of polarization. If we restrict the analysis to the advanced industrial democracies, there is much less variance in levels of institutionalization than if we include democracies that do not belong to that restricted set. For these cases, therefore, the need to incorporate an analysis of party system institutionalization is much less evident. However, since the 'third wave' of democratization began in 1974, an increasing number of the world's democracies have exhibited less institutionalized party systems. Accordingly, a broad effort to classify party systems must now incorporate the undertheorized dimension of institutionalization.

Not all third-wave democratizers have weakly institutionalized party systems. Spain, Portugal, and Greece relatively quickly developed systems that are more institutionalized than those that we find in most other third-wave democracies (Morlino 1995; Pridham 1990); not coincidentally, democracy was consolidated quite quickly in all three countries. In Uruguay and Chile, old party patterns reasserted themselves after the reestablishment of democracy in 1984 and 1990, respectively, and the 'new' party systems are reasonably well institutionalized. But whereas cases of weak institutionalization among the long-standing democracies are rare and seemingly represent a short-lived phase,[1] among the third-wave democratizers there are many such cases.

The paper is primarily conceptual/theoretical in intent. To underscore the dramatic differences between less institutionalized and more institutionalized party systems, I draw upon empirical information from Western Europe, Latin America, Southern Europe, and East Central Europe. My concern is to establish a contrast between cases of weak institutionalization (found almost exclusively among third-wave democratizers) and more institutionalized cases (found mostly among earlier democratizers). Given this effort to establish broad contrasts, the analysis does not draw detailed distinctions among party systems of the advanced industrial democracies, nor among the cases of weak institutionalization. For other purposes, such distinctions could well be crucial.

Party System Institutionalization

The most influential formulation for comparing and classifying party systems has been Giovanni Sartori's seminal *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Sartori saw two dimensions of party systems as being particularly important: the number of relevant parties and the degree of ideological polarization. In counting parties, Sartori included those that have 'coalition potential,' i.e., those that might form part of a governing coalition, as well as parties whose existence affected the tactics of party competition. His measure of ideological polarization, most clearly operationalized in Sani and Sartori (1983), focuses on the ideological distance among parties, i.e., the breadth of ideological divergence. Using these two dimensions, his typology includes four types of democratic party systems: two-party, moderate pluralism (multipartism with low ideological polarization), polarized pluralism (multipartism with considerable polarization), and predominant (in which the same party consistently wins a majority of seats). Sartori also analyzed two kinds of noncompetitive systems, but they are of less concern here.

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[1] Canada and Italy in the 1990s are examples of weak institutionalization in long-standing democracies, but both countries had quite highly institutionalized party systems until this decade.

Although Sartori's work has been challenged in a variety of ways (e.g., Daalder 1983; Santos 1986), it remains the single most important broad theoretical treatise on party systems, and his two dimensions for classifying party systems are still highly influential. His typology remains the most useful for classifying party systems in the advanced industrial democracies,

even though the Laakso and Taagepera (1979) "effective number of parties" measure has generally superseded Sartori's less clear-cut rules for counting parties.[2] Many other analysts, including Blondel (1968) and Duverger (1954), have focused primarily on the number of parties in classifying party systems. More recently, in their classification of Latin American party systems, McDonald and Ruhl (1989) relied primarily on the number of parties and secondarily on whether the party system is established or emerging. They propose four categories of democratic party systems: two-party systems, emerging two-party systems, multiparty systems, and emerging multiparty systems.

The drawback of classifying party systems with predominant reference to the number of parties is that to do so is to overlook substantial differences in the level of institutionalization of the party systems—and hence in the functioning of democratic politics. Sartori perceived that simply grouping all multiparty systems together was inappropriate, because the dynamics of these systems varied according to the level of polarization. Thus, in contrast to previous scholars, he argued that it was important to focus not only on the number of parties but also on the level of polarization. This was one of his most important contributions to the study of party systems.

Similarly, treating all multiparty systems as a single undifferentiated category when they exhibit vast differences in institutionalization is misleading. For example, Norway, Sweden, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, and Russia all have multiparty systems, but the systems in Norway and Sweden are much more institutionalized than those in the other four countries. Lumping together these

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[2] The effective number of parties is calculated by squaring each party's share of the vote (or of seats), summing the squares, and dividing one by this sum:

$$N = \frac{1}{\sum p_i^2}$$

where N is the effective number of parties and p_i is the share of seats (or votes) of each and every party. For example, if four parties won 40%, 30%, 20%, and 10% of the vote, then Nv (the number of effective parties in votes) would be

$$\frac{1}{.4^2 + .3^2 + .2^2 + .1^2} = 3.33$$

The effective number of parties has several advantages over Sartori's counting rules. It gives a precise mathematical formula rather than relying on somewhat subjective criteria, and it weights each party that wins votes (or seats) according to size rather than either counting all parties equally (if they meet Sartori's criteria for relevance) or excluding them altogether (if they do not meet the criteria). In addition, the effective number of parties is fully applicable to presidential systems, whereas Sartori's counting rules were devised for parliamentary systems. In presidential systems, coalition formation does not follow quite the same logic as in parliamentary systems; it is not always as clear whether or not a party is included in the governing coalition. In a parliamentary system a party is easily identified as part of the governing coalition because such parties have cabinet positions. In a presidential system the president rather than the party leaders has primary responsibility for naming ministers. The president might name a minister from a party whose leadership does not form part of the governing coalition. Therefore, it is sometimes disputable

cases of multipartism conceals profound differences in the nature of the systems. This fact has not been adequately recognized.

The suggestion here is not that the number of parties is an irrelevant criterion in the comparison, analysis, and classificatiion of party systems. The number of parties affects important dynamics in democratic politics: whether a single party or coalition is likely to govern, how broad or narrow the choice for voters is likely to be, whether democracy is likely to be majoritarian (with winner-takes-all rules) or consensus based (with power sharing) (Lijphart 1984). My claim is that, given profound changes in the number and nature of contemporary democratic party systems, we must pay attention to the level of institutionalization as well as the number of parties.

Throughout this paper the notion of institutionalization is used exclusively with reference to competitive political regimes. Parties may also be institutionalized in party-state systems or hegemonic party systems, but the nature of institutionalization and the indicators thereof differ from the cases examined here.

Definitions and Boundaries

A system is a combination of interrelated parts that interact in a patterned way to form a complex whole. A party system, then, is the set of parties that interact in patterned ways to form a whole. The notion of patterned interactions suggests that important rules in how parties compete are widely observed even if some rules are contested and undergo change. The idea of a system also implies continuity in the components that form the system and a minimum of stability in patterns of party competition. If there is a sharp discontinuity in the component parts, a different system has supplanted the previous one.

