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Source: *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (October 2015), pp. 126-143
Published by: Comparative Politics, Ph.D. Programs in Political Science, City University of New York
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43664173
Accessed: 27-02-2019 08:40 UTC

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From Single-Party to Electoral Authoritarian Regimes

The Institutional Origins of Competitiveness in Post-Cold War Africa

Yonatan L. Morse

Scholarship on authoritarianism has become increasingly concerned with variation in electoral authoritarian outcomes, often termed as differences in the competitiveness of elections. While several regimes now combine democratic and authoritarian practices, elections differ greatly in term of their comparative openness and the ability of incumbents to dominate elections.[1] Simultaneously, there has been a growing focus on the role of authoritarian institutions, and especially political parties, in explaining differences in durations of authoritarian survival.[2] Yet surprisingly little has been done to integrate these two sets of observations. How might differences in authoritarian parties explain variation in electoral authoritarian competitiveness rather than just regime survival? Importantly, what does an exploration of the institutional underpinnings of electoral authoritarianism tell us about the comparative durability of modern-day authoritarianism?

This article makes these connections with a limited study that examines cases of formerly single-party regimes in Africa that successfully transitioned to electoral authoritarianism. The narrow focus on single-party regimes allows for closer examination of the process of party formation and is especially pertinent to the African context where these regime-types predominate. The central argument is that party capacity, as developed under single-party rule, differed substantially in terms of a party's ability to integrate both elites and citizens—termed here as institutional articulation and social incorporation. While these differences in party capacity did not impact regimes while contestation was illegal, they were a primary factor in shaping the competitiveness of subsequent elections. When regimes were armed with more integrative parties, they could tap into new sources of authoritarian resiliency that helped them mitigate dilemmas of authoritarian rule in terms of elite and voter loyalty. Therefore, they could tolerate more electoral openness without risking defeat. Absent these advantages, regimes had to recourse to more traditional tools of authoritarian survival, namely patronage and coercion.

This article makes a number of contributions to the study of electoral authoritarianism, authoritarian institutions, and African politics. First, it adds needed clarification to the term competitiveness by disaggregating the openness of an election from the election outcome. In particular, I highlight a type of electoral authoritarian regime that is simultaneously more open to contestation yet also dominates elections, termed tolerant hegemonies in contrast to repressive hegemonies. Second, this study contributes to the growing interest in hybrid authoritarian institutions and provides an understanding of authoritarian parties that looks beyond their physical organization to capture both the integrity of internal processes and the breadth of social incorporation. Better capturing these differences in parties highlights variant sources of authoritarian survival and durability. Finally, this article contributes to the growing scholarship on African elections and political parties. It tempers the "democratization by elections" thesis by showing how greater competitiveness is not necessarily indicative of democratization but rather could also signal more entrenched authoritarianism.[3] Furthermore, it adds to a growing body of scholarship that focuses on variation in the capacity of African political parties, this time with an eye toward incumbent parties and the legacy of single-party rule rather than opposition parties.[4]

This article proceeds with an elaboration of the issue of competitiveness, the main dependent variable, and demonstrates how the cases studied here vary in terms of electoral openness and hegemony. It then discusses the role of political parties in authoritarian politics and the context of African single-party regimes and offers observational criteria that measure party capacity in terms of their organizational and integrative capacities. Scores for party capacity and electoral competitiveness are incorporated into an explanatory typology, which also includes measures of three of the most prominently discussed themes in authoritarian politics: economic performance, opposition capacity, and external actors. Typological theorizing is an established tool in qualitative methodology and is suitable for comparing small ranges of cases, adjudicating between competing theories, and modeling complex causation. Specific cases are discussed to further elaborate on the notions explored in the typological space.

Electoral Authoritarianism and Electoral Competitiveness

The term electoral authoritarianism is meant to convey an empirical reality that has spread since the onset of the Third Wave of democratization, and especially since the end of the Cold War. While earlier scholarship might have categorized such hybrid regimes as "democracies with adjectives" or "semi-democratic," there is now a consensus that several of these regimes are distinctly authoritarian.[5] While by definition all electoral authoritarian regimes hold regular but unfair elections for legislatures and executives, the nature of electoral contestation differs across cases, often with significant consequences for regime trajectories. At times, electoral victories are forged through heavy manipulation of the electoral process and the curtailment of civil liberties. At other times, incumbents find additional sources of authoritarian durability in the form of quasi-democratic institutions such as elections, political parties, legislatures, and judiciaries.[6]

Unfortunately, the terminology has been inconsistent and at times outright confusing. For instance, Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way consider a regime "competitive authoritarian" rather than "hegemonic authoritarian" if opposition parties are not physically precluded from competing or overly repressed.[7] By contrast, Philip Roessler and Marc Morjé Howard distinguish between competitive and hegemonic authoritarianism according to incumbent vote-share and infer from the term "competitive" a sense of regime instability and a tendency to tip either toward more hegemonic forms of electoral authoritarianism, or, alternatively, toward a minimally democratic regime.[8] Still other scholars such as Beatriz Magaloni and Kenneth Greene use the terms "hegemonic" and "dominant" interchangeably to connote stable and long-lasting electoral authoritarian regimes.[9] Others like Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell use the categories "dominant party multiparty" and "pure limited multiparty" to make similar distinctions.[10] Within the African context, Nicolas van de Walle refers to "status quo regimes" versus "contested autocracies."[11]

