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Building party grassroots: electoral systems, party organisations and social linkages from a cross-national perspective¹.

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Abstract

The objective is to explore the connection between the proportional electoral system (PR) and party organisations as key institutional determinants for party-group linkages from cross-party, national, and temporal perspectives. Developing a nuanced framework, we propose an integrated model to address two questions: 1) Do candidate-centred electoral systems impact the development of party-society linkages? 2) If the electoral system has any impact, does it occur directly or mediated by party organisations? Using V-Party (2020) and V-Dem (2020) databases, we selected and analysed 617 parties in 48 countries covering third-wave democracies, post-communist countries, and the most extensive proportional democracies in Europe (Western and Eastern Europe) and Americas between 1989 and 2019 -- Large-*N* cross-national comparative analysis (Janda 1980). Based on panel models, we found that the candidate-centred electoral system is negatively related to developing strong ties between parties and groups, but only in party organisations with low party strength, intraparty cohesion, financial linkages with non-party groups. When the decision-making process concentrates power in the hands of powerful party elites, they can solve coordination problems and mitigate intraparty conflicts and personalisation consequences. Thereby, intraparty politics vary empirically, answering their contextual challenges (electoral rules) strategically, with solid consequences for party-group linkages.

Key words: Party Organisations, Comparative Politics, Party change, Party-group linkages, Electoral systems.

1) Introduction

This article explores the connection between proportional (PR) electoral system and intraparty organisations dynamics as key institutional determinants for party-group linkages from cross-party and cross-national perspectives. A considerable body of literature on electoral systems emphasises that candidate-centred electoral systems – which encourage candidates to cultivate personal instead of party reputations – promote intraparty competition and unrooted party organisations (Carey and Shugart 1995; Mainwaring 1999; Ames 2001; Shugart 2001, 2005; Chang and Golden 2007; Colomer, 2011; André et al., 2014; Passarelli, 2020).

Nonetheless, there is little comparative empirical analysis on how party organisations have strategically answered (or adapted) to institutional personalisation in electoral rules (Balmas et al., 2013, p. 38-39; Rahat and Kenig, 2018)³. Notably, most of these analyses have an omitted variable bias by excluding party-level dimensions, in particular organisational dimensions of political parties (Renwick and Pilet, 2016; Passarelli 2020, p.21). Thus, we address two questions: 1) Do candidate-centred proportional electoral systems impact the development of party-group linkages? 2) If the proportional electoral system has any impact, does it occur directly or mediated by intraparty organisational structures?

Based on longitudinal and multilevel approaches, we expect that candidate-centred electoral systems are negatively related to developing strong ties between party and society, but only in party organisations with weak structures and high inclusiveness levels in intraparty decision-making processes. When parties have a robust organisation, and the decision-making process concentrates power in the hands of a few, party elites can enforce their decisions, solve coordination problems, and mitigate personal incentives of electoral systems – they preserve the collective interests of political parties over exclusive individualistic ambitions (Aldrich 2011; Rahat and Kenig 2018).

Therefore, we argue that structures, strategies, and decisions at the party-level mediate how the electoral system affects the party-group linkages (Thomas 2001; Allern et al., 2007; Allern and Verge 2017). Our article offers a roadmap on the interaction between incentives encouraged by electoral rules and party organisations, emphasising their consequences for that linkage. Changes in electoral systems elucidate their electoral tactics and how power relations are allocated within them (Shugart 2005; Colomer, 2011). However, party candidates do not compete in an organisational vacuum: our analysis considers the influence of the intraparty dynamics--particularly

³ In organizational theory, Oliver (1991) proposed five strategies to institutional conformation pressures. The author argued that these responses varied and are related to resistance levels to those pressures from passive to active strategy: acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation.

party organisations -- in which they operate.

From a theoretical perspective, different electoral systems offer distinct incentives for candidates, party members, and voters, structuring representational linkages between citizens and representatives (Carey and Shugart 1995; Shugart 2001, 2005). However, in contrast to majoritarian and mixed electoral systems, this research focuses exclusively on proportional (or (semi-proportional) systems (PR), mainly because it is possible to perfectly distinguish between electoral systems in which voters must (or prefer to) cast a vote (or votes) for a party from systems in which voters can rank parties or/and candidates.

Following the tradition of the 'most different' approach in a comparative analysis of political parties (Janda, 1980)⁴, we rely on the two most extensive cross-national datasets on party organisations and elections, both based on expert evaluations: V-Party Dataset (Lührmann et al., 2020) and V-Dem Dataset (Coppedge et al., 2020)⁵. Our conclusions offer a more nuanced picture than previous research, mainly by suggesting that the organisational dimensions must assume a more central role in the debate both as an explanatory variable per se and associated with the electoral systems, strongly capable of influencing substantive political outcomes, particularly party-group linkages.

Based on party literature, we propose specific empirical measures to capture the variation in intraparty decision-making and organisational capacity dimensions: (1) party strength, (2) financial linkage (by members and civil society), (3) candidate selection inclusiveness, and (4) intraparty cohesion. However, comparative research on intraparty politics remains limited, mainly due to the lack of reliable data (Shugart 2005, p. 36; Borz and Janda 2018). In turn, to close this gap, the Party V-Dem provides a longitudinal party-level dataset that allows access to the impact of internal party dynamics on different democratic outcomes (Düpont et al., 2021)⁶

We analysed 617 parties from 48 democracies, which adopt a proportional (PR) electoral system (including SNTV and STV) to verify the impacts of electoral systems and party organisations on party-group linkages. To enhance comparability, the dataset covers third-wave democracies, post-communist countries, and the most extensive democracies in Latin America and Europe (Western and Eastern Europe) between 1989 and 2019 (see appendix 4). All included parties won at least 5% of the votes in each legislative election. Thus, following the Freedom House parameters, we did not add authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes ('not free

⁴ In general, we seek to explain similarities from the many things on which the cases differ (Janda 1980).

⁵ At county level, see Bizzarro et al., (2018).

⁶Other notably comparative efforts include Janda's International Comparative Political Parties Project, Party Organizations Data Handbook (Katz and Mair 1992), and Political Parties Database (Poguntke et al., 2016).

countries')⁷. Related to the V-Dem dataset, the V-Party⁸ is based on expert evaluations⁹. However, while countries are updated in the V-Dem dataset every year, political parties are codified only when they run for national elections.

We highlight two potential limitations of expert-oriented data generation. First, the temporal gap, that is, the time interval between the codification process and empirical phenomena analysed, may reduce the data accuracy. To deal with this, we run shorter time model, excluding all observations before 2006 (half of the period analysed), and most of the findings remained like those verified using the entire sample – see appendix 5.

Second, experts may have divergences of opinions or make mistakes in the codification process. To address this challenge, both projects (V-Dem and V-Party) adopted the Bayesian item response theory (IRT), which aggregate expert ordinal rates into point estimates of latent (or unobservable) concepts and quantify the uncertainty around the interval estimations, considering the pattern of distinction, connections, and parallel coding ratings (Coppedge et al., 2019; Pemstein et al., 2020; Lührmann et al., 2020; Düpont et al., 2021). After performing several validation robust tests with multiple previous political parties' datasets, Düpont et al., (2021, p.17) concludes that: "party data aligns well with extant data on party organizational characteristics both from more recent surveys as well as older data reaching back to the 1980s. This puts confidence in utilizing V-Party data for longitudinal and cross-country analyses".

Even in the face of some eventual limitations, V-Dem and V-Party databases provide us with an unprecedented opportunity to explore the consequences of change in institutions and parties' structures over a long period. Moreover, combining V-Dem and V-Party datasets allows access to the direct impact of electoral institutions and internal party dynamics on party-group linkages by a robust large-N cross-national comparative design (Janda, 1980). As remember Benoit and Lever (2006, p. 3): " the great virtue of an expert survey is that it sets out to summarise the judgments of the *consensus* of experts on the matters at issue, and moreover to do so in a *systematic* way (...) expert survey results provide a benchmark that gives some systematic sense of the content validity of alternative measures".

⁷Chang and Golden (2007, p.122) also adopted the same criteria.

⁸Varieties of Party Identity and Organization (V-Party), version 1, October 2020. According to Lührmann et al. (2020, p. 4), V-Party covers the period 1970–2019 and offers expert-coded assessments of party organisation and identity for most relevant parties worldwide. In general, the V-party uses the same strategies of the V–Dem methodology: experts' evaluations. Altogether, 665 experts evaluated political parties' policy positions and organisational capacity across elections. As we say above, all parties selected have more than 5% of the vote share at a national election. The data was aggregated using V–Dem's Bayesian Item Response Theory measurement model (Pemstein et al., 2020). Four coders provided their assessment per observation to guarantee the reliability and confirmability of the dataset (Lührmann et al., 2020; Düpont et al., 2021).

⁹The end of the Cold War, notably marked by the Berlin Wall's fall in 1989, is so-called the start point of Fourth Wave of Democratization.

Our article proceeds in five sections. We first summarised the theories of electoral arrangements and party organisations and hypothesised their potential impacts on party-group linkages that we examine empirically. We next present and describe a cross-national empirical dependent variable and then the independent variables. Then, empirical models and results are discussed. A final section concludes.

1) Theoretical debate and hypothesis: a multilevel explanation for party-group linkages.

V.O. Key (1964) introduced the concept of 'linkage' to designate the party capacity in establishing the connections between citizens (mass opinion) and governments (Lawson and Merkl 1988; Kitschelt 2000). Comparative literature has shown that political parties declined their linkages with society in many democracies, mainly in the most consolidated ones. Despite that, these drops have not been homogeneous or linear over time and across regions; some parties have experienced periods of growth in their connection capacity (Rahat and Kenig, 2018).