A party system has three boundaries beyond which the use of this term becomes questionable. First, with extreme party system volatility, such that the major parties in one election become insignificant in the next, it may be meaningless to speak of a system. Under such circumstances, it is questionable whether the parties truly interact in a patterned way. Such cases are quite unusual, but during the 1990s Russia and Peru have approximated this condition. Second, in cases of extreme personalism, where parties have little control over who gains access to political office and most prominent politicians are not affiliated with a party, it is doubtful that a system exists. In regimes with pronounced personalism, political competition revolves around personalities rather than parties; the parties are of secondary importance for most voters and many candidates. Conaghan (1996) contends that since 1992 Peru has been such a case and argues that it is a 'no-party' system. Third, as Sartori (1976) observed, a system must consist of at least

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whether a party is part of the governing coalition and should be counted as a relevant party.

two parts; it is an oxymoron to speak of a one-party system. Rather, in cases of a single party, it is more appropriate to speak of a party-state system.

Sartori's definition of a party system is similar to the one proposed here,[3] but my understanding of the boundaries of 'party system' differs from his; Sartori uses the notion in a more restricted way. For example, he argued (1976: 185) that Colombia did not have a party system, and his introduction to the Brazilian edition of his book stated that Brazil did not have a party system.

Therein Sartori supplies a suggestive though undeveloped insight, because the Colombian and Brazilian party systems differed substantially from those in the advanced industrial democracies. But it distorts the case to say that these countries did not have party systems. Colombia had two major parties (Liberals and Conservatives) that had dominated electoral competition since the nineteenth century, and patterns of competition between them exhibited considerable regularity. Electoral volatility (the turnover from one party to others, from one election to the next) had been modest for decades. Moreover, Colombian parties have long been quite deeply rooted in the electorate, and they have been important political actors (Archer 1995). Similarly, Brazil's parties met the fundamental requirements of the notion of system both between 1946 and 1964 and between 1966 and 1979. There were patterned interactions in the competition among parties; the number of parties and the largest parties themselves were reasonably constant; the electoral strength of the parties changed over time, but not by dramatic leaps and bounds; parties won electoral support on the basis of distinctive and patterned social bases. If these two countries with high continuity in the main parties and moderate electoral volatility did not have party systems, by implication presumably most third-wave democratizers would not. Yet it is not very helpful to treat most third-wave cases as if they had no party systems. Wherever open party competition exists for even a few years, a system almost always develops. Politicians find it useful to create labels; such labels assist in the creation of a symbolic universe for voters and contribute to the organization of legislative affairs. Only in truly exceptional cases of personalism, fluidity, and volatility do the properties that define a system virtually cease to exist.

Rather than follow Sartori's restrictive notion of system and his dichotomous distinction between systems and nonsystems, I pursue his insight by focusing on varying levels of institutionalization. *Institutionalization* refers to a process by which a practice or organization becomes well established and widely known, if not universally accepted. Actors develop expectations, orientations, and forms of behavior based on the premise that this practice or organization will prevail into the foreseeable future. In politics institutionalization means that political actors have clear and stable expectations about the behavior of other actors. In

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[3] "A party system is precisely the system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition." A party system "results from, and consists of, the patterned interactions of its component parts, thereby implying that such interactions provide the boundaries, or at least the boundedness, of the system" (1976: 44, 43).

Huntington's (1968: 12) words, "Institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability."

An institutionalized party system, then, is one in which actors develop expectations and behavior based on the premise that the fundamental contours and rules of party competition and behavior will prevail into the foreseeable future. In an institutionalized party system there is stability in the identity of the main parties and the ways in which they behave. Institutionalization does not preclude change, but it limits it.

The notion of institutionalization should not be teleological; there is no necessary progression from weak to greater institutionalization. In fact, party systems can deinstitutionalize; the Italian, Canadian, Peruvian, and Venezuelan cases in the 1990s serve as prime examples. Thus it is not inevitable that most third-wave democratizers will move toward more institutionalized party systems. Institutionalization need not rest on any specific kind of party; it can occur in systems with comparatively loose parties, as in the United States, or in systems with programmatic, ideological parties, as in some Western European countries. As Kitschelt (1995) has argued, institutionalization can occur through programmatic positions or through clientelism.

Although weak institutionalization is typically associated with a variety of problems, this does not imply that extreme institutionalization is desirable. To the contrary, very high levels of institutionalization may result from a stultified party system. The relationship between party system institutionalization and the quality of democracy, then, is far from linear (Schedler 1996). An institutionalized party system is hardly a panacea.

Four Dimensions of Party System Institutionalization

We can distinguish among four dimensions of party system institutionalization. These four dimensions are shown in summary form in Table 1.

First, more institutionalized party systems enjoy considerable stability (Przeworski 1975); patterns of party competition manifest regularity. A system in which major parties regularly appear and then disappear or become minor parties, or in which vote totals of parties fluctuate widely on a regular basis, is weakly institutionalized.

Second, in more institutionalized systems, parties have strong roots in society. Linkages between parties and citizens are more stable; otherwise, parties do not structure political preferences over time, and there is limited regularity in how people vote. Strong party roots in society help provide the regularity that institutionalization implies. In fluid or less institutionalized party systems more citizens have trouble locating what the major parties represent. Survey data provide some sense of the extent to which parties have developed strong attachments with voters. In more institutionalized systems, party identification will be relatively stable in the short

term, and more voters will cast their ballot on the basis of party sympathy. Similarly, although there are major differences in the linkages between organized interests and parties even among institutionalized systems, these linkages are generally more developed than in fluid systems.[4]

Table 1

Ideal-Type Characteristics of Well and Weakly Institutionalized Party Systems

	Well Institutionalized Systems	Weakly Institutionalized (Fluid) Systems
Stability in patterns of interparty competition	Highly stable: Major parties remain on the scene for decades; electoral volatility is low.	Quite volatile: Some parties suffer precipitous declines, while other parties enjoy sudden electoral upsurges.
Party roots in society	Parties are strongly rooted in society. Most citizens vote for the same party over time and vote because of party. Organized interests tend to be associated with a party.	Parties are weakly rooted in society. Only a minority of citizens vote for the same party. Instead, citizens vote according to candidates or, if they vote because of the party label, they switch party preferences.
The legitimacy of parties and elections	Parties and elections enjoy unassailable legitimacy. Parties are seen as a necessary and desirable democratic institution.	Many individuals and groups question the legitimacy of parties and elections. A significant minority of citizens believe that parties are neither necessary nor desirable.
Party organization	Parties have significant material and human resources. Party processes are well institutionalized. Individual leaders, while important, do not overshadow the party.	Parties have few resources. Parties are the creation of, and remain at the disposal of, individual political leaders. Intraparty processes are not well institutionalized.