The fact that so many scholars highlight this variation is reflective of its importance, but the key axis of debate appears to be over the connotation of the term "competitiveness." Competitiveness can refer to the actual structure of contestation, or the rules and restrictions that shape whether voters can translate their preferences into actual outcomes. This is usually captured in measures of electoral fraud, restrictions on civil liberties, and the extent of state violence. On the other hand, competitiveness can refer to the capacity of actors to mount credible alternatives or the capacity of incumbents to effectively mobilize voters. This is often captured in measures of vote-share or regime longevity. To borrow a sport's analogy, competitiveness can refer to the rules of the game or the players' athletic ability. Undoubtedly, there is a relationship between uncompetitive structures and uncompetitive actors. Indeed, there is scholarship that suggests that electoral violence is responsive to perceptions of electoral weakness.[12]

Yet the empirical record is actually quite mixed, and there are theoretical reasons for thinking about competitiveness in a more nuanced way. It is true that at times regimes coerce in response to decline. This was true in the case of Kenya, where the Moi regime heavily repressed competition during the 1992 and 1997 elections (including the use of ethnic cleansing to create homogenous districts), and was still unable to deter opposition gains. Yet in cases like Cameroon, repression has remained a constant condition underpinning regime dominance. The Biya regime wins overwhelming majorities but also significantly curtails dissent and free expression. By contrast, some regimes that repress the least are in fact quite hegemonic. This is most explicit in the case of Tanzania, where, by most measures, electoral contestation lacks the restrictions seen in other African countries, but the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) still clearly dominates elections. Importantly, stressing these differences in openness and hegemony should cue scholars to different sources of authoritarian survival. Restrictive dominating regimes are not sustained by the same factors as more open dominating regimes.

Therefore, I look at competitiveness in terms of regime openness and regime hegemony in non-founding elections.[13] Detailed in Appendix A, regime openness refers to a combination of measures of electoral fraud, limitations on civil liberties, and the degree of state violence.[14] These measures purposefully capture a wide range of coercive behavior utilized prior to, during, and after an election. Regime openness is scored as either tolerant or repressive. Importantly, by tolerant it should not be inferred that elections in that country are democratic. Rather, it indicates that fraud and coercion were used less systematically to win elections. By contrast, regime hegemony refers to the ability of the incumbent to muster a significant presidential vote share or maintain control of the legislature over time. It builds on previously used standards of vote share thresholds and longevity requirements.[15]

Table 1 Categorizing Competitiveness in African Electoral Authoritarian Regimes

		Regime Openness	
		Tolerant	**Repressive**
Regime Hegemony	**Hegemonic**	Mozambique (2004–) Senegal (1978–1993) Seychelles (1998–) Tanzania (2000–)	Cameroon (1997–) Côte d'Ivoire (1995–2000)* Djibouti (1997–) Gabon (1996–) Togo (1998–)
	Non-Hegemonic	Mozambique (1999–2004) Senegal (1993–2001)**	Kenya (1997–2002)**

Note: * Ended by military coup; ** Ended by electoral turnover.

These classifications, summarized in Table 1, highlight two main features regarding Africa's former single-party regimes. First, the main axis of difference is regime openness and not regime hegemony. Second, as established theory suggests, non-hegemonic outcomes are short-lived.[16] In the case of Mozambique, after a brief period of closer electoral contestation the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) regime became hegemonic following the 2004 elections. In Senegal and Kenya, periods of non-hegemony gave way to electoral turnovers. Therefore, there are two levels of explanation needed regarding the competitiveness of elections. Primarily, why do some cases become tolerant hegemonies rather than repressive hegemonies? Secondarily, what ends or precludes regimes from establishing hegemony? As argued below, party capacity is the main differentiating factor between tolerant and repressive hegemonies, while economic performance and the degree of external pressure arguably shape hegemony.

Political Parties, Electoral Authoritarianism, and African Single-Party Regimes

Political parties hold a cherished place in the literature on democratic politics and state development and are often conceived of as institutions that solve elite coordination dilemmas and provide representative and expressive roles.[17] However, in authoritarian settings political parties are seen as key institutions for the perpetuation of authoritarian rule. Starting with Barbara Geddes' insights regarding the comparative longevity of single-party versus military and personalist rule, a new wave of literature has explored the supportive role of political institutions under authoritarian rule, particularly the unique role of political parties.[18]

Integrative Political Parties and Electoral Competitiveness The literature emphasizes a triad of complementary advantages that political parties provide autocrats: a platform for mitigating elite conflict, a mechanism for social mobilization, and a coercive tool. In particular, the ability of political parties to integrate elites and mobilize social support deserves special mention. As Jason Brownlee writes, parties lengthen the "time horizons on which leaders weigh gains and losses," and provide an institutional mechanism for resolving disputes. Beatriz Magaloni has explained how parties can solve the "dictator's dilemma," whereby participants in the ruler's coalition have no way of credibly knowing whether commitments will be upheld.[19] Concurrently, political parties are important mobilization tools, which, as Magaloni argues, cement the credibility of commitments between a ruler and their coalition due to the perception that the party is long lasting and durable. Therefore, some regimes seek supermajorities rather than minimally winning coalitions and will invest in mobilizing structures or use public policy to incorporate supportive segments of the population (or, alternatively, to punish detractors).

Importantly, this conception of political parties implies that parties are more than just an organizational tool, but at times can be integrative institutions. When parties limit excessive executive power, provide credible channels for elite advancement, and allow for the expression of dissent, they are provided with significant advantages that bind elites and voters to the party. Yet authoritarian parties do not always reflect the same commitments to elite integration and social mobilization. Often, parties exist on paper as organizations, but their institutional function is very weak. For example, parties might be subservient to a powerful executive, or they might not have much of a grassroots presence or a followed set of rules and procedures. In these cases, parties are utilized largely for their coercive capacity and organizational function. As Levitsky and Way note, parties can act as an extension or even a substitute for state power to coerce voters and oppositions.[20]

Therefore, it is not enough to note the presence or absence of a party or even, if one exists, to just describe its organizational structure. Rather, it is necessary to devise observational criteria of the party in practice. What factors help ensure credible commitments among elites and enable mass social mobilization? Traditionally, differences in parties are conceived of as ideal classificatory types that distinguish between mass and elite, programmatic and clientelistic, ideological and pragmatic parties (among others).[21] Yet, as Henry Bienen astutely noted regarding Africa, "the characteristics attributed to political systems in Africa were often based on images that African parties wanted to convey to the world themselves," rather than any empirical reality.[22] This criticism is relevant to the broader enterprise of party classification, since it often fails to capture theoretically relevant aspects of party-building such as elite integration or social incorporation.