We emphasise that the losses seemingly stem from multiple factors, though the literature has primarily highlighted the modernisation approach: lifestyle transformations, citizens' increasing distrust of political parties, and modern campaign apparatus. According to this viewpoint, while preserving some procedural functions in government and the state apparatus (Bartolini and Mair 2001; Ignazi 2012), party organisations came to be understood as antiquated or even irrelevant in their relationships with citizens (Lawson and Merkl 1988; Wattenberg 1994; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Schmitter 2001; Mair 2013).

Recently, there has been a renewed interest in how political parties still mobilise their organisational structures to establish strategic channels with social groups and organised citizens. From this perspective, the "collective terms of agreement" is highlighted to explain the cost-benefit interactions between power-seeking elites and organised interests (Thomas 2001; Poguntke 2002, 2006; Allern et al., 2007; Bawn et al., 2012; Allern and Bale 2011; Allern and Verge 2017; Allern et al., 2020). The emphasis now is on the non-zero-sum game in the relationship between political parties and social groups. More conceptually, according to Poguntke (2002, p. 7): "organisational linkage facilitates two-way communication between party elites and groups of voters, mediated through organisational channels and based on the exchange of electoral mobilisation for policy responsiveness."

In this sense, party elites are gatekeepers of groups influences, which strategically are invited to establish relations with intraparty structures, bringing attention to competitive interests that party leaderships have advantages or attacking other parties, groups, and public policies. More

specifically, these elites are also the agenda-setters -- not only reactive but proactive -- in their relationships with different social groups (Przeworski and Sprague 1986; Thomas, 2001; Sartori 2005).

Besides encouraging party-system institutionalisation (Mainwaring 1999, p. 325), the systemic relevance of party-group linkages is in creating a sense of democratic legitimacy for political parties by enhancing their representative functions (Ignazi 2012; Mair 2013). On the one hand, some scholars have questioned the party's capacity to develop ties with social groups, particularly in those established parties – Social Democratic, Conservative, and Christian Democrat parties (Mair 2013, p. 37-38). But, on the other hand, empirical evidence also suggests that some parties should be more concerned about maintaining their social linkages: trajectories of party-group linkages vary considerably from case to case and may subsist over time (Thomas, 2001; Poguntke 2002, 2006; Allern et al., 2007; Allern and Bale 2011).

The comparative discussion thus far has highlighted some external determinants driven by social changes of party-group linkages, but relatively little has been said of the centrality of the institutional environment¹⁰. We intend to address this relevant gap by exploring how party structures are the intermediate variable between the electoral systems and party-group linkages, emphasising organisational-based relationships.

Fundamentally, we assume that the electoral systems are structural elements in this regard – they are "unstable constants" (Riker 1980) – thus, the key aspect here is how the electoral systems impact intraparty conflicts and the development of linkage strategies over time. Carey and Shugart's seminal article sort the incentives of electoral systems into two polar categories: candidate-centred and party-centred electoral systems (Carey and Shugart 1995). From a 'top-down' (or elite) perspective, when the 'preferential vote' is allowed, politicians have more stimulus to cultivate personal than party reputations (Carey and Shugart 1995, p. 419; Shugart 2001, 2005; Colomer 2011; Dalton et al., 2011; André et al., 2014; Renwick and Pilet, 2016; Passarelli 2020). Besides, they emphasise that it affects candidates and legislators' behaviour (the 'style') (Mayhew 1974), thus resulting in the political instability of new democracies (Ames 2001).

In electoral systems that favour institutional personalisation, individual political relevance increases while political parties as a collective enterprise decline (Rahat and Kenig 2018). The usual expectation is that the candidate-centred electoral systems incentivise intraparty conflicts and candidates to distinguish themselves from their party and co-partisans. Thereby, a linkage strategy focusing on direct contact with individual politicians is higher effective by non-party groups.

¹⁰ For a relevant exception, see Thomas (2001, p. 274-276). Unlike our focus on intra-party aspects, his is on inter-party competition consequences on party-group linkages.

As André, Depauw, and Shugart (2014, p. 231-232) argue: "electoral institutions, in particular, structure the options available to voters and thereby strengthen or weaken the incentives for legislators to cultivate their personal reputations rather than the party's reputation." Given these possibilities, it should be expected that the linkage between parties as an organised group and society is undeveloped under personalised electoral systems.

Hypothesis 1: candidate-centred electoral systems are negatively related to developing strong ties between parties and groups by intra-party competition and less valuable party-group linkages as an electoral instrument for communicating with constituencies. Hence, the power balance between party-group on the one hand, and individualistic power-seeking strategies on the other, are related to the degree of the electoral system personalisation.

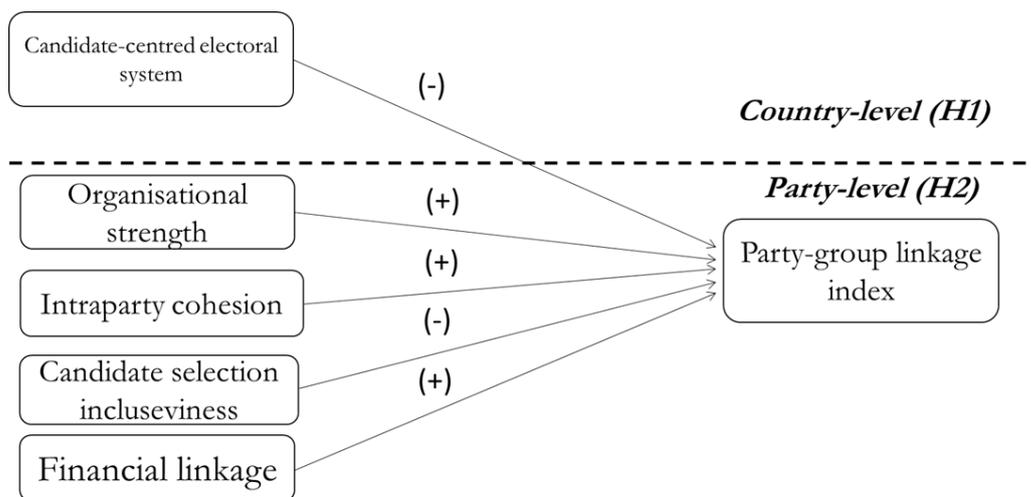
Is the impact of electoral systems on expected party-group linkages mediated by party organisation characteristics? From the perspective of intra-party politics, electoral rules constrain organisational strategies, but they do not determine the choices made by party actors (Harmel and Janda 1994; Allern and Bale 2012, p. 17). Thus, as shown in Figure 1, we might expect the party organisational characteristics to mediate the institutional incentives in establishing linkage strategies. As Allern and Verge point out (2017, p. 110): "the party level is crucial for how parties choose to organise their relationships with social groups. Parties are autonomous, power-seeking actors that choose to organise in ways that help them efficiently achieve their goals."

We argue that different party organisations may amplify, obstruct, or offset the effects of electoral institutions on group linkages. Party elites are not always passive in the face of electoral incentives (Cox 1997): they anticipate (or react to) their consequences and mobilise organisational resources to limit intra-party competition and enhance parties as a collective enterprise. As a result, organisational mechanisms can be mobilised to mitigate rebellions (and factions), sustain party-oriented careers, and develop party reputation (Chhibber et al., 2014).

Thus, controlling these mechanisms makes the party elites' agreements and promises (or threats) more credible to party members and social groups. In addition, these organisational resources can help develop more predictable electoral performance and party policy positions. In non-party groups' view, making agreements with robust and stable parties is more advantageous than transitory individuals (Alesina and Spear 1988).

Hypothesis 2: Party elites with the control of a robust and cohesive party organisation, which combine low-level inclusiveness in the candidate selection and financial support by society, stimulate the most robust party-group linkages. Conversely, when political parties are organizationally weak, non-cohesive, and porous to personal interests, their members will act as independent entrepreneurs to establishing connections with social groups rather than team players.

Figure I – Summary of the argument: a multilevel model.



Source: self-authorship.

2) The Multiple Pathways of Party-group Linkages.

By focusing on party variation of society linkages, the first step is to identify recent party-group relationships. Then, in the effort of tracing a comprehensive scenario in proportional systems (PR), we focus primarily on the two aggregated and standardised V-Party variables: *v2pagroup* and *v2pasocie*¹¹. Thus, our proposal of operationalisation combines different perspectives prevalent in literature.

