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Research Article

The Role of Political Institutions in Promoting Political Stability: A Comparative Study of Contemporary Political Systems

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ABSTRACT

Political stability is a key factor in the uninterrupted nature of the governance, the implementation of public policy, socioeconomic development, and the peaceful conduct of political competition. Political institutions are deeply involved in this process through their rules governing the use of power, their structure of relations among political actors, their structure of representation and accountability, and their structure of formal dispute resolution. This paper explores the impact of political institutions on the maintenance of political stability by comparing the contemporary political systems. Specific focus is placed on the effectiveness of legislation, the capacity of the Executive, judicial independence, the rule of law, electoral and representative institutions, political participation and institutional accountability. The study is based on a comparative mixed-method approach – combining a qualitative institutional analysis with quantitative governance indicators. Data are based on internationally accepted sources such as the Worldwide Governance indicators and the Global State of Democracy Indices. Analysis shows that constitutional and regime type are insufficient to explain political stability. Instead, the dimensions of stable political governance that are significant are institutional performance, effectiveness, legitimacy, adaptability, and capability in politics management. The comparative results also suggest that good public institutions, rules of law that offer security of legal guarantees, and functioning representative democratic mechanisms and institutional checks and balances offer avenues for resolving political differences without triggering a systemic crisis. The study comes to the conclusion that political stability is multiple and is the product of multiple interdependencies, including the interactions between institutional quality, governmental capacity, political participation, socioeconomic conditions and wider historical and political contexts. The findings add to comparative political studies by offering a unified approach to the analysis of institutional performance and political stability in different contemporary political systems.

KEYWORDS: Political Institutions; Political Stability; Political Systems; Rule of Law; Governance; Institutional Effectiveness; Political Participation; Comparative Politics

INTRODUCTION

Political stability is a significant issue in comparison of politics, because it affects how political systems can function in a manner that is both institutional and competitive, and, in the face of disagreement, economic pressures, and social change, maintain institutional continuity for the betterment of governance and development. Political stability in this context does not mean political continuity[1][2]. A political system can have a high level of institutional continuity, but also have regular changes of government, electoral competition, public disagreement, institutional reform, etc. Political stability, therefore, is best seen as the ability of a political system to deal with change and political conflict by means of its institutional norms.