To address this failure, I measure party capacity along two main criteria: institutional articulation and social incorporation (see Appendix B). Institutional articulation looks at indicators of party institutionalization, the process of elite recruitment, and the decisional powers of the party vis-à-vis other political institutions such as the executive or security services. These criteria are meant to capture differences in the organizational and integrative capacities of parties. Articulate parties have robust organizational structures such as established national-level offices, grassroots structures, and mass mobilizing organs. However, there are also structures in place that make the party a credible institution such as regular party congresses where elites can voice dissent and coherent party governing procedures.[23] Articulate parties have competitive rather than plebiscitary mechanisms for recruiting new members (and especially presidential candidates) and are afforded significant autonomy. In another sense, articulate parties are organizationally sound and internally more democratic. Both aspects help retain elite loyalty by conveying a sense of institutional permanence and integrity.

By contrast, social incorporation addresses the ability of parties to integrate voters and is based on an evaluation of the major distributional consequences of a party's social and economic commitments. In the African context, to assess wider social incorporation we would look at cases where the role of ethnic mobilization was not as salient or where there was a clearly dominant ethnic group supportive of the ruling party. Widely incorporative parties favor more broadly conceived constituencies, such as labor or rural segments of the population. Narrowly incorporative parties are instances where single-party regimes clearly prioritize slimmer urban constituencies or a narrower slice of ethnic populations. Regimes with multiethnic coalitions are often narrowly incorporative if the coalition changes or within the party there is the perception of an uneven distribution of resources.

Differences in institutional articulation and social incorporation impact how regimes compete in multiparty elections by providing incumbents with tools to solve dilemmas of autocratic rule. Regimes with articulate and broadly incorporative parties are more capable of preventing elite defection, and this ability should continue during moments of economic crisis and the growth of more credible opposition alternatives, so long as the party exudes permanence and credibility. The regime can rely on a wide network of party activists who are not simply opportunistic, but also vested in the longer-term survival of the party. The question of succession is also more easily resolved, which defuses a central node of possible defection. Similarly, broadly incorporative parties can rely on a steady supply of voters from a sufficiently wide constituency. Voter loyalty is not necessarily indicative of strong partisan affiliation or a deep sense of loyalty (although it might) but rather the consequence of patterns of clientelism and the delivery of political goods.

On the other hand, regimes with poorly articulate and narrowly incorporative parties will face more defection crises as elites see better opportunities elsewhere, or perceive that the regime is vulnerable. Since life in the party provides little by way of integration, elites will pursue opportunities elsewhere when they are available. Likewise, the challenge of executive succession is likely to seriously stress the party and provide the impetus for further regime defection. With regard to voters, these regimes cannot rely on a sufficiently wide community of support. Instead, they either depend on the support of much narrower groups, such as their own ethnic cohorts, or they must cobble together electoral coalitions of various groups to create larger majorities. These alliances are also sensitive to short-term fluctuations in perceptions of regime performance and vulnerability.

These differences impact a regime's ability to dominate the election and their propensity toward coercion. Regimes with weaker incumbent parties use coercion to cope with the initial shock of the transition to elections. Here coercion is used to ensure electoral victory and regime survival as elites and voters defect from the party. However, the continued survival of these regimes also depends on higher levels of coercion. To prevent further defections, nascent opposition challenges must be curtailed decisively, and term limits might be changed to prevent a succession crisis. Electoral coalitions are sustained by large amounts of patronage that is often derived coercively or by the exclusion of large segments of the population. By contrast, regimes armed with stronger parties are less sensitive to many of these issues. Instead, coercion is used much more strategically to create supermajorities or win specific districts rather than to ensure regime survival or act as a constant deterrent to defection.

This leads to my central hypothesis regarding regime competitiveness: Single party regimes with higher party capacity (in terms of institutional articulation and social incorporation) are more likely to transition to tolerant and hegemonic forms of electoral authoritarianism. The corollary is that regimes with weaker party capacity will transition to more repressive forms of authoritarianism and that their continued survival and hegemony will depend on their ability to continue repressing opposition and buying support.

Single-Party Regimes and the African Context This study is confined to the context of African single-party regimes, defined as regimes where an established political party governed for at least ten years prior to successfully transitioning to an electoral authoritarian regime.[24] This is done for a number of reasons. Theoretically, these regimes have the necessary longevity to examine differences in institutional evolution and allow for further elaboration upon an established regime-type. Moreover, while single-party regimes might survive longer than other forms of authoritarianism, the period of closed politics is a poor test of the comparative advantages provided by parties. In fact, the very institutional diversity noted above was essentially masked while contestation was deemed illegal, and very disparate forms of single-party regimes survived for similar periods of time simply because the costs of defection were so high. It is only during multiparty elections that we observe real variation in outcomes, and only under these conditions that the impact of party capacity is really put to the test.