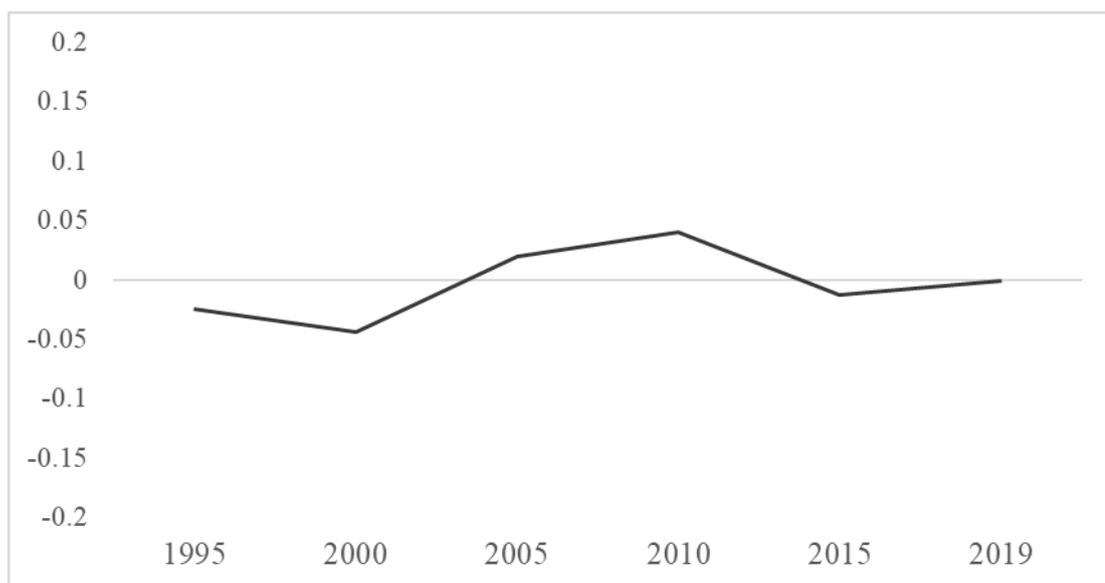
On the 'demand-side,' the emphasis is on structured ties (formal or informal) those party operators (elites) encourage or mobilise with civil society organisations, collateral organisations, social movements, and trade-unions (Poguntke 2002, 2006; Allern and Verge 2017; Allern et al., 2020). On the 'supply side,' the focus is on the social consistency of party organisations, namely

¹¹ Party-group linkages = affiliate organisations + party support group (except, the variable: 'no specific, clearly identifiable group' -- *v2pagroup_0* – more details in appendix 2). As a validation strategy, we found a positive Spearman correlation between *v2pagroup* (Affiliate Organisations/V-party 2020) and the sum of non-territorial sub-organizations (e.g., youth and woman branches) that are mentioned in the party statutes (official documents) (0.432, sig.< 0.05, n= 32), based on PPDB database (Poguntke et al., 2016). For a more systematic robustness checks with different available datasets (e.g., Janda, 1980, Poguntke et al., 2016), see Düpont et al. (2021, p. 14-17).

on the congruence (or alignment) between sociodemographic composition -- as well as the social identity of active supporters -- and their electoral basis (Bartolini 2000, p.26-27; Bawn et al., 2012), thus covering from aristocrats and militaries to working-class, woman, big-business, and religious social sectors¹².

In other words, one perspective can better assess if parties spend considerable efforts to build organisational ties with society (Sartori 2005), while the other expresses how social heterogeneity is within parties' organisational borders. Conceptually, both points of view are complementary: a close relationship with organised groups may help mobilise latent core supporters in and between elections – as previously stated, these developments encompass formal and informal strategies, encompassing 'new' (e.g., postmaterialist movements or sub-units) and 'traditional' (e.g., trade-unions) groups. Details on simple analysed are shown in Table 1, while Figure 2 displays the placement of party-group linkages along with the timescale (min: -3.92, max: 6.02).

Figure 2 –Party-group linkage index average over time



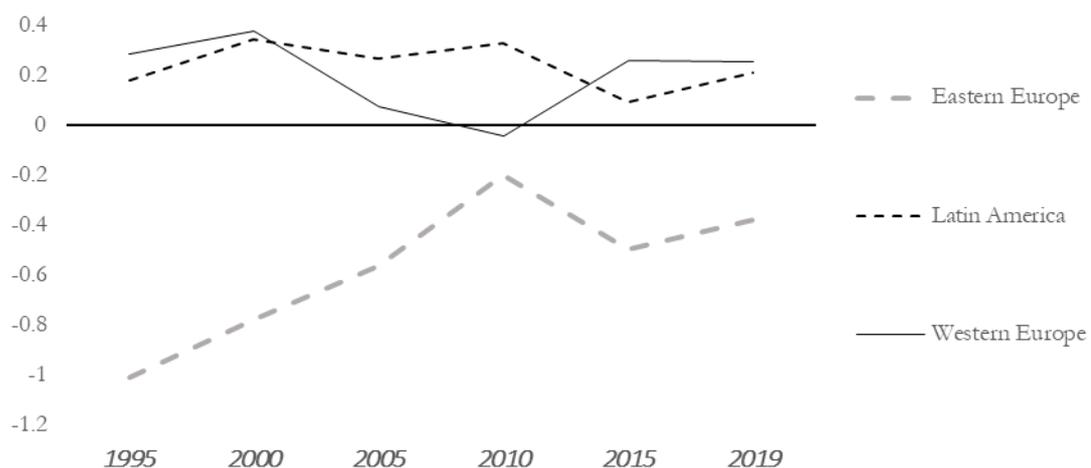
Source: V-Party (2020) n = 1,922.

Figure 2 presents an overview of trends in party-group linkages in all 48 democracies covered by our sample. Despite the decline diagnostic of political parties on society in new and

¹² Following the literature, our focus is on associational life, which not includes professional lobbyists, media groups, think-tanks, and paramilitary groups (Allern and Bale 2012, p. 10). Besides, we adopt a conceptual distinction between parties and social groups (or interests associations) suggested by Schmitter (2001, p.71): ‘the distinguishing characteristic of political parties is their role in the conduct of territorially based elections (...) Interest associations seek to influence the direction of policy so that it will benefit particularly (and, if possible, exclusively) their own members, without competing in elections or being publicly accountable for these policies’.

traditional democracies (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Mair 2013)¹³, there is no general declining trend. Instead, we have identified, on average, a pattern of relative stability in the recent decades. In figure 3, when segregated into three regions, the party-group linkages presented distinctive tendencies. In Eastern Europe, it has increased progressively until 2010, followed by a relative decline. In the same period, Latin American countries have experienced a stabilisation, preceded by a destabilisation cycle. Following the decline diagnosis, Western Europe had the most pronounced retraction in social linkages until 2010. Subsequently, their capacity to establish a relationship with society was partially recovered. Contrary to the expectation of modernisation theories, these initial findings reveal no evolutive pattern of party-group linkages across regions¹⁴.

Figure 3 - Party-group linkages cross-regional.



Source: V-Party (2020), n = 1,922.

¹³The literature is vast on this topic, among the most representative advocates of adaptation, see Bartolini and Mair (2001), Aldrich (2011) and Dalton et al., (2011). Among those who argue for the decline, see Dalton & Wattenberg (2000), Schmitter (2001) and Mair (2013). For a contemporary synthesis of this debate, see Rahat & Kenig (2018).

¹⁴ Similarly, Thomas (2001, p. 280) did not find a unique pattern in party-group linkages in cross-region comparative analyses, including Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and the Americas.

4) The consequences of political parties and electoral rules beyond the election day: party organisations and electoral systems as independent variables.

4.1 - Measuring electoral systems: the life under party list.

Electoral rules have consistently been identified as a key potential factor in shaping party decisions (Cox 1997, p. 38). In particular, electoral systems generate political opportunities and incentive structures for incumbents or ambitious politicians to building and perpetuating their party organisations (Aldrich 2011; Chhibber et al., 2014).

In operationalising changes involving more or less permissive electoral rules, we adopted a synthetic and modified Shugart's index idealized by David Farrell and Roger Scully (Shugart 2001; Farrell and McAllister 2006; Farrell and Scully 2007, p. 128-129) — the '*modified Intraparty efficiency index*.' According to Shugart (2001, p. 129), the index synthesises three main characteristics of electoral systems in a unique single measure: *ballot*, *vote*, and *district*. Moreover, the '*modified intraparty efficiency index*' allows detecting the extent to which the election success depends on either nominal or list votes (Shugart 2001, p.182; Farrell and McAllister 2006; Farrell and Scully 2007).

The codification process is summarised in Figure 4; all scores in our set of 48 nations are in appendix 2. We also consider the district size average as a separate variable (*v2elloeldm*)¹⁵. As mentioned previously, our interest here is in systematic developments and their consequences over time¹⁶. Higher scores across these components suggest a candidate-centred electoral system (maximum score: 9 – SNTV), while lower scores a party-centred electoral system (minimum score: 3 – closed list). The electoral system's data covers 48 countries is derived from the V-Dem (2020) and supplementary sources. Using this coding strategy, we can locate all democracies and their changes over time on a scale from predominantly candidate-centred to predominantly party-centred.

The final dataset encompasses 18 Western European, 15 Latin American, and 15 Eastern European post-communist countries. Including electoral reforms in the period, we analysed 23 closed-lists PR, 21 open-lists PR (including SNTV and STV), and 11 flexible ones from 1989 to 2019.

¹⁵ According to Carey and Shugart (1995, p. 418): 'in all systems where there is intraparty competition, as M grows, so does the value of personal reputation'.

¹⁶ Data source: Passarelli (2020); V-Dem (2020), Renwick and Pilet (2016), Bornann and Golder (2013), Dalton et al., (2011); Farrell and Scully (2007), Chang and Golden (2007), Shugart (2001), Colomer (2001), Carey and Shugart (1995).

Figure 4 - Modified intraparty efficiency index.