Partly as a consequence of these linkages between parties and their constituencies, parties within more institutionalized systems tend to be consistent in their relative ideological positions. A party that is markedly to the left of another party does not suddenly move to the right of it simply to gain short-term electoral advantage, for parties are constrained by their need to

[4] Huntington (1968) and Panebianco (1988) present the contrasting argument that strong linkages between organized interests and parties reflect limited autonomy of parties and therefore indicate weak institutionalization. But if linkages between parties and organized interests are strong, the party system is more likely to be stable, assuming that many members of the organizations will be influenced by organizational ties to a particular party.

maintain the support of activists (Kitschelt 1989: 1–8, 41–74). If major parties change their relative ideological position, it usually signals weak ties between parties and society and a lack of regularity in the process by which parties compete with each other and relate to social actors.

Third, in more institutionalized systems the major political actors accord legitimacy to parties. Elites and citizens believe that these fundamental institutions of democratic politics are necessary and desirable. Legitimacy is a dimension of institutionalization because the latter concept implies that actors base their behavior on the expectation of continuity of a practice. Legitimacy reinforces the tendency of actors to expect and perpetuate a behavior pattern.

Finally, in more institutionalized systems party organizations matter. Parties are not subordinated to the interests of a few ambitious leaders; they acquire an independent status and a value of their own. Institutionalization is limited as long as a party is the personal instrument of a leader or a small coterie. A more institutionalized party becomes autonomous vis-à-vis individuals who initially may have created it for instrumental purposes. It is a sign of greater system institutionalization if party structures are firmly established, if they are territorially comprehensive, if parties are well organized, if they have clearly defined internal structures and procedures, and if they have resources of their own. In more institutionalized systems, there is a routinization of intraparty procedures, including procedures for selecting and changing the party leadership (Panebianco 1988: 53–65; Janda 1980: 19–28, 98–107).

Peaceful transfer of the leadership from one person or a small coterie to a different group indicates a process of institutionalization. The Mexican PRI, in which the president dominated the party but in which there was turnover in the presidency and frequently in the party leadership every six years, reflects a form of institutionalization; the period during which a particular individual could dominate the party was clearly defined. Conversely, cases such as Alberto Fujimori's Cambio 90 in Peru, Fernando Collor's Party of National Reconstruction in Brazil, or Perón's Justicialist Party in Argentina, in which a single leader created and continued to dominate a party, manifest weak institutionalization.

Party system institutionalization implies a commitment to an organization and to some minimal collective goals (especially winning elections); it requires loyalty beyond allegiance to a single leader. In more institutionalized systems, politicians as a rule are loyal to their party on two basic issues: they do not change parties, nor do they publicly evince support for candidates of other parties. A few politicians may change parties, but in institutionalized systems this practice is unusual.

These four dimensions of institutionalization need not go hand-in-hand, but they usually do. Conceptually, a party system could be quite well institutionalized along one dimension but weakly institutionalized along another. One such example is Argentina between the 1940s and 1980s: the Peronists and Radicals long commanded loyalty among a broad part of the electorate,

but there was a high degree of personalization of power and no set of stable rules governing party life. Empirically, however, the four dimensions usually point in the same direction.

Party systems characterized by a lower degree of institutionalization can be termed fluid. This implies less regularity in patterns and rules of party competition, weaker party roots in society, less legitimacy accorded to parties and elections, and weaker party organizations which are often dominated by personalistic leaders.

Using Institutionalization to Assess and Compare Party Systems

The reason for distinguishing between institutionalized and less institutionalized or fluid party systems is not sheerly taxonomical. The differences between democracies with more institutionalized party systems and those with fluid party systems are significant. Institutionalized party systems structure the political process to a high degree. In fluid systems parties are important actors in some ways, but they do not have the same structuring effect.

To develop the argument that party systems differ in profound ways that cannot be captured by Sartori's typology, I compare some cases from Western Europe, Southern Europe, East Central Europe, and Latin America according to the four criteria of institutionalization proposed above. The data show sharp differences in the degree to which party systems are institutionalized. I also argue that these differences in party system institutionalization have important implications for democratic politics.

Comparing Institutionalization: Electoral Volatility

The first criterion of institutionalization, that patterns of party competition manifest regularity, is easy to measure and compare through an index of electoral volatility. Electoral volatility refers to the aggregate turnover from one party to others, from one election to the next (Przeworski 1975; Pedersen 1983). It is computed by adding the net change in percentage of votes gained or lost by each party from one election to the next, then dividing by two. For example, in a two-party system, if Party A wins 43% in Election 1 and 53% in Election 2, while Party B declines from 57% to 47%, volatility equals 10 + 10 divided by two, or ten.

Table 2 shows patterns of electoral volatility for the lower chamber for democratic elections in the 1945–96 period. Only the most recent democratic period is counted in countries where there was a democratic breakdown. The exclusion of earlier democratic periods enables us to ascertain whether third-wave cases sometimes have distinctive party systems. The earlier starting date for the Western European cases biases them toward slightly lower volatility since volatility has generally increased since the 1960s (Maguire 1983; Pedersen 1983), but it does not

alter the basic conclusion that there are stark differences between the more and less institutionalized cases.

Table 2

Lower-Chamber Electoral Volatility in 23 Countries

Country	Time Span	No. of Electoral Periods	Mean Volatility
United States	1944–94	25	4.0
Switzerland	1947–95	12	4.7
Finland	1945–95	14	7.8
Sweden	1944–94	16	8.5
Uruguay	1971–94	3	10.4
Belgium	1946–95	16	11.0
Colombia	1970–94	6	11.2
Norway	1945–93	12	11.2
Italy	1946–96	13	12.0
Portugal	1974–93	8	15.2
Greece	1974–93	6	15.5
Spain	1974–93	6	16.3
France	1945–93	14	18.3
Argentina	1973–95	7	18.8
Costa Rica	1953–94	10	22.9
Mexico	1988–94	2	22.4
Chile	1973–93	2	23.4
Slovakia	1990–94	2	26.5
Venezuela	1958–93	7	27.4
Czech Republic	1990–96	2	29.2
Poland	1991–93	2	31.4
Brazil[a]	1982–94	4	33.0
Bolivia	1979–93	4	34.5
Ecuador	1979–96	4	38.6
Russia	1993–95	2	54.0
Peru	1980–95	3	58.5

Calculations of volatility have followed five rules. 1) In cases of splits in a party, the faction that wins the larger share of the vote in the next election is generally considered as the continuation of the old party. The exception is when the smaller faction retains the party's original name. The other faction is considered a new party. 2) The reverse rule applies to mergers. The smaller merging party is considered as disappearing in the next election. 3) Formal alliances are treated as a combination of the allied parties. Volatility is calculated by comparing their combined share in the last election in which they participated separately with their share in the current election. 4) When changes of name did not stem from mergers or result from splits, I considered the newly named party to be the same as the party with the old name. 5) In countries with two-round voting, only first round results have been taken into account.

[a] Data for Brazil correspond to seats because complete data in votes are not available for some elections.