This theoretical impetus meshes nicely with the fact that the bulk of African regimes that transitioned to electoral authoritarianism following the liberalization wave of the early 1990s were single-party regimes, and the vast majority of them survived their founding elections.[25] Moreover, much less work has looked back at the impact of single-party rule or conceived of incumbent parties as formal institutions of authoritarian rule.[26] There is a prominent strand of scholarship that focuses on the intersection of ethnic demographics, electoral systems, and strong presidentialism to better understand the general volatility and fragmentation of African party systems.[27] There are also several studies that look at the impact of repeated unfair elections, the origins of capable opposition parties, or the pecuniary origins of cross-ethnic opposition coalitions rather than the nature of incumbent parties.[28]

This study contributes to this scholarship by looking at incumbent parties and specifying instances where the political salience of ethnic identity and the domination of politics by strong presidents were tempered by real party institutionalization and the creation of wider social constituencies. Single-party regimes that are institutionally articulate are by definition less presidential, and regimes that are widely incorporative have more stable electoral bases. This analysis of an understudied set of African cases helps explain instances of party system stability in places like Tanzania, where ethnic fragmentation is high and there is no dominant ethnic group. Moreover, the argument here is not that regimes with narrower social bases necessarily survive for shorter periods of time, but rather that they must rely on more coercive means to maintain power. Repressive hegemonies correspond much more closely to current thinking on African party systems than tolerant hegemonies.

The empirical record of party evolution in single-party Africa reflects this diversity. In the cases of Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Kenya, and Togo, despite the presence of some grassroots and mass mobilizing organization (and at times even competitive primaries for parliamentary nomination), parties were largely confined to major urban centers, did not institutionalize the process of executive succession, and were overshadowed by dominating presidential figures. For instance, in Kenya, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) did not convene a national congress for nearly twenty years and ran out of operating funds in the mid-1970s. In Togo, the Rally of Togolese People (RPT) did not even hold a parliamentary election until 1979 and developed a distinct cult of personality surrounding Gnassingbé Eyadéma. In Gabon, national congresses were held regularly but were extremely rigid affairs that simply rubber-stamped presidential directives.[29]

In most of these cases, ruling coalitions also reflected ethnic bias. While cabinets tended to maintain at least some semblance of ethnic balance, this masked ethnic favoritism in terms of public spending and appointment. In Cameroon, first president Ahmadou Ahidjo elevated the interests of his northern co-ethnics known as the "Garoua Barons," while his successor Paul Biya was perceived as representative of the southern "Beti Mafia." In Gabon, Omar Bongo was of the minority Batéké people from the distant eastern province of Haute-Ogooué. By 1985 nearly 78 percent of all industrialization had taken place in three regions alone. At one point, a quarter of cabinet ministers were Batéké, many of them Bongo's relatives. In Kenya, public resources shifted from a narrow group of landed Kikuyu from Central Province under Jomo Kenyatta to several of the smaller Kalenjin tribes of the Rift Valley under Daniel arap Moi.[30]

By contrast, the cases of Mozambique, Senegal, Seychelles, and Tanzania reflect much clearer commitments to institutional articulation and wider social incorporation.

In Mozambique, the heritage of armed anti-colonial struggle and radicalization toward Marxism-Leninism turned the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) into a robust political organization. As Carrie Manning writes, FRELIMO was never a "personal party," noting that internal structures mattered greatly. After independence, FRELIMO invested heavily into "dynamizing groups" that became the foundation for a party cell system.[31] Likewise, The Tanzanian African National Union (TANU) used first president Julius Nyerere's idea of *ujamaa*, or African socialism, as the impetus to construct a massive party with robust mass mobilizing organizations, regular party congresses, and, infamously, party cells for every ten homes.[32] In both Mozambique and Tanzania executive succession was later institutionalized through a quasi-primary system.

In these cases the conception of social incorporation was also much wider. As part of *ujamaa*, TANU launched a widespread campaign to create communal villages and provide basic infrastructure and services to large swathes of the rural population. TANU maintained an actual commitment to peasants and workers, and the impact of ethnicity was notably subdued. FRELIMO likewise took aggressive steps to establish state-owned farms and communal villages. While considered more southern oriented (in part due to the legacy of the Mozambican Civil War), ethnic mobilization in FRELIMO was not overt. The Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF) also followed a socialist path, and, despite the smaller size of its rural sector, it made significant investments into education and the reduction of income inequality.[33] Finally, in Senegal, the Socialist Party (PS) was able to reach into the countryside through its linkages with Sufi Brotherhoods (*marabouts*). This provided a bridge between president Leopold Senghor, a Catholic, and the majority rural Muslim population, and compensated for the PS's weaker institutional articulation.[34]

Designing a Typological Theory of Electoral Authoritarian Variation

Typological theorizing offers an alternative to structured comparisons and is a suitable method for parsing through complex causal processes within a medium-n context. Unlike conceptual typologies, explanatory typologies are an established tool in qualitative methodology that score cases along a number of explanatory variables.[35] In this instance, the typology combines a primary independent variable (party capacity) with measures of some of the most common variables in the literature: economic performance, opposition capacity, and external actors. These variables are used to test alternative theories, but also to illuminate interactive, complex, and variant causal patterns. This is a central strength of typological theorizing, in contrast with more straightforward Millian methods of comparison or set-theoretic methods. Typological theorizing allows a researcher to model complex and often equifinal causation in an easily interpretive manner.

While useful for medium-n comparisons, typological theorizing is not without its shortcomings. First, as the coding becomes more nuanced and the number of variables increases, the length of the explanation grows exponentially. To maintain a fairly parsimonious yet complex space, this article is limited to four variables using dichotomous coding and only reports actual results rather than all potential combinations of variables. Second, typological theorizing often has difficulty coping with the issue of time. Since the measure of a variable might evolve over time, there needs to be specificity regarding the boundaries of a case. For this study, cases are conceived as specific election periods, and the scores for each variable are given accordingly (Appendix B). Third, typological theorizing relies on qualitative judgments regarding cases and often utilizes rich data sources and historic knowledge. This study combines such qualitative measures with more quantitative observations, and an online replication file is made available.[36] Finally, typological theorizing is often paired with case studies and process tracing. While space constraints preclude such depth, individual cases will be discussed below.