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Political institutions are the organizational and operating frameworks of political power. These encompass legislatures, executive institutions, judicial institutions, electoral institutions, political parties, public administrations, constitutional systems and accountability and oversight institutions. North defined institutions as rules of human origin that shape political, social and economic interactions, and that provide relatively predictable rules for human actions so as to minimize uncertainty. That view holds that political stability requires institutions but also that they function effectively. Constitutions can formally provide for legislative oversight, judicial independence, electoral competition, and executive accountability, but the differences between the stated intentions and actual outcomes can mean the difference between actual political results and those desired by the constitution. Institutional strength thus includes the capacity of institutions to enforce rules, manage political disagreement, limit arbitrary power, ensure administrative continuity and respond to evolving political conditions. The study of comparative politics today also illustrates that political institutions are embedded in different kinds of constitutions that vary significantly. Presidential, parliamentary, semi-presidential, federal, and unitary political systems distribute authority differently and provide different mechanisms for executive-legislative relations, political representation, accountability, and decision-making. Institutional arrangements themselves are therefore an important field of comparative investigation. Lijphart's comparative work on democratic institutions, for example, distinguishes majoritarian from consensus-oriented forms of democratic government and examines differences in political representation and governmental performance across institutional arrangements. His comparative research illustrates why constitutional structures and the distribution of political authority are relevant to understanding political-system performance. Nevertheless, institutional form alone cannot explain political stability. Constitutional arrangements can be broadly similar, but political outcomes can be vastly different across countries. Even within countries that are nominally considered in the same political system category, the effectiveness of the judiciary, quality of public administration, credibility of electoral institutions, legislative capacity, extent of political participation, and strength of accountability mechanisms can vary significantly. This has led the institutional quality–political outcome connection to become a significant aspect of international governance measurement[3][4][5]. Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) from the World Bank, for instance, categorise six dimensions of governance: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption. The indicators currently provide comparable information for more than 200 economies, with the revised historical series extending from 1996 to 2024. This framework is especially relevant because it separates political stability from other dimensions of institutional quality. Government effectiveness or rule of law should therefore not automatically be interpreted as equivalent to political stability. Instead, these dimensions can be examined as related institutional characteristics whose relationships with political stability can be evaluated comparatively. Similarly, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) evaluates democratic performance using four broad categories: Representation, Rights, Rule of Law, and Participation. Its Global State of Democracy Indices cover 174 countries over the period 1975–2024 and incorporate a large number of indicators derived from expert assessments, observational data, and other established measurement sources[6][7]. Recent international evidence also demonstrates that institutional performance is dynamic rather than permanent. International IDEA's 2025 assessment reports substantial changes across different dimensions of representation, rights, rule of law, and participation during the preceding five-year period. The report particularly identifies declines in areas including judicial independence and electoral integrity across different regions and levels of democratic performance. Such developments reinforce the importance of examining political stability through an institutional perspective. Institutions that function effectively during ordinary political periods may be tested substantially during elections, economic crises, security challenges, leadership transitions, constitutional disputes, or periods of social polarization. Instead of just institutional persistence, institutional resilience will be linked to the capacity of institutions to persist in their activity when political times change. There are multiple interlinked ways to how political institutions can contribute to stability. The legislatures offer space for political representation and negotiation. Electoral institutions set rules of political competition and the election of representatives. Judicial institutions offer avenues for resolving legal and/or constitutional disputes. Collective decisions are carried out by executive institutions and public administrations, which ensure the continuity in public governance. Accountability institutions are institutions that monitor the application of governmental power; political parties and representative

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institutions link society's interests with governmental decision-making. The connection (relationship) however, will not be linear in nature. Institutional characteristics can interact with economic conditions, historical legacy, social structures, inequality, security conditions, international pressures, political culture, and leadership behaviour. Institutional quality, therefore, should be considered as a single great explanatory variable, rather than the only factor to explain political stability[8].

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Though there is a lot of literature available on literature of political institutions, governance, democracy and political stability, a comparative analysis of the relationship between the several dimensions of political institutional performance is needed. The mere fact of whether a country has a presidential system, parliamentary system, federal system, unitary system, majoritarian or consensus-driven system of government is not enough.

The main research question in this study is:

How do political institutions affect political stability in today's political systems, and how do they do so?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the efficiency of political institutions related with political stability?
- 2-Which of these concepts – rule of law, government effectiveness, representation, accountability, and political participation – are related to political stability?
- 3-What are the differences between political institutions in different modern political systems?
- 4-Is the formal nature of the political system a sufficient explanation for the variation of political stability, or is it institutional quality and performance?
5. What are the institutional arrangements that offer means of controlling political rivals and political conflicts?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of this research is to investigate the role of political institutions in political stability through comparative analysis.

More specifically, the study seeks to:

- examine the relationship between political institutions and political stability;
- evaluate the roles of legislative, executive, judicial, electoral, and accountability institutions;
- investigate the relevance of rule of law and government effectiveness;
- examine political representation and participation as components of institutional stability;
- compare institutional performance across contemporary political systems; and
- develop an integrated analytical framework connecting institutional characteristics with political stability.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

This research helps comparative political research by introducing a number of institutional aspects in a unified framework. While it is not intended to view political stability solely in the light of constitutional

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structure or regime classification, the proposed framework looks at the interplay between institutional effectiveness, rule of law, government capacity, representation, accountability, participation, and institutional adaptability.