	<i>Coding</i>	<i>Theoretical rationale</i>
Ballot	1 = Ballot access controlled by parties, and voters may not disturb the order of the list. 2 = Ballot access dominated by parties, but voters may disturb list. 3 = Ballot access nearly unrestricted.	The lower the extent of party control over the ballot, the greater the potential incentive for candidates to develop a personal reputation
Vote	1 = Vote for list only; 2 = Vote is list or nominal, but list votes predominate; 3 = Vote is nominal or list, but nominal votes predominate and pool to other candidates; 4 = Vote is nominal only, but the vote may pool or transfer to other candidates (not mandatory).	Preferential vote decreases party reputation relevance.
Magnitude	1 = District magnitude is greater than one, with Vote < 3. 2 = District magnitude is greater than one, with Vote > 2, provided that Ballot > 1.	In party-centred electoral systems, higher district magnitude, lower relevance of candidate reputation. Meanwhile, in candidate-centred electoral systems, higher district magnitude, lower relevance of candidate reputation.
Aggregation	Score index = Ballot + Vote + Magnitude	

Source: Farrell and Scully (2007, p. 128-129) and Shugart (2001).

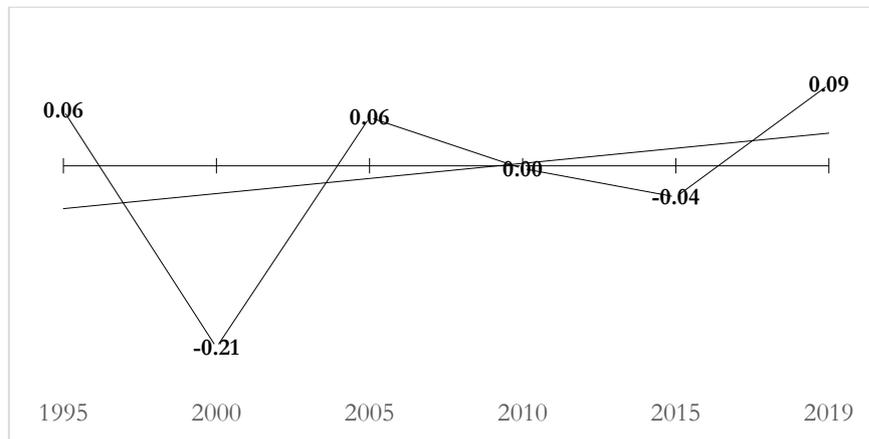
Figure 5 displays the average of standardised scores over time. We have chosen to aggregate averages to simplify the presentation, and more detailed scores by country are in appendix 4 (min: -1.07, max: 2.1). By using five-year intervals, we lessen such short-term average variation to focus on long-term trends. Overall, there are only modest and nonlinear net changes in direction to candidate-centred electoral systems. The overall change from 1989 to 2019s – across all democracies – turns out to be nearly 0.03.

Nevertheless, some countries demonstrate significant temporal variation in distinct directions. For instance, some electoral reforms enhance the candidate-centred aspects of the electoral systems, such as those adopted in Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Iceland. At the same time, there are also examples in another direction, such as Italian and Colombian reforms¹⁷. These findings are consistent with Rahat and Kenig (2018, p. 142) and Renwick and Pilet (2016) in European countries, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Israel, and Canada. Hence, there is

¹⁷ More details about Colombian and Italian cases, see Passarelli (2020).

considerable variation between regions. On average, Table 1 also demonstrates that Western Europe has more personalised proportional (PR) electoral systems than Eastern Europe and Latin America (sig < 0.05).

Figure 5 - 'Modified intraparty efficiency' average index over time (1995 – 2019).



Source: Passarelli (2020); V-Dem (2020), Renwick and Pilet (2016), Bornann and Golder (2013), Dalton et al. (2011), Farrell and Scully (2007), Chang and Golden (2007), Shugart (2001), Colomer (2001), Carey and Shugart (1995), n=55.

4.2 - Party organisations: a multidimensional phenomenon.

Concerning how electoral dynamics affecting party-group linkages: do party organisations make a difference? Parties' characteristics widely differ across regions, countries, and within the same party system, with potentially significant political implications (Janda 1980; Poguntke et al., 2016). In this sense, the same electoral institutions may be associated with quite different intraparty outcomes (Chhibber et al., 2014).

Given our broad organisational focus here, we do not presume symmetrical development in all intraparty spheres under the same environments – institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). As Barnea and Rahat (2007, p.377) emphasised: "at the end of the day decisions is made internally, with a certain level of autonomy for the decision-makers." Based on previous comparative research, the organisational dimensions introduced here are related to central variables in party literature: (1) party strength, (2) financial linkage (by members and civil society), (3) candidate selection inclusiveness, and (4) intraparty cohesion (Janda 1980; Katz and Mair 1995; Hazan and Rahat 2010; Tavits 2013, p. 17-18).

Moreover, these variables accommodate an extensive range of potential factors that affect party-group linkages, besides describing aspects of party structures entirely or mainly under the control of party elites (Harmel and Janda 1994, p. 261). Specifically, we emphasise that preferences,

priorities, and intraparty decision-making may influence the linkage strategies of party elites. This argument implies that rational leadership decisions can establish or abolish those aspects (Harmel and Janda 1994; Aldrich 2011). To this end, the pre-existing literature on political organisations accordingly establishes the basis for four central variables:

First, *party strength* consists of two conceptually distinct analytical dimensions: (1) party activists and permanently active personal (bureaucracy) in local communities; (2) permanent offices at the local level. At the party-level, taken together, organisational strength embraces the capacity of mobilisation, professionalisation, and territorial extension of parties beyond parliamentary structures (Cotter et al., 1989; Coleman 1996; Tavits 2013; Bizzarro et al., 2018)¹⁸. Tavits (2013, p. 19) argues that: "party has a strong organisation if it has structures, personnel, and activities beyond public office."

In short, we expect a positive relationship between party strength and party-group linkages (Thomas 2001, p. 279): strong parties are more effective in reaching close and long-term attachments with organised groups, recruit social leadership and establish face-to-face contact with citizens (Tavits 2013). Moreover, from a social group's perspective, parties with robust organisations are more electorally viable and credible to establish connections. The party strength score is a composite variable created by adding the standardised local organisational strength (*v2paactcom*) and local party office (*v2palocof*) for each party. Consistent with our shared understanding of empirical reality, as Table 1 shows, Western European parties are more robust than Eastern Europe and Latin America (sig. < 0.05). Conversely, on average, there is no significant difference in party strength evolution over time (min: -4.7; max: 3.8).

Second, party funding by members and organised groups – *the financial linkage*¹⁹. One of the most important aspects of party organisations concerns how they finance themselves. In some parties, the fee payment (directly to parties or indirectly) is central to intraparty accountability between elites, mass membership, and organised interests (Katz and Mair 1995; Mair 2013). When party leaders are dependent on group resources, they increase the investment in linkages (Thomas 2001). Beyond monetary benefits, party members and organised society's contributions provide legitimacy to political parties (Ignazi 2012, p.75-76).

An additive and standardised index were created to access relevant financial connections with non-party organisations and party members. In this case, we aggregate the scores of parties that have used as one primary financial source the donations from civil society organisations and trade unions (*v2pafunds_3*) as well as party membership fees and small-scale donations of

¹⁸ Party strength = local organisational strength + local party office.

¹⁹ Financial linkage = large-scale donations from civil society + membership donations

supporters (*v2pafunds_4*). As shown in Table 1, in consonance with previous literature evidence, our findings suggest a significant retraction in financial support for both party members and non-party organisations over time (Katz and Mair 1995; Mair 2013). Additionally, Table 1 reports significant differences in cross-region evidence; in Latin America and Eastern Europe, the average net of contributions is minor than in Western Europe (sig. < 0.05).

Third, *candidate selection* is a central process in which political parties nominate their candidates for electoral dispute (Hazan and Rahat 2010). Our focus is on the size of the selectorate who can participate in the selection procedure and its consequences – inclusiveness. We expect an exclusive nomination favours intraparty coordination, limits intraparty competition, and generates a more representative candidate list (Hazan and Rahat 2010, p. 114). To an extent, ballot access control is a critical currency in bargaining processes; this, in turn, stimulates the establishing of party-group linkages.

Besides, as gatekeepers, if party elites control re-nomination, they have tools to discourage intraparty conflicts (factionalism and personalism) in the face of contextual challenges (Key 1964; Hazan and Rahat 2010; Colomer 2011). Using the standardised candidate nomination (*v2panom*), the higher the index score, the greater the inclusiveness of candidate selection. As the first column in Table 1 indicates, parties vary significantly in candidate selection between regions (min: -2.9, max: 4.6, sig. < 0.05).

Finally, *intraparty cohesion* relies on party members sharing the same preferences — particularly, we expect that the more robust the party cohesion, the stronger party-group linkages. In these terms, a cohesive behaviour may sustain the reputation of reliability and accountability to non-party organisations, interest groups, and society besides improving a party's electoral success and image. All these factors, in combination, significantly makes parties predictable: an incohesive elite behaviour emphasises short-term strategies such as appealing candidates, media-based campaigns, and populist (or flip-flop) policies to attract group support (Aldrich 2011, Tavits 2013).

The variable is labelled '*internal cohesion*' (*v2padisa*); a positive change increases intraparty cohesion. Table 1 demonstrates that the average party-linkage society is lowest in Eastern Europe and Latin America, followed by Western Europe (min: -4.1, max: 2.9, sig. < 0.05).