Discussion of Variables Though the literature on electoral authoritarianism is ripe with several contrasting theories, this study elevates the role of economic performance, opposition capacity, and external actors. It does not test the role of variables such as state capacity or modernization theory. This is due, in part, to the constraints of typological theorizing, but also to the fact that among these African cases there is little variation. For instance, state capacity is uniformly quite weak (in terms of military spending or the scope and cohesion of the military), and nearly all the countries are low-income.

Economic Performance Positive economic performance impacts the competitiveness of elections through two processes. First, growing economies provide incumbents with the resources to maintain patronage networks. This can involve rents from state-owned industries, wealth generated from private sources that must pass through government channels, or greater access to corruption. A growing economy allows incumbents more flexibility in managing their coalition. Second, positive economic performance can reduce voter-grievance, a factor which is particularly relevant in the resource-constrained environment of sub-Saharan Africa. The role of economic crisis and longer-term trends of economic decline have both been emphasized as factors that destabilize authoritarian regimes.[37] Indeed, as Bratton and van de Walle stress, popular protests, initially economic in nature, served as the prelude to foundational elections in Africa.[38] The measure used here looks at combinations of macro-indicators of economic development and indicators of social welfare.

Opposition Capacity The role of opposition parties has garnered significant attention from scholars of electoral authoritarianism and African politics who disagree in their predictions regarding electoral authoritarian variation. On the one hand, poorly organized oppositions allow incumbents to compete more easily and limit the need for coercive measures. In the African context, opposition parties are often counted as poor institutions that lack administrative capacity, are non-existent between elections, and are merely vehicles for expelled elites.[39] More generally, opposition parties often make poor decisions by shunning cooperation or choosing to boycott elections.[40] Yet these factors are often derivative of the repressive environment rather than inherent weakness. On the other hand, when parties are well-organized, cooperative, and participatory, they might be better equipped to compete, but might also incur repressive responses from the incumbent. Therefore, it is difficult to predict what exactly the nature of contestation is going to be based solely on opposition capacity. The measure used here looks at the stability and institutionalization of the party system and also evaluates opposition decision-making.

External Actor Pressure There is now growing attention paid to the role of external actors in the process of democratization.[41] Specifically, the ability and willingness of external actors to pressure incumbent leaders for democratic reform can significantly influence the competitiveness of elections. External actors can use conditional aid to push for political reform or impose sanctions to limit the ability of incumbents to use coercion. Likewise, external actors can endow opposition parties with rhetorical and material support. By contrast, external actors can also serve as authoritarian patrons, especially when faced with conflicting foreign policy goals. This is at times referred to as "Black Knight" support, where regimes not only go unpunished for bad behavior, but are also further emboldened to engage in authoritarian behavior. The measure used here looks at the capacity of external powers to apply pressure in terms of economic leverage and their willingness to use that capacity based on their foreign policy preferences.

Typological Results and Discussion

Table 2 summarizes the scores along the measures of party capacity, economic performance, opposition capacity, and external actors and arranges cases according to whether they share the same scores. Several countries appear as separate cases due to changing scores along one or more variables across electoral periods. Each row therefore represents a different array of variables leading to different alignments of electoral competitiveness.

The typological space indicates that party capacity is indeed the primary factor differentiating between tolerant and repressive hegemonies. All cases of strong party capacity transitioned to tolerant hegemonies for significant periods of time. This is in-line with the theoretical expectations that single-party regimes that invested in integrative and inclusive parties were more likely to retain elite and social support during multiparty elections without the need for extensive repression. By contrast, all the single-party regimes with weaker party capacities shifted to less open forms of electoral authoritarianism, and all of them became hegemonic with the exception of Kenya.

The prime example of strong party capacity leading to a tolerant hegemony is Tanzania. As noted, heavy investments were made into integrative party structures and wider social coalitions under single-party rule. As expected, during the multiparty era elite defection was nearly non-existent. The most critical election since 1995 occurred in 2010 when the economy was stressed and there was a better-organized opposition challenger (the Chadema party). Still, there were only three major defections, which fell far below the opposition's expectations.[42] Throughout the multiparty era, CCM also intervened into the primary system to ensure a more credible process and significantly benefitted from a two-round primary system for the presidential nomination. Tellingly, while in 1995 the popular Jakaya Kikwete narrowly lost the second round of the primary to Benjamin Mkapa (686–639), he remained in CCM and contested again and won in 2005.[43] CCM has likewise maintained a distinct mobilization edge, easily garnering over 60 percent of the vote in most constituencies and keeping an even stronger rural edge. Only in urban areas and in the opposition ethnic stronghold of Kilimanjaro does CCM muster less than 50 percent.[44] These party-derived advantages limited the need for widespread coercion.

Table 2 A Typological Theory of Electoral Authoritarian Variation

Case / Indicator	Party Capacity	Economic Performance	Opposition Capacity	External Actor	Electoral Competitiveness
Cameroon (1997–2002) **Côte d'Ivoire (1995–1999)** **Djibouti (1997–2008)** **Togo (2002–2010)**	–	–	–	–	Repressive/ Hegemonic
Cameroon (2002–2011) **Gabon (1996–2011)** **Togo (1998–2002)**	–	+	–	–	Repressive/ Hegemonic
Djibouti (2008–2011) **Togo (2010–2013)**	–	+	–	+	Repressive/ Hegemonic
Kenya (1997–2002)	–	–	–	+	Repressive/ Non-Hegemonic
Mozambique (1999–2004) **Senegal (1998–2001)**	+	+	+	+	Tolerant/ Non-Hegemonic
Mozambique (2004–2009) **Senegal (1978–1993)** **Seychelles (1998–2011)** **Tanzania (2000–2010)**	+	+	+	+	Tolerant/ Hegemonic
Senegal (1993–1998)	+	–	+	+	Tolerant/ Hegemonic