RELATED WORK

INSTITUTIONAL THEORY AND POLITICAL STABILITY

The institutional approach has always been a key element of political science and political economy. An important premise of institutional theory is that political behavior is not 'independent' from institutional contexts. Rules, procedures, norms and enforcement mechanisms shape the incentives and constraints of governments, political organizations and citizens. North is especially important in this regard. North considers institutions to be structures that influence human interaction and suggests that stability in institutions leads to less uncertainty. He also makes a distinction between formal rules and informal constraints and notes that the process of institutional development is often incremental and path-dependent. This view is applicable to political stability because predictable political processes help to minimize uncertainty over the acquisition, use, challenge and succession of governmental power. Institutional stability does not necessarily require institutional immobility. North's approach, however, proposes that stable institutional systems can evolve over time, but remain sufficiently continuous to organize political interactions. Therefore, institutional analysis offers a theoretical basis for analysing the divergent consequences of comparable political pressures in different political systems.

STATE CAPACITY, RULE OF LAW AND ACCOUNTABILITY

An associated literature examines the ability of political institutions to require people to follow them, but only within the bounds of the law and politics. Fukuyama's discussion about political order focuses on three primary institutional aspects: an effective state, the rule of law, and political accountability. His historical analysis suggests that the current political structure arose in various permutations and combinations of these institutional elements. This framework is important for this current study because it emphasizes an important difference between state capacity and limits placed upon political power. The government may have a great management capacity and not have any means of political accountability, or the political system may have a strong accountability system, but have problems of public policy implementation. There may thus be some conditions on the way in which effective government and institutional constraints are combined that are important to political stability, but not either/or. Similarly, worldwide governance indicators are multidimensional, as they measure Government Effectiveness, Political Stability, Voice and Accountability, Rule of Law, Regulatory Quality and Control of Corruption separately. Separation of these dimensions allows for empirical analysis of relations between characteristics of governance, without assuming that they represent one institutional phenomenon[9][10].

CONSTITUTIONAL DESIGN AND COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS

A second line of comparative political study is whether and how alternative institutional designs generate alternative political results. Lijphart identified two different types of democracy, majoritarian and consensus, in his research. Consensus-based institutions tend to spread power to more actors and institutions than do majoritarian ones. His discussions of the old democratic systems focus on the differences in representation and institutional performance in these systems. Research since then has not settled the debate on effects of these institutions. For example, Giuliani's rethinking of the promotion of consensus institutions returns to the question of how consensus institutions and interest-group structure relate to economic performance and governance capacity, demonstrating that institutional impacts can be contingent on a combination of elements, not just any single constitutional feature. Studies of the evolution of political systems also using Lijphart's approach have shown the significance of institutional change. In his study of Turkey, Lord looks at the continuation and evolution of key features of the majoritarian form of institutions in the face of constitutional change, and the importance of focussing on institutional practice over time as well as formal

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constitutional features. These studies indicate that comparative analysis should separate formal institutional design from the institutional performance[11][12].

REPRESENTATION AND ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS

Another significant field of study on political stability is the case of representative institutions. Elections, legislatures, political parties and other representative institutions provide institutional avenues for the contestation of political interests for government influence. International IDEA views Representation as encompassing credible elections, inclusive suffrage, freedom to form political parties, effective legislatures and democratic practices at the local level. Representation thus extends beyond the mere system of elections. This difference is significant for the institutional analysis. Periodic elections do not fully reflect the operation of representative institutions. The capacity of legislature, electoral credibility, party organization, political inclusion and other ways in which citizens can shape governmental power need to be taken into account. Predictability in political competition and political succession can be provided by representative institutions, which can affect political stability. The impact of their provisions, however, might rely on the broader protection of the rule of law, accountability frameworks, and openness of the participation of various social groups[13].