Sources: Data about Latin America come from Nohlen 1993; *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Argentina* Vol. 10, 1994 (Buenos Aires: INDEC); the *Boletín Electoral Latinoamericano* (San José: Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos); (Brazil 1994, *Folha de São Paulo,* 16 and 21 November 1994); Ecuador 1996, provisional results published on the World Wide Web by Emerinfo at http://mia.lac.net/opcion 96/resultados/exitdipn.htm; Paraguay 1993, Diego Abente (personal communication); Peru 1995, official results published on the WWW at http://ekecorp.net.pe/jne; and Venezuela 1993, Parliamentary Elections in Venezuela, on the WWW at http://www.universal.nl/users/derksen/election.

Data for Europe and the United States come from Mackie and Rose (1991); for updates after 1991 and for data on Russia and Poland, see the *European Journal of Policy Research*; Slovakia and the Czech Republic, Kevin Krause (personal communication); data on 1995 and 1996, "Parliamentary Elections around the World" on the World Wide Web (http://www.universal.nl/users/dreksen/election/).

Volatility is much higher in most of the Latin American and post-Soviet cases than in Western Europe. Party systems range from very stable (the United States, Switzerland, Finland, and Sweden) to extremely volatile (Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Poland, and Russia). In the United States, on average, if we used election results in one election to predict results of the next, we would err by only 4.0% of the aggregate vote. In Peru, following the same procedure, the error would be nearly fifteen times greater (58.5%).

With low volatility electoral outcomes are stable from one election to the next. Because the parties remain on the scene for a long time, it is easier for citizens to grasp their relative programmatic positions. Opportunities for new parties are restricted. With high volatility outcomes are less stable from one election to the next. Some major parties suffer large losses, while new or minor ones enjoy commensurable gains. The electoral market is more open and less restrictive, and outcomes are less predictable. The fact that parties enjoy rapid ascension and experience sudden demises presumably makes the system more opaque to citizens: they have less time to assimilate what different contenders represent. High turnover from one party to another increases the chances of significant policy change. Finally, with high volatility legislative turnover is great, leading to a situation in which large numbers of legislators have little experience.

Party Roots in Society

In more institutionalized systems parties develop strong and stable roots in society. Whereas the first dimension reflects a concern with stable overall patterns in interparty competition, in this one linkages among parties, citizens, and organized interests are addressed. Where parties have strong roots in society most voters feel connected to a party and regularly vote for its candidates. Linkages between organized interest groups and parties tend to be tighter.

Party roots in society and electoral volatility, while analytically different, are intertwined. The two dimensions are closely related because strong party roots in society limit electoral volatility. If most citizens support the same party from one election to the next, there are fewer floating voters and, hence, less likelihood of the massive electoral shifts that are reflected in high volatility.

Where parties are deeply rooted in society most voters support the same party over time and in different kinds of elections. Survey and voting data provide indications of the extent to which voters cast their ballot on a partisan basis (and, hence, the extent to which parties are

rooted in the electorate). Parties are more deeply rooted if most voters state that they voted or intend to vote for candidates of the same party in consecutive elections.

Similarly, data that range from the local to the national level may indicate congruence or divergence between voting patterns for one position and another. For example, in presidential systems the difference between presidential and legislative voting provides relevant information for assessing the depth to which parties penetrate society. Where parties shape the political preferences of most voters, this difference between presidential and legislative voting should be less pronounced. Citizens more frequently vote on the basis of party labels, and therefore they tend to vote for the same label in legislative and presidential elections. Table 3 shows the mean difference between the percentage of lower chamber votes won by parties and their percentage in presidential elections. Table 3 is limited to concurrent presidential and lower chamber elections because the dynamics of nonconcurrent cases predictably differ (Shugart and Carey 1992: 226–58), with a tendency toward a higher aggregate difference between presidential and legislative voting.

Table 3

Presidential Vote Compared with Lower-Chamber Vote: Concurrent Elections

Country	Time Span	No. of Elections	Mean Difference
Mexico	1982–94	3	3.2
Peru	1980–95	4	9.7
United States	1944–92	13	10.3
Paraguay	1989–93	2	10.4
Argentina	1973–95	4	10.9
Costa Rica	1970–94	7	11.0
Venezuela	1973–93	5	12.3
Chile	1989–93	2	15.3
Colombia	1974–94	6	16.3
Ecuador	1978–96	4	25.9
Brazil	1994	1	44.1

Note: The absolute values of the differences between shares of the presidential and lower-chamber vote that each party gained are totaled and then divided by two.

Sources: As for Table 2.

Widespread ticket splitting also tends to indicate weak party roots in society. This indicator is useful primarily for presidential or semi-presidential systems since parliamentary systems do not afford the same means of splitting the national ticket.[5] In the United States, since 1976, 25% of voters have split their ticket at the national level. In contrast, surveys indicated that in Russia, 70% of voters planned to split their tickets in the 1993 national elections (White, Rose, and McAllister 1997: 139). [6]

The percentage of respondents who report having a party preference also helps us gauge the extent to which parties are deeply rooted in society. Exact levels of party identification vary according to how the question is framed. Notwithstanding such variations, the data again show a chasm between most of the advanced industrial democracies and most of the third-wave democratizers, excluding Greece and Uruguay where party identification approaches Western European levels. In most Western European countries 60–70% of voters identify at least somewhat with a party (Schmitt 1989), although this figure has declined in recent decades. According to White, Rose, and McAllister (1997: 135), only 22% of Russian respondents report that they identify with a party. Rose (1995: 22) gives a figure of 80% reporting a party preference in Britian, compared to 40% in the Czech Republic, 30% in Slovakia, 20% in Hungary, and only 15% in Poland. He talks of demobilized voters in East Central Europe, referring to individuals who have no preferred party and do not trust parties; such voters form the clear majority throughout the region.

In southern Europe, in 1989, party identification figures ranged from a low of 30% in Spain to 63% in Italy (Schmitt 1989: 183–84). In Latin America, according to Latinobarometro data (see Lagos 1996 for details), the eight countries for which data are available (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela) show a considerable range in the share of party identifiers, from 67.1% of respondents in Uruguay to under 40% in Argentina (37.6%), Chile (35.9%), Venezuela (33.3%), and Brazil (32.5%).[7] In a 1995 poll in Lima, Peru, only 20% of respondents said they identified with a party (Conaghan 1996: 22). In sum, in virtually all of the advanced industrial democracies, most voters have a party preference, whereas in many third-wave democracies, the great majority do not.

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[5] Bicameral parliamentary systems or systems that give voters two votes (Germany) afford the opportunity of ticket splitting, but such ticket splitting is not directly comparable with that between the president and congress.

[6] A more thorough analysis of ticket splitting than is possible here would need to control for the effective number of parties. As the number of parties increases, so do options for ticket splitting, independent of the level of institutionalization. Ticket splitting may reflect the action of a rational and informed voter, but it still indicates comparatively weaker citizen attachment to a particular party.

[7] The Latinobarmetro data reported in this paper are provisional and subject to change.