By contrast, in a case like Cameroon where the party was much less integrative, elite defection was a much more serious concern, and social mobilization remained much narrower. For instance, the party had no real mechanism for resolving elite disputes or addressing the question of executive succession. In 1997, Victor Ayissi Movodo and Titus Edzoa, both from Biya's close circle, challenged Biya and intended to run as independents. The former was found murdered and the latter arrested. Between 2002 and 2004 a reform movement within the ruling CPDM party failed to make any headway, leading to the defection of Chief Mila Assoute and the arrest of several members of the opposition. As expected, in 2008, despite international protest, Paul Biya amended the constitution to allow himself to run for a third term, a move perceived by many as a way to defuse potential defection from the party.[45] Likewise, the CPDM's pattern of electoral support largely corresponded to its southern ethnic orientation, with very limited vote-share in wide swaths of North- and South-East Provinces and much of Northern Cameroon. Rather than use the distinct advantages of political parties, Biya relied heavily on repression to deter challengers and win elections.[46]

The role of economic performance, opposition capacity, and external actor pressure all fail to differentiate between degrees of regime openness, but do provide insights into longer-term regime trajectories, particularly in regard to the issue of electoral hegemony. Positive economic performance does help regimes sustain electoral hegemony, which confirms similar findings made by Beatriz Magaloni.[47] This is particularly evident in the tolerant cases where there is no variation along opposition capacity and external actor pressure. For instance, in Mozambique, FRELIMO struggled to win after its founding election in 1994. However, by sustaining higher economic growth and improving social well being, it has been able to side line its main opponent RENAMO. By contrast, a significant period of economic stagnation in Senegal between 1988 and 1998 damaged the PS regime, which was no longer able to sustain hegemony and ultimately lost at the polls to the Sopi coalition in 2000. This coincided with significant changes in the social base of the PS when Sufi Brotherhoods withdrew their public approval for president Abdou Diouf.[48]

The role of economic performance is similarly important among the repressive cases, but it interacts with the role of external actor pressure. Several instances of weaker economic performance were still hegemonic, but this coincided with lower levels of international pressure. In these cases regimes were either under very little international pressure or outright authoritarian patronage. Most often this was in the form of French support for authoritarian incumbents. For example, in Cameroon French monetary support helped protect Paul Biya in the early 1990s and provided cover for him to change the constitution in 2008.[49] However, in Cameroon and Djibouti there has also been important U.S. support since 2001 due to competing foreign policy goals.[50] Faced with few consequences for coercive behavior, incumbent regimes used repressive measures to decimate opposition parties at the polls.

Repressive regimes can mitigate the impact of high external actor pressure by sustaining higher levels of economic growth. Regimes like Djibouti from 2008–2011 or Togo from 2010–2013 relied heavily on development assistance but also maintained above average economic growth. By contrast, in Kenya, the combination of low economic performance and high external actor pressure unraveled the Moi and KANU regime. During the multiparty era Kenya underwent stagflation and became a central target for Western democratization pressures. This included strong support for opposition parties, pressure on Moi from prominent diplomats such as United States Ambassador to Kenya Smith Hempstone, the repeated use of conditional aid, and extensive election monitoring.[51] Within the context of weaker party capacity, Moi had no way to retain elites, mobilize wide social sectors, or sustain high levels of coercion. Between 1992 and 2002 defection was rampant, elections were narrowly won on the backs of ethnic cohorts, and Moi conceded important, albeit limited, constitutional reforms. Unlike Paul Biya in Cameroon, Moi was unable to amend the constitution, and KANU faced a significant succession struggle in 2002. While the opposition was organizationally weak and prone to frequent internal splits, it coalesced into an electoral coalition that defeated KANU in 2002.

Finally, the typological space highlights some interesting insights regarding opposition capacity. Opposition capacity, as measured here, is uniformly weaker across the repressive cases and stronger across the tolerant cases. It is therefore unsurprisingly endogenous to regime strength. Repressive environments often lead to further detrimental decision-making such as frequent electoral boycotts or regime co-optation, while more open and tolerant conditions allow political parties to lay down real institutional roots. Yet the inability of institutionally stronger opposition parties to erode regime hegemony is at first glance counter-intuitive. In the cases of Mozambique, Senegal, Seychelles, and Tanzania opposition parties are provided several advantages compared to the other cases, yet fail to translate these into electoral dividends. However, this is to be expected given a better understanding of the sources of authoritarian strength and their relationships to electoral competitiveness. Opposition parties in tolerant hegemonies can only really challenge incumbents that go through a longer-term process of decline as in Senegal.

Conclusion

While scholars are becoming increasingly aware that political parties are key institutions in sustaining authoritarianism, current scholarship has not effectively conceptualized differences in ruling parties or satisfyingly related these insights to the context of electoral authoritarianism. Through an exploration of African single-party states that transitioned to electoral authoritarianism, this study has illuminated how differences in party development impacted subsequent electoral competitiveness in terms of electoral openness and hegemony and has contributed to our understanding of contemporary authoritarianism and African politics.

Exploring the variant competitive nature and institutional underpinnings of electoral authoritarianism has important consequences. The fact that CCM in Tanzania and the CPDM in Cameroon have survived for similar periods of time tells us very little about their political dynamics or comparative durability. Repressive hegemonies might have political parties, but they are not the central tools for perpetuating power. Rather, these regimes rely on their ability to coerce or buy their way to victory, which is shaped, among other things, by their economic performance and their position in the international system. On the other hand, tolerant hegemonies primarily utilize the institutional advantages of well-organized and integrative parties that limit elite defection and increase social support for the regime, thus reducing the need for widespread coercion. In this sense some tolerant hegemonies are more truly hybrid.