Overall, we recognise the role of institutional frameworks (contextual factors) for shaping parties' behaviour, as well as the actors have leeway in how they make use of opportunities offered by the institutions (Barnea and Rahat 2007; Chhibber et al., 2014). Nevertheless, examining electoral system and party-level determinants, we must also control multiple external elements -- control variables are as follows (summary statistics are in appendix 1):

4.3) - Institutional controls:

- Presidentialism Index (*v2xnp_pres*): presidentialism can affect party organisations and party-group linkages by enhancing intraparty conflicts between parliamentarians and presidential candidates (Thomas 2001). In particular, both attend different electoral constituencies (local and national) – competing principals' pressures (Key 1964; Mainwaring 1999; Samuels and Shugart 2010). Thus, more presidentialized governments should expect minor party-group linkages -- Interval, from low to high presidentialized government (0-1).
- Division of power index (*v2x_feduni*): the division of power in federal and unitary democratic regimes can undermine party-group linkages (Thomas 2001). In a less cooperative institutional framework, parties are more autonomous and cohesive. Hence, federalism weakens parties because it reinforces existing sub-national conflicts and generates new sources of conflict (Key 1964, Mainwaring 1999; Ames 2001). Moreover, where power is decentralised, state and federal parties tend to be hierarchically and ideologically less integrated (Ames 2001). Both factors are challenging to build stable linkages between parties and organised groups. Therefore, the greater the positive variation in the division of power index, the greater the autonomy of subnational governments – scale (0-1).
- Compulsory voting (*v2elcomvot*): we argue that compulsory voting laws enforced via costly sanctions can reduce incentives to political parties building linkages with social groups. Parties are less dependent on mobilisation, decreasing the incentive of leaders to invest in linkage strategies (Dalton et al., 2011). Thus, compulsory voting reduces the electoral relevance of establishing party organisation, and by implication, diminishes the importance of the party-group linkages. A positive variation in the indicator means a higher level of sanctions in compulsory voting – scale (0-1).

4.4 – Socio-political controls:

- Civil society index (*v2xcs_csi*): we expect the growing distance between parties and society flows from the increasingly alternative forms of participation in a stronger mobilised civil society. Such a process may produce systemic consequences for party-social group linkages, making it more difficult for parties to perform their representative and aggregative functions (Lawson and Merkl 1988; Dalton & Wattenberg 2000; Schmitter 2001). Therefore, a positive variation in the indicator means a higher civil society mobilisation –

scale (0-1).

- Educational equality (*v2pedueq*): scholars establish that increased economic development associates with a more broad-based distribution of educational and occupational resources. Greater access to educational and occupational resources increases engagement chances on alternative (or new) forms of participation vis-à-vis to party decline. In this way, we expect the rising equality to lead to decreased party-group linkages (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000; Schmitter 2001; Mair 2013), a positive variation in the indicator means educational equality – scale (0-1).

Table I - Independent variables cross-regional and on time.

	Internal cohesion		Candidate selection inclusiveness		Party strength		Financial linkage		The modified intraparty efficiency index		Magnitude average (M)	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
	(Std. Dev)		(Std. Dev)		(Std. Dev)		(Std. Dev)		(Std. Dev)		(Std. Dev)	
Years												
1995	0.3 (1.2)	419	0.43 (1.3)	429	-0.17 (1.8)	429	0.4 (1.5)	429	0.06 (1.0)	42	17.8 (33)	42
2000	0.25 (1.2)	255	0.44 (1.3)	260	0.03 (1.9)	260	0.08 (1.4)	259	-0.2 (0.98)	42	31.7 (61)	42
2005	0.23 (1.2)	251	0.62 (1.3)	256	0.06 (1.8)	256	0.07 (1.4)	255	0.06 (1.0)	41	20.8 (38)	41
2010	0.20 (1.2)	347	0.51 (1.4)	352	0.06 (1.7)	352	-0.25 (1.4)	350	0.00 (0.92)	45	40.9 (78)	45
2015	0.16 (1.3)	332	0.47 (1.5)	344	0.06 (1.7)	340	-0.06 (1.5)	342	-0.03 (1.0)	44	36.5 (65)	44
2019	0.17 (1.2)	283	0.57 (1.5)	289	0.05 (1.7)	288	-0.11 (1.4)	285	0.09 (1.0)	42	42 (70)	42
Eta-squared	0.003		0.002		0.003		0.013***		0.009***		0.024***	
Regions												
Latin America	0.07 (1.18)	602	0.05 (1.4)	602	-0.79 (1.7)	602	-0.14 (1.1)	602	-0.10 (1.04)	15	6.6 (4.7)	15
Eastern Europe	0.04 (1.2)	537	0.011 (1.2)	537	0.29 (1.7)	537	-0.29 (1.0)	537	-0.05 (0.9)	15	57.8 (88.1)	15
Western Europe	0.51 (1.3)	748	1.17 (1.2)	791	0.35 (1.7)	790	0.31 (1.9)	781	0.13 (0.99)	18	28.1 (44.2)	18
Eta-squared	0.031***		0.157***		0.068***		0.032***		0.011***		0.113***	

Source: V-Party (2020) and V-Dem (2020), n = 1,922. Eta squared refers to the between-groups variance explained by regions and years, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

5 – Results and Discussion.

5.1 - Bivariate analysis.

In recent years, there has been a growing literature oriented by an interest in the consequences of institutional choices for democratic effectiveness (Farrell and McAllister, 2006; Farrell and Scully, 2007); particularly on electoral institutions, it suggests that some electoral system is likely to encourage (or not) strong party organisations and stable party roots with society (Mainwaring 1999; Ames 2001; Passarelli 2020). However, in electoral reforms circumstances, the intra-party dimension can become a pivotal incentive to shape the electoral system's preferences of party elites (Renwick and Pilet 2016; Rokkan 1970, p.162).

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlations between all our indicators of party organisations and electoral systems. On the one hand, the 'modified intraparty efficiency index' correlates positively and significantly with financial linkage, candidate selection inclusiveness, and internal party cohesion (sig. <0.05). But, on the other hand, the correlation between party strength is not significant and negative. In essence, this analysis suggests no perfect correlation between the electoral system characteristics and intraparty dimensions, notably organisational variables -- correlation levels are weak.

Moreover, there is generally a weak and negative correlation between the district magnitude average and the party organisational dimensions (except party strength). Consequently, when the electoral magnitude is high, parties tend to limit their levels of inclusiveness in candidate selection, party strength, and financial linkages (sig<0.05). Hence, district magnitude is associated with distinct party organisational characteristics – parties tend to be less inclusive and limit their organisational capacity.

Finally, but no less importantly, as indicated in Table 2, the party organisation variables are not strongly correlated, which justifies their analysis as distinct (or particular) dimensions. In this sense, parties develop their organisational structures differently, sometimes adopting strategies diverse from others (Tavits 2013; Chhibber et al., 2014).

Table 2 - Pairwise correlations between 'modified intraparty efficiency index' and party strength, internal cohesion, financial linkage, and candidate selection (inclusiveness).

Variables	Party strength	Financial linkage	Candidate selection	Internal cohesion
Financial linkage	0.062***			
Candidate selection inclusiveness	0.265***	0.116***		
Internal cohesion	-0.070***	0.020	-0.053**	
Magnitude average	-0.116***	-0.087***	-0.142***	-0.015
Modified intraparty efficiency index	-0.008	0.302***	0.103***	0.119***

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0. Source: V-Party (2020) and V-Dem (2020), n = 1,922.

5.2 - Multivariate analysis.

To evaluate the extent to which electoral systems and party organisational changes increased the intensity of party-group linkages, Table 3 presents estimates of six general models of panels with fixed effects, utilising all parties that won at least 5% of votes between 1989 and 2019. Using the entire sample, we estimate panel models with fixed-effect to analyse the changes within an element – party-group linkages – and control for all time-invariant differences²⁰. In this sense, we control by unobserved heterogeneity when adding the fixed-effects at regions, countries, and party levels, thus estimating the effects of 'modified intraparty efficiency index', district magnitude (on average), and party organisations variables on party-group linkages (Woodridge 2002).

Table 3 is roughly structured into four parts and presents different variables (organisational, socio-political, and institutional). Model 1 and 2 includes, respectively, the electoral systems and party organisations variables. Additionally, Model 3 aggregates electoral system and party organisation variables and Model 4 also include all controls variables.

The 'modified intraparty efficiency index' is negatively and significantly related to party-group linkages: the more the candidate-centred PR electoral systems, the fewer linkages a party is likely to develop. However, as expected for hypothesis 1, the 'modified intraparty efficiency index' affects stably and consistently party-group linkages in all four models. Moreover, adding different variables left the intensity of the relationship relatively steady. As Model 1 reveals, adding one point on the modified intraparty efficiency index' (min: -1.073, max: 2.101) favours a reduction of approximately -0.09 points by year (min: -3.9, max: 6.0) – equally, this effect is statistically significant in the model 6, which includes all variables.

Conversely, as results in Table 3 show, the coefficients for the district magnitude are all

²⁰ In short, $y_{it} = a + x_{it}b + v_i + e_{it}$, where v_i ($i=1, \dots, n$) are the fixed effects to be estimated. In addition, the Hausman Test was statistically significant (sig. < 0.000), thus supporting our model choice.

negative and statistically not significant. Even so, these results are consistent and provide considerable support for the hypothesised relationship between the incentives of electoral systems and party-group linkages (hypothesis I).

As in previous electoral system analyses, Table 3 presents a similar result for three organisational variables in all models, thus providing considerable support for the hypothesised relationship -- party strength, intraparty cohesion, and financial linkage. In this sense, the variables produce a positive, statistically significant, and stable effect of party organisational dimensions on party-group linkages over time.

In Model 2, where we examine party factors without our electoral system-level variables or controls effects, we find significant variables which affect party-group linkages. A party is more connected with social groups where its organisational structures, cohesive behaviour of intraparty elites, and finance linkages are more robust than in parties whose organisation is fluid and weak. The relationship remains when controlling for the electoral system variables (model 3), indicating that the party organisation elements remain significant regardless of intra-party competition and contextual personalisation incentives.