The ability of parties to survive for a long time indicates that they have probably captured the long-term loyalties of some social groups. Consequently, in more institutionalized systems, parties are likely to have longer organizational histories than in cases of lower institutionalization. Table 4 shows the percentage of the vote captured by older parties in the most recent legislative elections; the somewhat arbitrarily chosen cutoff point used to define an 'older' party is 1950. I was relatively stringent in assessing whether a party has existed since 1950. A party could change its name, but only if organizational continuity was evident. If a party that existed in 1950 experienced later schisms, only one (the larger one, unless there are compelling grounds

Table 4

Lower-Chamber Vote for Parties Founded by 1950

Country	Parties	Election Year	% of Vote
United States	Democratic/Republican	1994	97.2
Norway	Liberal/Conservative/Labor/Center/Christian People's	1993	90.0
Sweden	Social Democrat/Moderate Unity/Center/Left/People's	1994	88.7
Finland	Social Democrat/Swedish People's/Center/National Coalition/Left Wing Alliance	1995	82.3
Switzerland	Christian Democrat/Liberal Conservative/Radical Democrats/Social Democrats/Swiss People's	1995	76.6
Argentina	Radical/Justicialist/PDP	1995	75.4
Mexico	PRI/PAN/PPS/PARM	1994	75.1
Colombia	Liberal/Conservative	1994	72.1
Uruguay	Colorado/Nacional	1994	61.2
Belgium	Christian People's/Liberty and Progress/Francophone Socialist/Flemish Socialist/Volksunie/Christian Social[1]	1995	60.0
Venezuela	AD/COPEI	1993	56.7
France	Socialist/Communist/Conservative/Gaullist	1993	52.7
Spain	Socialist/Communist (United Left)/Catalan Republican Left/Basque Nationalist	1996	50.1
Costa Rica	Partido Liberal	1994	44.7
Paraguay	Colorado-Asociación Nacional Republicana/Liberal	1993	44.2
Chile	Radical/Socialist/Christian Democrats	1993	42.1
Bolivia	MNR	1993	36.2

Italy	PDS (former PCI)	1996	21.1
Brazil	PDT/PTB-PSB	1994	12.8
Ecuador	PLRE/PCE	1996	9.6
Greece	Communist Party of Greece	1993	4.5
Peru	APRA	1995	4.1

[1] The Christian People's Party and Christian Social Party resulted from a split in the Catholic Party in 1968. The French and Flemish Socialist Parties resulted from a split in the Socialist Party in 1978. For purposes of this table, these parties are considered as continuation of their predecessors rather than as new parties.

Sources: Nohlen 1993; Mackie and Rose 1991. For updates after 1991, see several issues of the *European Journal of Policy Research.* Data on 1995 and 1996 are drawn from the "Parliamentary Elections around the World" page on the World Wide Web (http://www.universal.nl/users/dreksen/election/").

to consider a smaller one the historical continuation of the original party) of the offspring is counted as having existed in 1950.

Once again, the contrasts are stunning. In the 1994 US elections parties that were created by 1950 captured 97.2% of the vote; Norway (90.0%), Sweden (88.7%), and Finland (82.3%) were close behind. In contrast, few pre-1950 parties in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru are still electorally important organizations. In Peru only one party created by 1950, APRA, ran in the 1995 elections, capturing a feeble 4.1% of the lower-chamber vote. Most of the other Latin American cases exhibit an intermediate pattern.

Table 4 excludes the post-Soviet cases because the long period and massive impact of Communist rule made it more difficult for older parties to survive (Cotta 1994). Still, the rapidity with which parties have appeared and disappeared in Russia and Poland is notable. Moser (1995: 10) observes that "of the 13 electoral blocs participating in the 1993 (Russian) parliamentary elections only four existed under the same label a year earlier."

Again excluding the post-Soviet cases, Table 5 provides a view of party longevity from a different angle. Whereas Table 4 measured the share of seats of relatively old parties as of 1996, Table 5 indicates the ages of parties that won at least 10% of the seats in recent legislative elections.[8] In determining the foundational year of parties, I allowed for changes of names if there was clear organizational continuity. Table 5 again underscores the ephemeral nature of many parties in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru and the much greater age of the main parties in most of Western Europe.

The ability of nonpartisan and antiparty candidates to win office serves as another indicator of party rootedness in society. Where citizens are attached to a party, such candidates

[8] This idea was suggested by Dix (1992).

rarely win high office. In the consolidated democracies it is uncommon for nonpartisan or antiparty candidates to fare well. In contrast, in new democracies with fluid party systems political independents can successfully seek office. Space for populists is greater, especially in presidential systems, since candidates can appeal directly to the masses and do not need to be elected head of the party to become head of state. Candidates can capture high executive office such as the presidency and governorships without deep ties to an established party. For example, Brazilian President Fernando Collor de Mello (1990–92) created a party in order to run for president in 1989, and he ran on an antiparty platform. Seven months after his inauguration his party won only 40 of 503 lower chamber seats in the October 1990 congressional elections, and it disappeared altogether in the months following his resignation (in order to avoid impeachment hearings) in 1992. Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori (1990–present) also created a party in order to run for the presidency; he, too, campaigned against parties and has subsequently eschewed efforts to build a party. In Peru political independents dominated the

Table 5

Years since Founding of Parties with 10 Percent of the Lower Chamber Vote, 1996

Country and Election Year	Parties	Years since Founding	Average Age
United States, 1996	Democratic	168	
	Republican	140	154
Colombia, 1994	Liberal	147	
	Conservative	147	147
Uruguay, 1994	Colorado	160	
	Nacional	160	115
	Broad Front	25	
Sweden, 1994	Social Democrats	106	
	Moderate Unity (Conservative)	97	101
Norway, 1993	Conservatives	114	
	Labor	102	99
	Center (Farmers')	81	
Switzerland, 1995	Social Democrats	108	
	Christian Democrats (Catholic)	103	
	Radical Democrats	100	97
	Swiss People's (Farmers, Traders & Citizens)	78	
Belgium, 1995	Christian People's (Catholic)	149	
	Liberty and Progress (Liberal)	149	89
	Francophone Socialist	106	
	Francophone Liberal	22	
	Flemish Socialist	18	
Finland, 1995	Social Democrats	97	
	Center (Agrarian Union)	89	
	National Coalition	77	78
	Left Wing Alliance (Democratic Union)	51	
Paraguay, 1993			
	ANR (Colorado)	109	
	Liberal Radical	109	74
	National Encounter	4	
Argentina, 1995	Unión Cívica Radical	106	
	Justicialista	51	54
	Frepaso	5	
Spain, 1996	PSOE	65	
	Communist (UL)	65	49
	Popular	19	
Costa Rica, 1994	National Liberal	51	
	Social Christian Union	43	47
France, 1993	Socialist	86	
	Gaullists	51	
	National Front	18	43
	Union for French Democracy	18	

Mexico, 1994	PRI	67	
	PAN	57	43
	PRD	6	
Chile, 1993	Socialista	64	
	Demócrata Cristiano	58	
	National Renovation	30	40
	Independent Democratic Union	9	
Italy, 1996	Democratic Party of the Left (CPI)	75	
	Forza Italia	3	39
Ecuador, 1996	PSC	45	
	PRE	16	30
Venezuela, 1993	AD	60	
	COPEI	50	
	MAS	28	29
	Causa R	7	
	Convergencia	4	
Bolivia, 1993	MNR	55	
	MIR	25	
	ADN	18	22
	CONDEPA	8	
	Civic Union Solidarity	7	
Portugal, 1994	Socialist	20	
	Popular Social Democrats	20	20
Greece, 1993	PSM	19	
	New Democracy	19	19
Brazil, 1994	PMDB	31	
	PFL	12	
	PSDB	8	13
	PPR (PDS)	3	
Peru, 1995	Cambio 90	7	
	Unión por el Perú	1	4

Sources: As for Table 2.