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND RULE OF LAW

Another key institution in the political-stability literature is the judiciary, as legal and constitutional conflicts often occur between governments, political parties, and individuals or other institutions. Independent judicial bodies can offer formal channels of interpretation of laws, review of governmental activities and solution of constitutional conflicts. This dimension is acknowledged as such in the framework of International IDEA, a part of the Rule of Law category, which includes judicial independence. Empirical evidence today suggests that courts might be among the areas where substantial changes are possible within relatively stable political regimes. Judicial independence is one of these areas where the decline is more pronounced during the period under review, as highlighted in International IDEA's 2025 global assessment in the Rule of Law category. This evidence is relevant to the view of judicial institutions as dynamic political institutions, not a set of constitutional attributes.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY

Political participation is another way of linking citizens with political institutions. Participation is not confined to the right to vote, but can encompass a wider range of civic participation, such as involvement in other civic or civil society organizations, political associations, and other institutionalized ways of engaging in the public sphere. International IDEA establishes its Participation category by the indicators that relate to civic participation, civil society and electoral participation. Institutional perspective: participation offers avenues for political demands to be relayed within the political system. Such channels do not ensure political stability, and involvement can go hand in hand with high levels of political disagreement. But there are also ways for disagreement to happen in the existing political processes of institutionalized participation. This is because it is analytically different from political consensus. The consensus of citizens is not a precondition for the stability of a political system; in fact, one of the conditions for stability may be the presence of institutions that can deal with disagreements[14].

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY

New comparative data also indicates that the performance of institutions needs to be viewed in a dynamic manner, as a variable feature of a nation rather than a constant one. Global State of Democracy 2025 classifies democratic performance into four categories: Representation, Rights, Rule of Law, and Participation, and shows that there are major differences in several of these areas between 2019 and 2024. According to International IDEA, during that time more than half of the countries measured regressed in one or more area of democratic performance. This does not necessarily support the view that there is a causal link between the quality of democratic performance and political stability. Yet it does show that vital

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institutional traits like judicial independence, representative institutions, civil liberties, and participation can also move a long way off course over time. The importance of contemporary comparative research which can analyse both the formal design and the functioning of political institutions is reinforced.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is of comparative research design, comparing the role of political institutions in connection to political stability in the contemporary political systems. The comparative approach enables similarities and differences to be introduced to the analysis of the impact of institutional arrangements on the continuity, resilience and effectiveness of political systems. The study integrates qualitative institutional analysis and quantitative governance and political stability indicators. Instead of a blanket assumption of superiority of one institutional model, the focus of the analysis is on the effects of specific institutional features, such as rule of law, legislative effectiveness, judicial independence, electoral institutions, political participation, effectiveness of government, and mechanisms of accountability, on various forms of political stability.

COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK

The selected cases represent different types of contemporary political systems and institutional arrangements. The comparison may include parliamentary, presidential, semi-presidential, federal, and more centralized systems. The analytical framework evaluates five major institutional dimensions: Legislative institutions: their ability to represent political interests, formulate legislation, oversee the executive, and provide institutional channels for resolving political disputes. Executive institutions: their capacity to implement public policy, maintain administrative continuity, and respond effectively to political and socioeconomic challenges. Judicial institutions: particularly judicial independence, constitutional review, protection of legal rights, and the enforcement of the rule of law. Electoral and representative institutions: including electoral competition, representation, political participation, and mechanisms for the peaceful transfer or continuation of political authority. Accountability and oversight institutions: including mechanisms designed to constrain arbitrary power, monitor government activity, address corruption, and maintain institutional checks and balances. Political stability is treated as the dependent variable, while institutional strength and institutional characteristics represent the principal explanatory variables.

DATA SOURCES

The study is mainly based on secondary quantitative and qualitative data collected from international databases and institutional reports. The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) developed by the World Bank are especially relevant as they provide comparable measures in six components of governance: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption. The updated methodology for the WGI includes over 200 economies and dates back to 1996. The study also uses the Global State of Democracy (GSoD) Indices developed by International IDEA. These indicators examine political systems in four general areas: Representation, Rights, Rule of Law, and Participation. Version 9 includes data for 174 countries and offers comparative data for the time period 1975–2024. Other sources of information include constitutions, electoral legislation, official government publications, peer-reviewed political-science publications and reports from international organisations.