In models 2 and 3, consistent with our and the literature's expectations (Coleman 1996, Tavits 2013), those parties that allocate efforts to build extra-parliamentary solid party organisations develop considerably more social ties than those focusing on alternative strategies over time. Also, consistent with our expectations, models 2 and 3 reveal a positive relationship between intra-party cohesion and non-party group linkages. When party members behave cohesively over time, it generates more stable and clear expectations for external players, including social groups. Because of the stability and predictability, parties can have less incentive to break potential agreements. Additionally, they perform more effectively the fundamental functions of representation and accountability (Dalton et al., 2011; Aldrich, 2011).

In consonance with established literature, we find that financial linkage is positively associated with party-group linkages: a symbiotic relationship is formed. On the one side, parties and candidates have a growing interest to increase campaign funds. Conversely, non-party groups need party support to promote their policy agendas or access electoral lists. This financial connection is probably an essential bonding factor between parties and groups (Cox 1997; Bawn et al., 2012). Nevertheless, contrary to our expectations, we do not find evidence suggesting that candidate selection methods' inclusiveness have significantly affected party-group linkages. Therefore, our evidence suggests that the rules for selecting candidates are not directly relevant, but we do not rule out its indirect effects (see Table 2).

Model 4 presents the effect of electoral systems and party organisations on party-

group linkages, including all control variables above described: presidentialism index, division of power index, compulsory voting, civil society index, and educational equality. In essence, this is a re-estimation of Model 3 but now adding control variables. Once again, as the results in Model 4 show, the levels of party strength, financial linkages and intra-party cohesion are, indeed, associated with increases in party-group linkages. The predicted effects are plotted in Figure 6. All four graphs indicate the significant effect of organisational and electoral system variables on party-group linkages -- our data strongly support hypothesis 2. In addition, contrary to expectations, the compulsory vote is the single control variable to have a significant and positive impact on party-group linkages. A possible alternative explanation is that increased participation possibly leads to increased electoral uncertainty, stimulating a thickening of group ties.

Table 3 - Results for Panel Analyses with Fixed Effects

VARIABLES	(1) Electoral system	(2) Party organisations	(3) Electoral- organisational	(4) Complete model
Electoral-system				
District magnitude (M)	-0.011 (0.009)		-0.009 (0.008)	-0.008 (0.008)
Modified intraparty efficiency index	-0.093*** (0.031)		-0.061** (0.030)	-0.062** (0.030)
Party Organization				
Party strength		0.436*** (0.030)	0.433*** (0.030)	0.423*** (0.030)
Financial linkage		0.068*** (0.026)	0.061** (0.026)	0.044* (0.027)
Internal cohesion		0.055*** (0.013)	0.053*** (0.013)	0.049*** (0.013)
Candidate selection inclusiveness		-0.025 (0.028)	-0.013 (0.028)	0.005 (0.029)
Institutional variables				
Presidentialism index				0.357 (0.224)
Division of power index (federal- unitary)				-0.010 (0.137)
Compulsory voting				0.108* (0.056)
Socio-political variables				
Civil society index				-0.132 (0.167)
Educational equality				0.040 (0.038)
Constant	0.317 (0.259)	-0.045*** (0.017)	0.213 (0.249)	0.116 (0.305)
Observations	1,922	1,868	1,868	1,868
R-squared	0.009	0.151	0.155	0.165
Number of parties	617	600	600	600
Parties FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Countries FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Regions FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. **Source:** Author's elaboration from V-Party (2020) and V-Dem (2020) datasets. Dependent variable: party-group linkages.

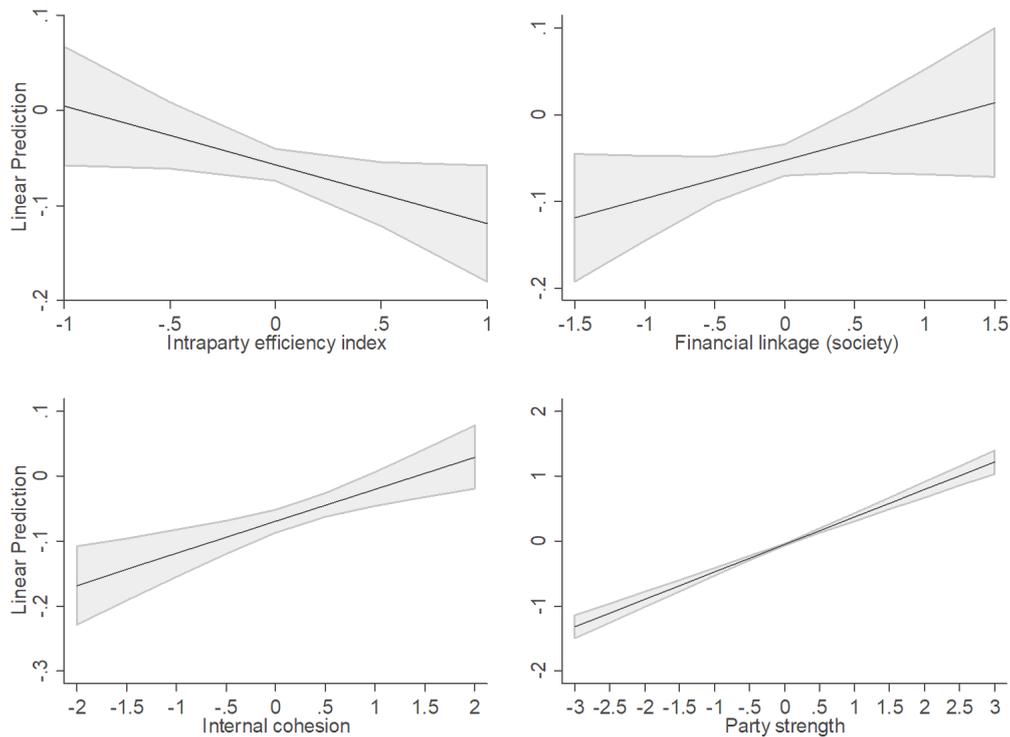


Figure 6 - Predictive margins with 95% Cis (Model 4).

To what extent do a specific variation of the electoral system matter for the relationship between parties and group linkages? How far do party structures in different electoral systems stimulate a similar pattern of relations with non-party groups, or how far it differs? To do a systematic analysis of the interplay of party agency under constraining of distinctive institutional structures (electoral rules), we employ three models with the same variables of Model 6 (excluding 'modified intraparty efficiency index'), but now segregating our sample by different electoral systems: closed-list, flexible-list, and open-list/SNTV/STV (Mainwaring, 1999, p. 339)²¹.

Likewise, many have suggested a more candidate-centred electoral system, an intra-party competition and institutional personalisation. Under preferential voting systems (flexible- and open-lists), it is intuitively expected that party-level elements may not be relevant to explain party-group linkages. However, as Table 4 shows, even the effects have declined comparatively between Models 7 and 8 vis-à-vis Model 9 (respectively coefficients = 0.460, 0.253 and 0.498, sig < 0.05), the party strength continues to have a significant impact in party-group linkages (see Figure 7).

In contrast, Models 7, 8 and 9 confirm a solid linear pattern of decline in intra-party cohesion effects between different electoral systems: closed-list is likely to favour the relationship between cohesive intraparty behaviour and party-group linkages (with advantages to closed-lists –

²¹ According to Mainwaring (1999, p. 339): 'with open list PR, with the single transferable vote, or with the single non-transferable vote, candidates owe their election to their own efforts, and are not beholden to the party.'

Models 7 and 8). However, the coefficient becomes not statistically and substantively insignificant once considered the flexible-list and open-lists (STV and SNTV – Model 9). Therefore, in our results, each electoral system is likely (or not) to encourage different degrees of intraparty cohesion (Carey and Shugart 1995; Shugart 2001, 2005). Besides, candidate selection inclusiveness and financial linkage are not significant (see Table 4).

Notably, the cases of Brazil and Denmark illustrate our findings – both democracies allow 'preferential votes', respectively adopting OLPR and Flexible-list PR electoral systems (Passarelli 2020)²². In the Brazilian case, the increasing party organisational strength ($\bar{x} = -1.08$ in 1995 to $\bar{x} = -0.95$ in 2018) is positively associated with a significant increase in party-group linkages ($\bar{x} = -0.65$ in 1995 to $\bar{x} = -0.48$ in 2018/ $r = 704$, $\text{sig} < 0.00$) – the relative strengthening of Brazilian party organisations on time are consistent with Mainwaring et al., (2017) recent assessment. Despite the differences with the previous case, a similar characterisation applies to Denmark: party organisational strength ($\bar{x} = -0.77$ in 1990 to $\bar{x} = -0.48$ in 2018) is positively associated with party-group linkage densification ($\bar{x} = -0.238$ in 1990 to $\bar{x} = -0.007$ in 2018/ $r = 0.842$, $\text{sig} < 0.000$). It is also convergent with Allern et al. (2007) and Rahat and Kenig (2018) comparative studies.

Overall, contrary to usual expectations, the connection between electoral systems and intraparty politics is less automatic. Our results found evidence that party decisions about their organisational strategies also matter. Like many put in question the direct relationship (or mechanical) between social structure and party organisations (e.g., Przeworski and Sprague 1986; Sartori 2005), our finds suggest that there is no predefined impact of the electoral systems and party-group relationship.

