

Executive Constraints and Economic Growth in Autocracies

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Economic Growth and Political Regime

Wealthy countries are nearly always democratic

- Modernization theory
- Institutional approach:
 - negative** impact of democracy on economic growth (*Przeworski and Limongi, 1993; Barro, 1996; Tavares and Wacziarg, 2001*)
 - positive** effect (*Persson and Tabellini, 2006; Papaioannou and Siourounis, 2008; Acemoglu et al, 2014*)
 - no significant difference** (*Giavazzi and Tabellini, 2005*)

Heterogeneity between Regimes

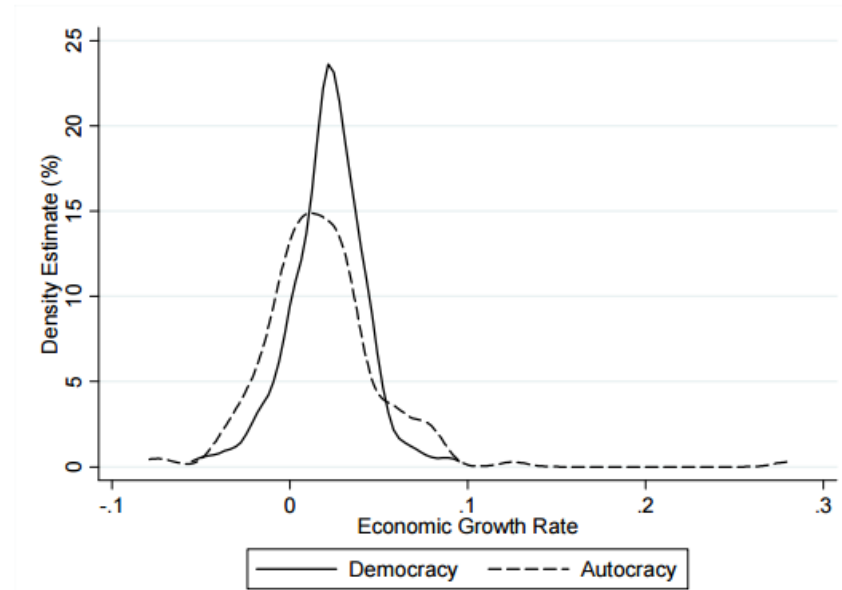


Figure 1: Economic Growth Distributions among Democracies and Autocracies

Sources: Penn World Table 6.2 and POLITY IV (version 2004)

Notes: Plotted are the density functions estimated by using the Gaussian kernel and the bandwidth that minimizes the mean integrated squared error (the *kdensity* command in STATA with the *gaussian* option).

Institutions in Autocracies

- The most important is survival of the regime -> to consolidate a leader in power
- Cooperation allows a dictator to reduce the possibility of a rebellion and stay in power
- Distribution of spoils and policy concessions provide cooperation in autocracies
- Accountability is important even in autocracies

Implications for economic growth

“Even nominal institutions improve economic performance” *(Gandhi, 2008)*

- Greater uncertainty regarding political future without institutions
- More reasons to steal from the state to satisfy short-term needs (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011)
- Weakly institutionalized polities compared to strongly institutionalized perform worse

Gandhi, 2013

- Legislatures
- Political parties

Wright, 2008

Military and party-based regimes vs.
Monarchies and personalist regimes

Classifications of Autocracies

Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010)	Geddes, Wright, and Franz (2014)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">3. civilian dictatorship (civilian effective head)4. military dictatorship (military effective head)5. royal dictatorship	<p><u>Regime types:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. monarchy2. personal3. party-based4. military+ amalgamas

- On a conceptual level, categorizing autocratic regimes into distinct types often creates a false dichotomy between party-based regimes and non party-based regimes, obscuring the fact that the majority of autocratic regimes have ruling parties

TABLE II
Number of dictatorial political parties

Region	Dictatorial parties			Total
	None	Single	Multiple	
Sub-Saharan Africa	286	760	388	1434
Middle East/North Africa	334	129	236	699
Asia	194	304	368	866
Latin America/Caribbean	56	104	400	560
Eastern Europe/ex-USSR	0	384	64	448
Western Europe	7	57	26	90
Total	877	1738	1482	4097

Listed in country-year units of observation

“The Union Soudanaise - Rassemblement Democratique Africain (US-RDA) under Modibo Keita in Mali, for instance, is coded as part of a dominant-party regime. Yet national policies were determined entirely at the discretion of Keita alone, and the USRDA lacked institutionalized rules and permanent structures. Eight years after taking power, Keita was deposed in a coup and the party was banned. Although Keita, who was also a self-proclaimed socialist, portrayed Mali as a one-party state, the ruling party was actually extremely weak”.

Meng, 2017

- Measuring and identifying the institutional strength of institutions, independent of the influence of leaders, remains a crucially important task
- It is not correct to draw inferences about the strength of institutions based primarily on regime categories

Distinction between institutional strength with leader strength

Autocracies of the World, 1950-2012 (Magaloni, Chu & Min, 2013)

Regime type:

- Military
- Monarchy
- Multiparty
- Single party

Provide two novel measures of personalism:

1) A three-point measure of the country-year's regime's degree of personalism (based on the seven-point executive constraints scale of the Polity IV)

- Highly personal
- Moderately personal
- Weakly/not personal

2) Index: measure of personalism within each regime

$$\sum_{i=1}^m \left(\frac{exec_i}{n} \right)^2$$

where n is the age of the regime up to that year, and $exec$ is the number of years that a unique executive i (out of a total m executives up to that year) has led the regime

Research Question

How executive constraints measured as the degree of personalism impact economic growth?

Thank you for your attention!