VARIABLES AND INDICATORS

Political stability is the dependent variable and is understood as the capacity of a political system to maintain institutional continuity, to control political competition and disagreement, and to contain destabilizing political violence and/or unconstitutional disruption. One quantitative measure is the Political Stability indicator of the World Bank, but it should be used in conjunction with other institutional indicators and not as a sole indicator of political stability. A new approach to estimating political stability is included as a distinct dimension of governance in the World Bank's updated methodology.

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DATA ANALYSIS

Data gathered are analyzed descriptively and/or comparatively. First of all, the features of institutions are determined for each political system. Second, the period under study is analyzed in terms of political-stability indicators. Third, differences in political stability are related to institutional characteristics. The analysis also could use correlation analysis to check whether there are statistical significant relationships between indicators like rule of law, government effectiveness, political participation, accountability and indicators of political stability.

$$PS_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1RL_i + \beta_2GE_i + \beta_3VA_i + \beta_4CC_i + \epsilon_i$$

where:

PS= Political Stability

RL= Rule of Law

GE= Government Effectiveness

VA= Voice and Accountability

CC= Control of Corruption

ϵ= Error term

The equation allows the study to investigate associations between institutional characteristics and political stability while recognizing that stability is also affected by historical, economic, social, geographic, and international factors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL STABILITY

The comparative analysis suggests that political stability is not just correlated to the formal nature of the political system but also to the performance and robustness of this system's institutions. Stable political systems that have formal means for political conflict, formal dispute-resolution mechanisms, functioned judicial systems, and effective public administration have more formal ways to resolve political differences. The results hence indicate that the performance of the institution ought to be separated from the form of the institution. States with similar constitutional set-ups can have different political results owing to variations in implementation, administration, rule adherence, and political practices.

Table 1. Institutional factors and their expected relationship with political stability

Institutional Factor	Institutional Function	Potential Contribution to Stability
Effective legislature	Representation and oversight	Provides institutional channels for political competition
Effective executive	Policy implementation	Improves continuity and administrative responsiveness
Independent judiciary	Legal dispute resolution	Encourages predictable application of law
Electoral institutions	Regulated political competition	Establishes procedures for political participation and succession
Rule of law	Limits arbitrary exercise of	Improves institutional predictability

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	authority	
Accountability mechanisms	Monitors government authority	Provides formal mechanisms for correcting abuses
Political participation	Integrates social and political interests	Gives citizens institutional channels for political involvement

RULE OF LAW

The rule of law is a key theme that emerges from the comparative analysis. In a setting where political rules are regular and where institutions are set up in a constitutional manner, political actors have formal processes in place to settle conflicts. Judicial institutions can be given a significant role in settling disputes over government, elections, the interpretation of the constitution and individual rights. At the same time, a weakening of judicial independence can diminish one of the institutional tools that can be used to help resolve political conflicts. Judicial independence has also declined in countries with varying degrees of democratic performance, as seen in International IDEA's 2025 assessment, which highlights the need to not take institutional resilience for granted, even within longstanding political systems. The results reinforce the idea that political stability hinges partly on the ability of political institutions to continue to do their constitutional work when the country is experiencing disagreement or crisis.

GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Government effectiveness also emerges as an important institutional dimension. Political institutions are unlikely to contribute to long-term stability if governments cannot implement policies or provide basic administrative functions. Effective institutions create continuity between political decisions and practical implementation. This relationship can be represented conceptually as: This does not imply that government effectiveness automatically produces political legitimacy. Instead, administrative effectiveness is one component of a broader institutional environment that also includes accountability, representation, and the rule of law. The World Bank therefore measures Government Effectiveness separately from Political Stability, Voice and Accountability, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption.