This provides insights into the notion of regime durability, which can possibly be applied cross-nationally. It suggests that true party-based authoritarianism is less sensitive to short-term changes and can more easily reproduce electoral victories over time. While regimes like CCM's in Tanzania or FRELIMO's in Mozambique are not everlasting, they have deep institutional sources of durability. Both the integrity of the ruling party and the breadth of the social coalition would need to drastically change in order to weaken them. By contrast, repressive hegemonies without robust political parties are more reactive, brittle, and sensitive to immediate environmental changes. For instance, it is unsurprising that following the death of Omar Bongo in 2009 the PDG in Gabon underwent a serious succession crisis that challenged his son and successor Ali Bongo during the 2011 election (he won only 42 percent of the vote). Likewise, in these instances changes in the international environment can significantly alter domestic balances of power. More broadly, this study should encourage scholars and policymakers to take closer consideration of party institutions to further understand the roots of electoral behavior.

This study also has implications for the study of African politics and the question of democratization. First, it challenges the notion that improved electoral conditions are inevitably indicators of democratization. In fact, more competitive conditions can reflect authoritarian durability rather than a process of democratization. Second, building on recent work that looks at formal institution building in the African context, this study suggests that the same insights also apply to incumbent parties. In their seminal work on African democracy Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle argued that neopatrimonialism, not regime-type, was the heritage that would define Africa's democratic future. Without diminishing the continued influence of strong presidents, ethnicity, and political clientelism, this study provides examples of incumbent political parties where institutions mattered. While this currently sustains authoritarianism, it remains to be seen how this might bode for future politics and ultimately democracy.[52] Since opposition parties are institutionally stronger in tolerant hegemonies, they might provide the seedlings for institutionalized democratic party systems in the future.

NOTES

Sincere thanks go out to Marc Morjé Howard, Daniel Brumberg, Scott Taylor, and Andrew Bennett for their guidance on this project, and to the anonymous reviewers for the extremely valuable insights. I am also grateful to Leonardo Arriola, Kevin Croke, Catherine Kelly, Brandon Kendhammer, Rachel Beatty Riedl, Landry Signé, and Keith Weghorst for their important comments and suggestions at various venues. All errors are of course my own.

1. Larry J. Diamond, "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (April 2002), 21–35; Marc M. Howard and Philip G. Roessler, "Liberalizing Electoral Outcomes in Competitive Authoritairan Regimes," *American Journal of Political Science*, 50 (April 2006), 365–81; Andreas Schedler, *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2006).

2. Jason Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Beatriz Magaloni, "Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule," *Comparative Political*

Studies, 41 (January 2008), 715–81; Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Benjamin Smith, "Life of the Party," *World Politics*, 57 (April 2005), 421–51.

3. Staffan I. Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Staffan I. Lindberg, "The Power of Elections in Africa Revisited," in Staffan I. Lindberg, ed., *Democratization by Elections: A New Mode of Transition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 25–46.

4. For examples see, Leonardo R. Arriola, *Multi-Ethnic Coalitions in Africa: Business Financing of Opposition Election Campaigns* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Sebastian Elischer, *Political Parties in Africa: Ethnicity and Party Formation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Adrienne LeBas, *From Protest to Parties: Party-Building and Democratization in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); M. Anne Pitcher, *Party Politics and Economic Reform in Africa's Democracies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

5. Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (January 2002), 5–21; Diamond; Philip G. Roessler and Marc M. Howard, "Post-Cold War Political Regimes: When Do Elections Matter?," in Staffan I Lindberg, ed., 2009, 101–28.

6. Schedler, 2006.

7. Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 21–23.

8. Roessler and Howard.

9. Magaloni, 2006; Kenneth F. Greene, *Why Dominant Parties Lose Mexico's Democratization in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

10. Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell, "Pathways from Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, 18 (January 2007), 143–57.

11. van de Walle, 2002.

12. Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Susan D. Hyde, and Ryan S. Jablonski, "When Do Governments Resort to Election Violence?" *British Journal of Political Science*, 44 (January 2014), 149–79.

13. Regimes that failed to win their "founding election" are excluded from this analysis. This is congruent with other work on electoral authoritarianism, which argues that foundational elections were unique political moments that afforded much greater potential for change, and not necessarily good tests of theories of longer-term regime evolution (see, Howard and Roessler).

14. Due to space constraints, the Appendix is not in the print version of this article. It can be viewed in the online version, at www.ingentaconnect.com/cuny/cp.

15. This article uses the term "electoral hegemony" rather than "electoral dominance" to differentiate between autocratic and democratic systems. While often used interchangeably, dominance is more commonly used to describe democratic systems. See, Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

16. Roessler and Howard; Daniela Donno, "Elections and Democratization in Authoritairan Regimes," *American Journal of Political Science*, 57 (March 2013), 703–16.

17. John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Sartori.

18. Barbara Geddes, "Authoritarian Breakdown: Empirical Test of a Game Theoretic Argument," Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, 1999. On the greater longevity of party-based authoritarianism and their better record of economic performance see, Scott Gehlbach and Philip Keefer, "Investment without Democracy: Ruling-Party Institutionalization and Credible Commitment in Autocracies," *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 39 (June 2011), 123–39; Gary W. Cox, "Authoritarian Elections and Leadership Succession" (Unpublished Manuscript, 2009). On authoritarian institutions more broadly see, Gandhi.

19. Brownlee; Magaloni, 2008.

20. Levitsky and Way.

21. For a comprehensive account of this approach and for the most recent attempt to classify political parties see, Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond, "Species of Political Parties a New Typology," *Party Politics*, 9 (March 2003), 167–99.