Combined with other contextual trends, maintaining or increasing the linkages with society requires an organisational effort that may or may not be directly stimulated by electoral rules. Therefore, our analysis supports a fundamental aspect highlighted by Borz and Janda (2018, p 1): "political scientists are already moving away from a purely deterministic approach, whereby an organisation is seen only as an effect of environmental conditions. The field of party politics should also consider parties' strategic decisions of adopting organisational changes to pursue their goals".

²² Denmark introduced the Flexible-list PR in 1920, while Brazil has employed OLPR since 1932.

Table 4 - Results for Panel Analyses by Party-lists.

VARIABLES	(7) Closed-list	(8) Flexible-list	(9) Open- list/STV/SNTV
Party strength	0.498*** (0.050)	0.444*** (0.053)	0.252*** (0.048)
Financial linkage	0.015 (0.040)	0.007 (0.046)	-0.034 (0.051)
Candidate selection inclusiveness	0.019 (0.037)	0.030 (0.047)	-0.092 (0.065)
Internal cohesion	0.123*** (0.019)	0.027 (0.018)	-0.003 (0.027)
Magnitude (M)	-0.021 (0.037)	-0.005 (0.007)	-0.015 (0.032)
Control variables	YES	YES	YES
Observations	726	497	645
R-squared	0.236	0.228	0.123
Number of parties	271	134	228
Parties FE	YES	YES	YES
Countries FE	YES	YES	YES
Regions FE	YES	YES	YES

Standard errors in parentheses*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. **Source:** Author's elaboration from V-Party (2020) and V-Dem (2020) datasets. Dependent variable: party-group linkages.

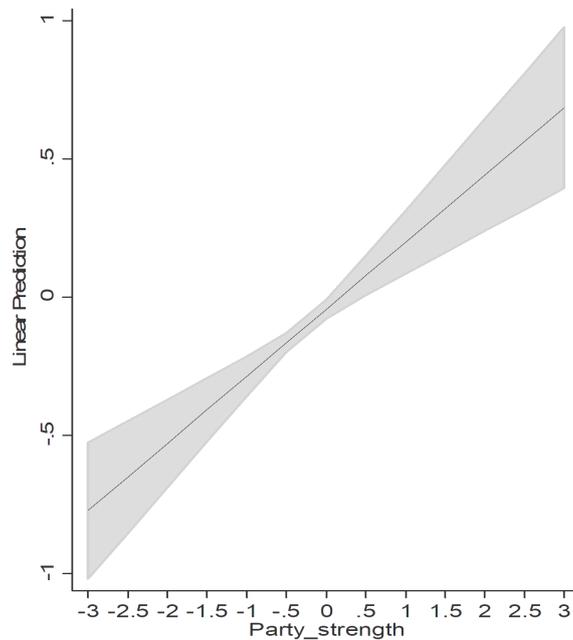


Figure 7 - Predictive Margins with 95% Cis (Model 9).

6 – Conclusions

This article has offered a broad perspective on how and why institutions -- particularly proportional (PR) electoral systems -- are relevant to explain the relationship between parties as a collective enterprise and non-party groups. While much of the literature on political parties has focused on the socio-political determinants of their decline or adaptation (e.g., Bartolini and Mair 2001; Mair 2013), we have shown how electoral institutions, primarily by stimulating intraparty competition and personalisation, can impact the linkage strategies with social groups negatively over time.

Nonetheless, we also have argued that the effects of electoral systems depend on how party organisations are structured. Hence, it is a critical intervening dimension in how the institutional environment affects parties-group relationships – powerful organised party elites are agenda-setters, taking the final decision in the organisational process (Cotter et al., 1989; Harmel and Janda 1994, Barnea and Rahat 2007, Tavits, 2013). Empirically, V-Dem and V-Party data have allowed us to investigate the longitudinal effects of variables at the party-level, which have not been systematically examined (Düpont et al., 2021).

In descriptive terms, whereas party-group linkages, party strength, candidate selection inclusiveness, and intraparty cohesion remain on average stable over time (1989-2019), we identified an increase of the candidate-centred electoral system vis-à-vis the decline of financial linkage by social groups in the same period (Rewink and Pilet 2016; Rahat and Kenig 2018). Our models and empirical findings demonstrate that strong and cohesive parties, which receives financial support from society, have consistently developed more linkages with non-party groups than fluid and porous political parties.

We also found evidence that political parties with strong organisations have established solid party-group linkages during this period, even in a candidate-centred electoral system (hostile environment). Indeed, this is consistent with our argument that party elites from strong party structures have more coordination capacity to limit intraparty conflicts. Putting these sets of evidence together, we conclude that even in more candidate-centred electoral systems, the finds suggest that the organisational structures of parties may assume a more central explanatory role, strongly capable of influencing party-group linkages.

In further analysis, our results suggest being advantageous (or necessary) in adopting a more cautious analytical position on the relative balance of structure and agency, particularly concerning party and society relationships (Gauja 2017, p. 13-15). The focus on party-level implications, especially the organisational capacity of elites, needs particular and careful attention. Together with a considerable previous comparative literature, the results presented in our article

suggest that "party change does not just happen" also in their relations with social groups (Harmel and Janda 1994, p. 261-262).

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Appendix 1: Variables Description and Statistics

Table 5 - Variables Description and Statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. dev.</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>25 %</i>	<i>Media n</i>	<i>75 %</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>V-dem variable codes</i>
Party Strength	1,929	0.00	1.813	-4.029	-1.328	0.115	1.522	3.266	v2paactcom, v2palocof
Party-group linkages	1,922	0.00	1.664	-3.937	-1.213	-0.125	1.167	6.009	v2pagroup, v2pasocfie
Electoral linkages	1,920	0.00	1.504	-1.585	-1.585	-0.123	0.755	5.357	v2pafunds
District Magnitude Avarege (M)	2,250	31.8	61.4	1.1	5.29	8.9	15	450	v2elloelsy
Modified intraparty efficiency index	2,250	0.00	1.000	-1.073	-1.073	-0.015	1.043	2.101	v2elloelsy
Internal Cohesion	1,887	0.239	1.275	-4.101	-0.688	0.267	1.159	2.962	v2padisa
Candidate Selection Inclusiveness	1,930	0.503	1.419	-2.908	-0.405	0.580	1.439	4.659	v2panom
Presidentialism Index	2,250	0.170	0.176	0.009	0.038	0.098	0.275	0.931	v2xnp_pres
Division of power index	2,250	0.724	0.247	0.000	0.490	0.870	0.968	1.000	v2x_feduni
Compulsory Voting	2,250	0.500	0.817	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	3.000	v2elcomvot
Educational equality	2,250	1.437	1.449	-1.890	0.650	1.750	2.630	3.430	v2peedueq
Civil society index	2,250	0.866	0.126	0.000	0.830	0.900	0.950	0.980	v2xcs_ccsi

Source: V-Dem (2021) and V-Party (2020).

Appendix 2: operationalisation

Figure 8 – Variables' operationalisation

Variables
<p>1) Party Strength = Local organisational strength + Local party office</p> <p>Local organisational strength (v2paactcom): To what degree are party activists and personnel permanently active in local communities? <i>Clarification:</i> please consider the degree to which party activists and personnel are active both during election and non-election periods. Party personnel refers to paid staff.</p> <p>Responses:</p> <p>0: There is negligible permanent presence of party activists and personnel in local communities.</p> <p>1: There is minor permanent presence of party activists and personnel in local communities.</p> <p>2: There is noticeable permanent presence of party activists and personnel in local communities.</p> <p>3: There is significant permanent presence of party activists and personnel in local communities.</p> <p>4: There is widespread permanent presence of party activists and personnel in local communities.</p> <p>Local party office (v2palocof): Does this party maintain permanent offices that operate outside of election campaigns at the local or municipal-level? <i>Clarification:</i> By "local or municipal" we mean low level administrative divisions that are ranked below regions, provinces, or states. We refer to offices that ensure professional personal and continued interaction of the party with citizens. Permanent offices operate outside of election campaigns.</p> <p>Responses:</p> <p>0: The party does not have permanent local offices.</p> <p>1: The party has permanent local offices in few municipalities</p> <p>2: The party has permanent local offices in some municipalities.</p> <p>3: The party has permanent local offices in most municipalities.</p> <p>4: The party has permanent local offices in all or almost all municipalities.</p>
<p>1) Financial linkage (v2pafunds) = Large-scale donations from civil society + Membership donations</p> <p>Party resources: What were the major sources of party funds for this election campaign? Clarification: choose up to three most important ones. If a main source of funding for this campaign comes from the party's assets such as properties and stocks, please code where these assets originally came from.</p> <p>Responses:</p> <p>3: Large-scale donations from civil society organizations (including trade unions) [v2pafunds_3].</p> <p>4: Membership fees and small-scale supporters' donations [v2pafunds_4].</p>
<p>2) Internal Cohesion (v2padisa).</p> <p>Internal Cohesion: To what extent do the elites in this party display disagreement over party strategies? <i>Clarification:</i> Party strategies include election campaign strategy, policy stance, distribution of party financial resources, cooperation with other parties (i.e. coalition formation), and the selection of legislative and presidential candidates as well as the party leader. Party elites are prominent and influential party members such as current and former ministers, members of parliament or the party leadership, regional and municipal leaders, and opinion leaders. They do not necessarily have to be the part of the official party leadership.</p> <p>Responses:</p>

- 0: Party elites display almost complete disagreement over party strategies and many party elites have left the party.
- 1: Party elites display a high level of visible disagreement over party strategies and some of them have left the party.
- 2: Party elites display some visible disagreement over party strategies, but none of them have left the party.
- 3: Party elites display negligible visible disagreement over party strategies.
- 4: Party elites display virtually no visible disagreement over party strategies.