1995 municipal elections. Having seen from Fujimori that antiparty appeals could win popular support, a new cohort of antiparty politicians has emerged.

Personalism and antiparty politicians are also common in some post-Soviet cases. Russian President Boris Yeltsin is not a member of a party and has undermined parties. Alexander Lebed, who finished third in the 1996 Russian presidential election, ran as a quasi-independent, as did Stanislaw Tyminski, who finished second in the 1990 Polish presidential election. Nonpartisan candidates have fared well in the plurality races for both chambers of the Russian parliament. In the 1993 elections well over half of the single-member-district candidates for the lower chamber were independents without partisan affiliation, and only 83 of the 218 deputies elected belonged to a party (Moser 1995: 98). In 1995 more than 1,000 of the 2,700 candidates for the single-member-district seats were independents. Independents won 78 of the 225 single

member seats; the largest single party could muster only 58 seats (White, Rose, and McAllister 1997: 203, 224).

In more institutionalized party systems such personalism is the exception.[9] In the Latin American countries with more institutionalized systems presidents are almost always long-term members of major parties. In Western Europe the same is true of prime ministers.

These indicators show that there are profound differences in the 'rootedness' of parties in society. Notwithstanding some erosion of party voting in recent decades, in most of the advanced industrial democracies parties have strong roots. In most of the advanced industrial democracies over half of the voters identify with and vote for the same party over time (Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck 1984). In contrast, in Russia, Brazil, and Peru party roots in society are weak, and only a small minority of voters are loyal to the same party election after election. Rather than being channeled through parties and other democratic institutions, democratic politics acquire a personalized character.

These differences in party rootedness have significant implications for democratic politics. In more institutionalized systems voters are more likely to identify with a party, and parties are more likely to dominate patterns of political recruitment. In fluid systems, a larger share of the electorate votes according to personal image or personal connections more than along party lines; antiparty politicians are more able to win office. Thus, populism and antipolitics are more common in weakly institutionalized systems. Personalities rather than party organizations dominate the political scene. Given the propensity toward personalism and the comparative weakness of parties, mechanisms of democratic accountability are usually weaker. Weak party roots in society and a high degree of personalism enhance the role of television in campaigns, especially for those executive positions. Democracies with weak party systems tend to be 'delegative' democracies, to use O'Donnell's (1994) term: democracies with weak mechanisms of accountability, a high degree of personalism, and sweeping power vested in the executive.

Because they rely on direct linkages to the masses, populist leaders are more likely than others to pursue policy measures with an eye toward publicity rather than long-range policy impact. Less attached to and constrained by a party, they are more likely to be erratic and violate unspoken rules of the game. A vicious circle can result; the fluid nature of the party system creates greater space for populists, who then govern without attempting to create more solid institutions (O'Donnell 1994). With a fluid system predictability declines while the potential for erratic leadership increases. Fluid party systems involve a low degree of institutionalization of party politics, so politics tends to be more personalized and patrimonial.

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[9] Personalism is not entirely absent in the industrialized north, as Perot (United States) and Berlusconi (Italy) make apparent.

A more institutionalized party system helps foster accountability in two ways. First, politicians are more accountable to party leaders, who have a vested interest in protecting the party. Those holding executive office are more inclined to stay with established party platforms. Politicians are less likely to be autonomous agents. This does not ensure accountability, but it establishes one more mechanism to generate accountability.

A more institutionalized party system also strengthens mechanisms of politicians' accountability vis-à-vis voters. Democratic accountability revolves in part around having the opportunity to displace political leaders by means of the vote. Voters can seek accountability either through individual politicians or through parties.

In less institutionalized systems, neither of the two main forms of accountability —individuals or parties—vis-à-vis voters usually works well. Accountability through parties is hampered by the fact that parties are fluid and heterogeneous, and there are so many parties that citizens cannot easily identify them. Moreover, some parties have lacked the organizational continuity to create a clear profile in the minds of most voters. Because their profile is less established, parties are more difficult for citizens to appraise.

In more institutionalized systems party labels are powerful symbols and party commitments are important. Parties give citizens a way of understanding 'who is who' in politics without needing to read all of the fine print. By doing so they help facilitate the process of accountability that is a central part of democratic politics. Democratic accountability is enhanced because even if voters cannot evaluate individual legislative candidates, they can evaluate party labels and differentiate among the parties. Evaluating parties is easier because there are fewer of them and because their positions are more visible than those of individual politicians.

In fluid party systems there is less institutional control over leadership recruitment than in more institutionalized ones. Even in this era of modern media (which make it easier for candidates to reach a mass audience) and skepticism about parties in most democracies (which makes it easier for antiparty politicians to gain currency) the institutionalization of party systems affects the recruitment of political leaders. Countries with more institutionalized party systems are less likely to have antiparty leaders.

Because of the greater probability that a populist with a weak party base might be elected, institutional impasses may be more likely in democracies that have fluid party systems. In institutionalized party systems candidates from minor parties have little chance of being elected president. Most voters are loyal to a party, and they generally cast their ballots for candidates of that party. This reduces the likelihood that a candidate from a minor party might win the election. It also dampens the prospects of populist, antiparty candidates.

If elections are personalistic contests, individuals cast their ballots for personal leaders more than they base their choice on party profile. Of course, some citizens in all democracies vote

on the basis of personalistic appeals rather than party differences. But where personalistic disputes are decisive and party labels are less entrenched, those who win elections are likely to feel less restrained about how they should govern (Linz 1994; Rose 1981). They are more prone to demagoguery and populism, both of which have deleterious effects on democracy.

The Legitimacy of Parties and Elections

Legitimacy usually refers to attitudes about the political regime (Linz (1978: 17–18; Morlino and Montero 1995: 232–35), but the concept can also refer to democratic institutions. Parties are legitimate to the extent that political actors have a positive attitude toward them or, minimally, consider them necessary parts of a good political regime. Comparatively positive attitudes toward parties increase the likelihood that the system will be stable. Posed in this way, the concept is not tautological; both legitimacy and stability can be empirically measured, and the presence of one need not imply that of the other.