REPRESENTATION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Organized mechanisms, such as those afforded by representative institutions, allow citizens and political groups to voice interests and compete for political voice. Political parties, parliaments, elections, and other representative institutions can manage political competition without resort to extra-institutional confrontation. International IDEA creates contemporary democratic performance through the lenses of Representation, Rights, Rule of Law and Participation, recognizing these as separate but related aspects of institutional governance. Yet, elections in themselves are not an indicator of institutional effectiveness. Electoral institutions have to be analyzed along with legal safeguards, participation, representation, and the institutional context.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

The comparative analysis also highlights the significance of institutional checks and balances. A political system commonly distributes authority among executive, legislative, judicial, or other oversight institutions. These arrangements can prevent disputes within one institution from automatically becoming crises affecting the entire political system. Checks and balances may contribute to stability through: In parallel, institutional fragmentation can create political stalemate when there is low coordination and compromise. The impact of the checks and balances, therefore, is partly reliant on the way the institutions work in practice. More recently, International IDEA analysis also shows that constitutional changes in some 2025

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cases have been made to give greater powers to the executive or to reduce checks and balances, highlighting the fact that the formal institutional fabric can evolve significantly over time.

COMPARATIVE INTERPRETATION

The comparison indicates that differences in political stability are not necessarily due to different systems of government between presidential, parliamentary, federal or centralized.

Table 2. Summary of Comparative Findings

Dimension	Main Finding
Political-system type	Formal system type alone does not determine stability
Rule of law	Provides predictable procedures for political and legal disputes
Judicial institutions	Can provide institutional mechanisms for constitutional dispute resolution
Executive capacity	Supports continuity and implementation of public policy
Legislature	Provides representation, lawmaking, and executive oversight
Electoral institutions	Regulate political competition and political succession
Accountability	Constrains governmental authority through institutional oversight
Participation	Provides institutional avenues for societal political involvement
Institutional adaptability	Helps systems respond to changing conditions without institutional breakdown

In general, the comparison suggests that political stability is a multi-faceted concept. Economic conditions, social divisions and armed conflict, political culture, history and international pressures can all impact on political stability, as do political institutions. A causal claim needs to be made carefully, however, unless there is a longitudinal statistical test or a better causal research design to support the claim.

CONCLUSION

This research focussed on the impact of political structures on political stability by comparing and analyzing the contemporary political system. The analysis suggests that political institutions affect stability in four ways: they generate regular rules for political competition, they shape who has political authority, they resolve political conflicts, they create mechanisms by which citizens and political players can enter into political processes, and they create public policies that frame political processes. The results indicate that it is more fruitful to focus on institutional performance than just on the formal type of a country's institutions – presidential, parliamentary, semi-presidential, federal or centralized. The outcomes of political systems with similar constitutional structures can look quite different, depending on the strength of the legislative, executive, judicial, electoral, public administration and accountability systems. The dimensions of rule of law, institutional accountability, government effectiveness, political representation, judicial independence, and meaningful participation appear as key dimensions to look at how political stability is related to institutions. These dimensions have a dynamic relationship with one another. For instance, an effective government can help continuity in administration, and rule-of-law institutions can help limit the power of government, representative institutions can create avenues for political participation and contestation. The comparative analysis thus corroborates a multidimensional concept of political stability. Political institutions create mechanisms to deal with disagreements and political change within established rules and procedures, but they are less than half of the explanation for political stability. Economic conditions, social structures, historical experiences, security conditions, political behavior, and external pressures are all factors that should be included in comprehensive explanations as well. This study could be extended in future by using longitudinal data for a larger number of countries and/or panel-data regression, institutional case studies or

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mixed-method design approaches. It might also investigate how specific institutional features impact under various forms of government such as presidential, parliamentary, semi-presidential, federal, and unitary systems. This analysis would give a more accurate picture of the context in which political institutions foster resilient and stable political systems today.

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