22. Henry Bienen, *Armies and Parties in Africa* (New York: Africana Pub. Co., 1978).

23. The literature on party institutionalization refers to the process by which parties become reified and acquire stability over time, often noted as "value infusion" and "behavioral routinization." See Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Steven Levitsky,

"Institutionalization and Peronism the Concept, the Case and the Case for Unpacking the Concept," *Party Politics*, 4 (January 1998), 77–92; Vicky Randall and Lars Svåsand, "Party Institutionalization in New Democracies," 9 (January 2002), 30–52. In the literature on authoritarianism it is unfortunately most often simplistically captured through a party's age.

24. This excludes cases of military regimes that built political parties and transitioned to electoral authoritarianism (e.g. the CDP in Burkina Faso, the APRC in the Gambia, or PDP Nigeria) and cases of revolutionary movements that took power without a single-party interlude (e.g. the MPS in Chad, the EPRDF in Ethiopia, or ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe). While these insights into the difference between a party's organization and its internal workings might be relevant for some of these cases, the focus on single-party regimes helps to isolate differences in party evolution and is therefore useful for theory development.

25. The cases that did not survive are Cape Verde, Malawi, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Zambia. There were other single-party regimes (Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Guinea-Bissau) that ended regular electoral practice after their founding elections. In other excluded cases there was a transitional government prior to the election (Benin, Comoros, Mali).

26. Single-party rule was the subject of a trove of scholarship in the post-independence era: Bienen; James S. Coleman and Carl G. Rosberg, *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); Aristide R. Zolberg, *Creating Political Order; the Party-States of West Africa* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966). Yet these studies were largely sidelined following the shift toward the study of elections and clientelistic politics. See Ruth B. Collier, *Regimes in Tropical Africa: Changing Forms of Supremacy, 1945–1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

27. Karen E. Ferree, "The Social Origins of Electoral Volatility in Africa," *British Journal of Political Science*, 40 (October 2010), 759–79; Shaheen Mozaffar, James R. Scarrit, and Glen Galaich, "Electoral Institutions, Ethnopolitical Cleavages, and Party Systems in Africa's Emerging Democracies," *American Political Science Review*, 97 (August 2003), 399–421; Nicolas van de Walle, "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41 (June 2003), 297–321.

28. Arriola; LeBas; Lindberg 2006, 2009.

29. Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History since Independence* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012); Stephen Ellis, "Rumour and Power in Togo," *Africa*, 63 (October 1993), 462–76; John R. Heilbrunn, "Social Origins of National Conferences in Benin and Togo," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 31 (June 1993), 277–99; James F. Barnes, *Gabon: Beyond the Colonial Legacy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992); Douglas A. Yates, *The Rentier State in Africa: Oil Rent Dependency and Neocolonialism in the Republic of Gabon* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1996).

30. John Mukum Mbaku and Joseph Takougang, eds., *The Leadership Challenge in Africa: Cameroon under Paul Biya* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2004); Samuel Decalo, *The Stable Minority: Civilian Rule in Africa, 1960–1990* (Gainesville: FAP Books, 1998), 121–44; Hornsby, 220–78, 399–465.

31. Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900–1982* (Boulder: Westview Press 1983); Carrie Manning, *The Politics of Peace in Mozambique: Post-Conflict Democratization, 1992–2000* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002).

32. Göran Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Bismarck U. Mwansasu, "The Changing Role of the Tanganyika African National Union," in Bismarck U. Mwansasu, ed., *Towards Socialism in Tanzania* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 169–92.

33. Bruce Baker, "Seychelles: Democratising in the Shadows of the Past," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 26 (September 2008), 279–93; Marcus F. Franda, *The Seychelles: Unquiet Islands* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982).

34. Leonardo A. Villalón, "Generational Changes, Political Stagnation, and the Evolving Dynamics of Religion and Politics in Senegal," *Africa Today*, 46 (Summer/Autumn 1999), 129–47.

35. For more on this method see Colin Elman, "Explanatory Typologies in Qualitative Studies of International Politics," *International Organization*, 59 (April 2005), 293–326; Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

36. The replication file can be found at the author's website: https://sites.google.com/site/yonatanmorse/home/data-1.

37. Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Magaloni, 2006.

38. Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

39. Michelle Kuenzi and Gina Lambright, "Party Systems and Democratic Consolidation in Africa's Electoral Regimes," *Party Politics*, 11 (July 2005), 423–46.

40. Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Howard and Roessler; Staffan I. Lindberg, "Tragic Protest: Why Do Opposition Parties Boycott Elections?" in Andreas Schedler, ed., *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), 149–63.

41. Bunce and Wolchik; Donno; Levitsky and Way.

42. These were Fred Mpendazoe, Skiutu Philip Chibululu, and John Shibuda (*Tanzanian Affairs,* Jan. 2010).

43. *Tanzanian Affairs*, Sept. 1995.

44. Yonatan L. Morse, "Party Matters: The Institutional Origins of Competitive Hegemony in Tanzania," *Democratization*, 21 (June 2014), 655–67.

45. *BBC News Online*, Mar. 17, 2008.

46. An interesting perspective on the use of coercion in Cameroon is provided by Leonardo Arriola who examines how state control of the banking system limited the ability of opposition groups to raise the funds necessary to maintain electoral coalitions (Arriola).

47. Magaloni, 2006.

48. While social incorporation was high in Senegal due to the distributional consequences of PS policy, the defection of the Sufi Brotherhoods highlights the party's weaker institutional articulation. The PS had no real party-based system of social mobilization.

49. Ibid.

50. The U.S. needed Cameroonian support on the U.N. Security Council prior to the Iraq War Resolution and Djiboutian support for military bases to combat Al-Qaeda affiliated groups in Somalia.

51. Hornsby.

52. Allen Hicken and Erik Martinez Kuhonta, "Shadows from the Past: Party System Institutionalization in Asia," *Comparative Political Studies*, 44 (February 2011), 572–97.