Because parties typically rank among the least trusted of democratic institutions even in long-established democracies, it is important to avoid unrealistic expectations in measuring legitimacy. Survey data provide a good means for assessing differences in mass-level legitimacy. Even allowing for growing citizen disaffection with parties in institutionalized systems, parties have lower legitimacy in most third-wave democratizers. White, Rose, and McAllister (1997: 51–52) report that in Russia parties are the least trusted among the 16 institutions evaluated in a series of public opinion surveys. On a scale of 1 (no trust) to 7 (great trust), only 2% of respondents gave parties a 6 or 7, compared to 60% who gave them a 1 or a 2. Forty-three percent agreed with the statement, "We do not need parliament or elections, but instead a strong leader who can make decisions and put them into effect fast" (White, Rose, and McAllister 1997: 46). Parties also ranked as the institution (among eight) that evoked least sympathy in Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Italy, but nevertheless "the legitimacy of parties is high in all four countries" (Morlino and Montero 1995: 256). On a sympathy index scale ranging from 1 (least sympathy) to 10 (greatest), parties scored a mean of 4.4 in Portugal, 4.2 in Spain, 4.1 in Italy, and 4.9 in Greece in 1985 (Morlino and Montero 1995: 258). Greek parties scored only 10.9% below the midway point (5.5) of the scale. On the White, Rose, and McAllister (1997: 52–53) trust index, which ranged from 1 (least trust) to 7, Russian parties scored only 2.3 of 7, 42.5% below the midway point (4.0) of the scale.

In a survey in central Europe pollsters asked several questions that tapped the comparative legitimacy of parties. One question asked citizens whether they approved of the dissolution of parties and parliament. In Poland 40% responded affirmatively, compared to only 8% in Austria. Among Polish respondents 31% said they would prefer a one-party system, as compared with 8% in the Czech Republic. In Poland 39% said that they approved of rule by a strong man, compared to 22% in Austria and only 19% in Slovakia (Linz and Stepan 1996: 285, citing Plasser and Ulram 1993: 46–47).

The Latinobarometro (Lagos 1996) asked the familiar question about trust in institutions. Although parties were generally the least trusted institution, there is nevertheless significant variance across cases. In Uruguay, which has one of the more institutionalized party systems in Latin America, 41.0% of respondents expressed a lot of trust or some trust in parties. In Peru and Brazil only 21.2% and 17.4% of respondents, respectively, expressed a lot of trust or some trust in parties, and in Venezuela, where the party system deinstitutionalized and experienced a major crisis in the 1990s, only 16.0% expressed a lot of trust or some trust. The level of trust in parties at the low end of the Latin American range is much lower than in the southern European democracies.

The Latinobarometro also asked respondents whether they believed that democracy could exist without political parties. A high percentage of respondents who believe that parties are necessary for democracy suggests greater legitimacy of parties. In Uruguay (78.2%) and Argentina (70.8%), both of which have moderately institutionalized party systems, a sizeable majority agreed that parties are necessary for democracy. At the low end were Brazil (47.4%), which has a weakly institutionalized party system, and Paraguay (46.8%), where democracy was first realized in 1993.

How do these differences in the legitimacy of parties affect democratic politics? Where parties are particularly discredited, it is easier for antiparty politicians to win office. They have a simpler task in finding a supportive electorate. For this reason the discredit of parties explains the significant number of antiparty voters in many third-wave countries. The problems that attend the rise of antiparty politicians, including further attacks on democratic institutions and a somewhat greater likelihood of erratic leadership, are more common.

The limited legitimacy of parties in fluid party systems also hinders democratic consolidation. Democratic consolidation not only means that actors abide by the rules of the game, it also implies a positive construction of beliefs and norms toward the regime. Gunther, Diamandouros, and Puhle (1995: 7) consider a democracy consolidated "when all politically significant groups regard its key institutions as the only legitimate framework for political contestation, and adhere to democratic rules of the game" (see also Linz and Stepan 1996: 5–6). Democracy is generally more consolidated when actors accord legitimacy to parties since they constitute the main mechanism for competing for state power in virtually all democratic systems.[10]

Party Organization

[10] For a viewpoint on the relationship between party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation that diverges somewhat from the one taken here, see Toka (1997).

With the partial exception of the United States, party organizations have long been relatively robust in countries with more institutionalized party systems. Parties in Western European democracies have historically been well financed, had (though now declining) active mass memberships, cultivated fairly sizable and professionalized staffs, and commanded strong loyalty on the part of elected representatives. Parties developed relatively clear and stable procedures for selecting leaders, for providing for new leadership, and for organizational structures. Party leaders are important everywhere, but in more institutionalized systems, the party is not subordinate to the leader; the converse is generally true. Although there were always important organizational differences between the centrist and conservative parties, on the one hand, and the leftist parties, on the other, these differences pale in comparison to those between parties in more institutionalized systems and those in less institutionalized systems.

In countries such as Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Russia parties have enjoyed only precarious resources and have been weakly professionalized. Party labels, though not devoid of ideological content, are often diffuse; many parties are personalistic vehicles. In Peru and Russia parties exercise little control over nominations. In Peru, for example, President Fujimori has used focus groups and surveys to determine who runs on the ballot of his party. Fujimori himself, rather than the party, has controlled congressional nominations (Conaghan 1996); this personalistic control of candidate selection is the antithesis of an institutionalized system. Moreover, as is also true in Russia, candidates can gain ballot access without a party and can win election as independents.

Politicians in some fluid systems are not loyal to their parties; switching from one party to another is commonplace. For example, in the Brazilian legislature of 1991–94, out of 503 deputies there were 262 switches (Samuels 1996). Between the December 1993 Russian parliamentary elections and October 1995, 128 of 450 Duma members switched parties. Similarly, in the weeks following the December 1995 Duma election, 142 Duma members switched parties (White, Rose, and McAllister 1997: 184, 238). Neither citizens nor political elites evince loyalty or sympathy toward parties. Organizational loyalty is much greater among politicians in countries with more institutionalized party systems. Party discipline is more frequently relaxed in countries with weakly institutionalized systems than in countries with stronger institutionalization. For example, in Latin America party discipline is strong in Argentina and Venezuela, which have relatively well-institutionalized systems, and comparatively weak in Brazil, which has a less institutionalized system.

In sum, the solidity of party organization varies markedly across cases, with significant consequences for democratic politics. In some countries party organizations have significant resources and command deep loyalty among the political elite. These organizations still dominate

political campaigns. In others, party organizations are flimsy; party loyalties are frequently shallow, and it is typical for individual politicians to cultivate mainly personal votes.

Conclusion

Throughout much of the twentieth century democratic politics has been rooted in relatively institutionalized party systems. Even the US system, long considered weak compared to most Western European counterparts, fits this description.

In the third wave of democratization many competitive political regimes exist in countries that have weakly institutionalized party systems. Democratic politics in fluid party systems acquire different characteristics from those exhibited by democracies with more institutionalized systems: more personalized, weaker mechanisms of accountability, greater electoral volatility, more floating voters, more uncertainty. Although O'Donnell (1994) does not discuss 'delegative' democracy in terms of the characteristics of party systems, delegative democracy is unlikely if not impossible in more institutionalized party systems. This mostly new phenomenon of competitive politics with weakly institutionalized party systems requires some rethinking of party systems theory.

If variation in the level of institutionalization is a crucial component of contemporary democratic party systems, then why has this issue been neglected in the literature? Analyses of the US and Western European party systems have dominated the theoretical literature. The better work on Western European party systems has reached a high degree of sophistication, but it has not paid much attention to this issue because for most of the twentieth century there was relatively little crossnational variance in levels of institutionalization. In their study of 13 Western European countries from 1885 to 1985 Bartolini and Mair (1990: 73) found that France, with a volatility of 15.2%, had the highest mean electoral volatility during that 100 year period, while Austria (5.7%) had the lowest. All of the Western European cases were relatively well institutionalized. The variance in party system institutionalization, though not irrelevant, was not sufficient to warrant systematic attention in thinking about the ways in which to compare party systems. This situation changes when we turn to the third-wave cases. By expanding the universe of cases around which we theorize from the advanced industrial democracies to newer, less consolidated democracies, variance in party system institutionalization, which is limited and of secondary importance if we study only the Western European cases, becomes extensive and of primary importance.

Despite the importance of variations in party system institutionalization, this dimension has not been extensively explored for the purpose of structuring comparisons among party systems. Sartori (1976: 244–48) proposed a suggestive contrast between party systems that were 'structurally consolidated' and those that were not, and he deliberately excluded the

unconsolidated systems from his analysis. Although Sartori anticipated the importance of party system institutionalization, my approach differs from his in some respects. Implicitly, Sartori saw 'structural consolidation' as a dichotomy: either a system was structurally consolidated, and relatively few systems were according to him, or it was not a system at all. Yet nothing in the definition of a system implies such a rigid demarcation of boundaries, that only very stable systems may qualify as such. Posing this contrast in dichotomous terms is conceptually and empirically misleading. It makes more sense to conceive of institutionalization as a continuous variable. Empirically, many Latin American and Eastern European systems are more institutionalized than Sartori's category of nonconsolidated party systems would suggest, yet they are less institutionalized than most systems in the advanced industrial democracies. Sartori's characterization of most systems outside the advanced industrial democracies as highly unstructured is inaccurate. He wrongly implied that virtually all party systems in Latin America and other less developed regions are weakly institutionalized, and he did not suggest that differences in consolidation or institutionalization could frame fundamental comparisons of party systems. He stated that party systems were structurally consolidated when they contained solidly entrenched mass parties, but he did not provide adequate means for assessing whether a system had such parties.

Moreover, were we to accept Sartori's claim, we would be compelled to abandon a theoretical dialogue between scholars working on established party systems and those studying new party systems. According to Sartori, the kind of analysis that one can apply to structurally consolidated systems does not obtain for other cases. At a time when most of the world's democracies have less institutionalized party systems, this would represent a loss. Party system institutionalization, then, is most usefully conceptualized along a continuum.

Other scholars have also discussed party system institutionalization, but the importance of this notion for structuring comparisons and analysis has not been well established.[11] In sum, despite the importance of variance in levels of party system institutionalization, this dimension remains undertheorized.

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[11] There are several good studies of electoral volatility, including Bartolini and Mair (1990), Coppedge (1995), Maguire (1983), Pedersen (1983), and Przeworski (1975). Toka (1997) provides an interesting recent analysis of party system institutionalization in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. In her comparative analysis of Central American party systems Bendel (1993) suggested the importance of different levels of institutionalization. McDonald and Ruhl (1989) paid attention to whether a system was 'emerging' or 'established,' but without explaining or defining those terms in detail and with some questionable empirical judgments about how to classify cases. Dix (1992), Huntington (1968), Janda (1980), and Panebianco (1988) analyzed the institutionalization of parties (rather than party systems), and Panebianco based his typology of parties on levels of institutionalization. However, Panebianco did not compare party *systems* based on levels of institutionalization, and he dealt with cases (Western

Is weak institutionalization merely a product of the new nature of most third-wave democracies and, hence, an ephemeral feature of systems that have not had enough time to consolidate? As Converse (1969) suggested long ago, time can be a critical factor in the crystallization of partisan identities and, hence, in the institutionalization of a party system. In Italy, Spain, Greece, and Venezuela electoral volatility dropped sharply after an initial high period (Morlino 1995: 318–19); in all four cases low initial institutionalization gave rise to greater institutionalization. Thus, it is certainly possible that in some new democracies the early period of low institutionalization will give rise to the building of a more stable, rooted party system. On the other hand, cases such as Bolivia since 1980, Brazil since 1985, Ecuador since 1978, and especially Peru since 1980 show that institutionalization is not an inevitable product of time. In Peru the old system collapsed between the late 1980s and 1995.

Because there has been considerable discussion of the weakening of parties in the advanced industrial democracies, it is important to note that these systems are still much more institutionalized than the fluid party systems found in many third-wave democratizers. Parties in the consolidated democracies face new challenges and are experiencing some erosion in many counties, but as the data throughout this paper have suggested, there is a qualitative difference between these older and more institutionalized systems and the fluid ones.

Analyses of Latin American and Eastern European parties and party systems have proliferated in the past decade, but they have generally not attempted to challenge the way we theorize about and compare party systems. Such a challenge is in order. It is not that the analyses of Western European party systems are wrong; they are often very impressive. Rather, analyzing the party systems of third-wave democratizers enables one to perceive considerable variance in party system institutionalization and significant consequences stemming from these variations. These issues do not surface with comparable clarity in the examination of Western European cases because of the lower variance across cases.

Party systems vary markedly in levels of institutionalization, and institutionalization varies independently from the number of parties. Institutionalization also varies significantly relative to ideological distance in the party system. Some weakly institutionalized systems such as Peru in the 1990s exhibit little ideological polarization, while others (e.g., Russia, Peru in the 1980s, Brazil in the mid- to late 1980s) are quite polarized. Some fairly well-institutionalized systems (e.g., the United States) are not very polarized, while others (Italy and France until the 1990s) exhibited considerable polarization.

The differences between more and less institutionalized party systems are so important that they can fruitfully be used as a starting point for analyzing, classifying, and comparing party

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Europe) that showed low variance compared to what would be evident were Latin America or Eastern Europe to be included.

systems. The dynamics and characteristics of weakly institutionalized systems differ profoundly from those of well-institutionalized ones.

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