3) Candidate Selection inclusiveness (*v2panom*).

Candidate nomination: Which of the following options best describes the process by which the party decides on candidates for the national legislative elections? Clarification: If nomination procedures vary across constituencies consider the most common practice.

Responses:

- 0: The party leader unilaterally decides on which candidates will run for the party in national legislative elections.
- 1: The national party leadership (i.e. an executive committee) collectively decides which candidates will run for the party in national legislative elections.
- 2: Delegates of local/regional organisations decide which candidates will run for the party in national legislative elections.
- 3: All party members decide on which candidates will run for the party in national legislative elections in primaries/caucuses.
- 4: All registered voters decide on which candidates will run for the party in national legislative elections in primaries/caucuses

4) Party Society Linkages = *Affiliate organisations + Party support group*

Affiliate organisations (*v2pasocitie*): To what extent does this party maintain ties to prominent social organisations? Clarification: When evaluating the strength of ties between the party and social organisations please consider the degree to which social organisations contribute to party operations by providing material and personnel resources, propagating the party's message to its members and beyond, as well as by directly participating in the party's electoral campaign and/or mobilisation efforts. Social organisations include: Religious organisations (e.g. churches, sects, charities), trade unions/syndical organisations or cooperatives, cultural and social associations (e.g. sports clubs, neighbourhood associations), political associations (e.g. environmental protection) and professional and business associations. Social organisations do not include paramilitary units or militias.

Responses:

- 0: The party does not maintain ties to any prominent social organisation.
- 1: The party maintains weak ties to prominent social organisations.
- 2: The party maintains moderate ties to prominent social organisations.
- 3: The party maintains strong ties to prominent social organisations.

Party support group (*v2pagroup*): To which particular group in society does the core membership and supporters of this party belong? Clarification: Choose only the key groups. Though you may choose up to three groups, if only one group is most relevant, please only choose that group.

Responses:

- 0: No specific, clearly identifiable group [*v2pagroup_0*].
- 1: The aristocracy, including high status hereditary social groups and castes [*v2pagroup_1*].
- 2: Agrarian elites, including rich peasants and large landholders [*v2pagroup_2*].
- 3: Business elites [*v2pagroup_3*].
- 4: The military [*v2pagroup_4*].
- 5: An ethnic or racial group(s) [*v2pagroup_5*].
- 6: A religious group(s) [*v2pagroup_6*].
- 7: Local elites, including customary chiefs [*v2pagroup_7*].
- 8: Urban working classes, including labor unions [*v2pagroup_8*].
- 9: Urban middle classes. (0=No, 1=Yes) [*v2pagroup_9*].
- 10: Rural working classes (e.g. peasants) [*v2pagroup_10*].
- 11: Rural middle classes (e.g., family farmers) [*v2pagroup_11*].

12: Regional groups or separatists [v2pagroup_12].

13: Women [v2pagroup_13].

14: Other specific groups [v2pagroup_14].

5) **Presidentialism Index (v2xnp_pres)**

Presidentialism Index: To what extent is the regime characterised by presidentialism?

Clarification: Presidentialism means the "systemic concentration of political power in the hands of one individual who resists delegating all but the most trivial decision making tasks" (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997: 63). It relates closely to V-Dem's index of Horizontal Accountability (v2x_horacc) but focuses more specifically on the extent to which the President is free from constraints by other institutions or actors. The point estimates for this index have been reversed such that the directionality is opposite to the input variables. That is, lower scores indicate a normatively better situation (e.g. more democratic) and higher scores a normatively worse situation (e.g. less democratic). Note that this directionality is opposite of that of other V-Dem indices, which generally run from normatively worse to better. Scale: Interval, from low to high (0-1).

6) **Division of power index (v2x_feduni)**

Division of power index: Are there elected local and regional governments, and — if so — to what extent can they operate without interference from unelected bodies at the local level?

Clarification: The lowest score would be reserved for a country that has no elected local or regional governments, or where all or nearly all elected offices are subordinate to non-elected offices at any local or regional level that exists. A high score would be accorded to a country in which both local and regional governments are elected and able to operate without restrictions from unelected actors at the local or regional level with the exception of judicial bodies. A medium score can be achieved in various ways: there are strong elected governments at the local level but not the regional level, or vice versa; or both local and regional governments elect an executive but not an assembly; or elected and non-elected offices are approximately equal in power at the local and regional levels; or various combinations of these scenarios. **Scale:** Interval, from low to high (0-1).

7) **Compulsory voting (v2elcomvot)**

Compulsory Voting: Is voting compulsory (for those eligible to vote) in national elections?

Responses:

0: No.

1: Yes. But there are no sanctions or sanctions are not enforced.

2: Yes. Sanctions exist and are enforced, but they impose minimal costs upon the offending voter.

3: Yes. Sanctions exist, they are enforced, and they impose considerable costs upon the offending voter.

8) **Educational Equality (v2peedueq):**

Educational equality: To what extent is high quality basic education guaranteed to all, sufficient to enable them to exercise their basic rights as adult citizens? Clarification: Basic education refers to ages typically between 6 and 16 years of age but this varies slightly among countries.

Responses:

0: Extreme. Provision of high quality basic education is extremely unequal and at least 75 percent (%) of children receive such low-quality education that undermines their ability to exercise their basic rights as adult citizens.

1: Unequal. Provision of high quality basic education is extremely unequal and at least 25 percent (%) of children receive such low-quality education that undermines their ability to exercise their basic rights as adult citizens.

2: Somewhat equal. Basic education is relatively equal in quality but ten to 25 percent (%) of children receive such low-quality education that undermines their ability to exercise their basic rights as adult citizens.

3: Relatively equal. Basic education is overall equal in quality but five to ten percent (%) of children receive such low-quality education that probably undermines their ability to exercise their basic rights as adult citizens.

4: Equal. Basic education is equal in quality and less than five percent (%) of children receive such low-quality education that probably undermines their ability to exercise their basic rights as adult citizens.

9) *Core civil society index (v2xcs_ccsi)*

Core civil society index: How robust is civil society?

Clarification: The sphere of civil society lies in the public space between the private sphere and the state. Here, citizens organise in groups to pursue their collective interests and ideals. We call these groups civil society organisations CSOs. CSOs include, but are by no means limited to, interest groups, labor unions, spiritual organisations if they are engaged in civic or political activities, social movements, professional associations, charities, and other non-governmental organisations. The core civil society index CCSI is designed to provide a measure of a robust civil society, understood as one that enjoys autonomy from the state and in which citizens freely and actively pursue their political and civic goals, however conceived. The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for CSO entry and exit (*v2cseeorgs*), CSO repression (*v2csreprss*) and CSO participatory environment (*v2csprtpft*).

Scale: from low to high (0-1).

10) *District Magnitude (M) (v2elloeldm)*

Lower chamber election district magnitude: For this election, what was the average district magnitude for seats in the lower (or unicameral) chamber of the legislature?

11) *Electoral system index (v2elloelsy):*

Lower chamber electoral system — 13 categories: What was the electoral system used in this election for the lower or unicameral chamber of the legislature?

Responses:

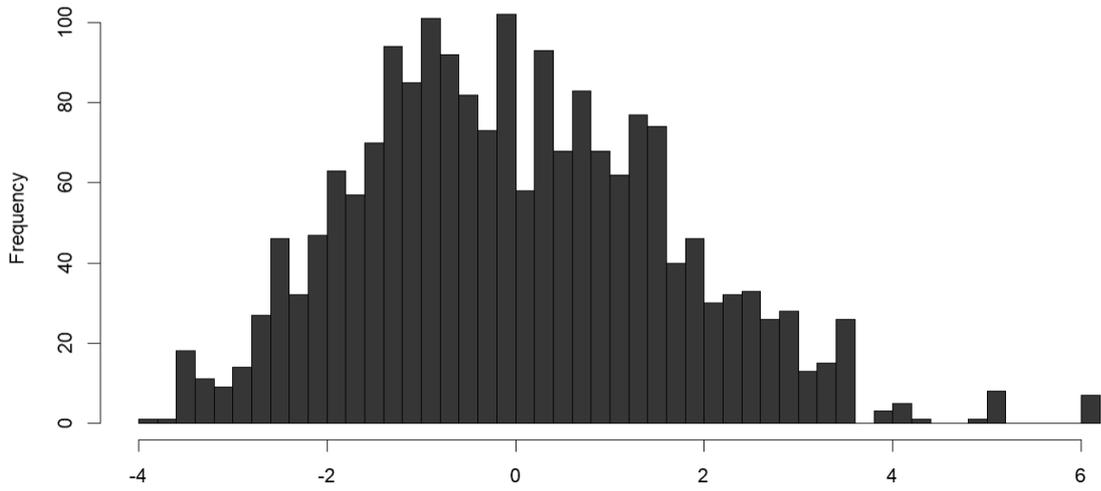
- 0: First-past-the-post (FPP, aka plurality) in single-member constituencies. The candidate with the most votes wins the seat.
- 1: Two-round system in single-member constituencies. Like FPP except that a threshold — usually 50% + 1 — is required to avoid a runoff between the two top vote-getters.
- 2: Alternative Vote in single-member districts. Voters rank-order their preferences for the candidates who compete for a single seat. If any candidate receives an absolute majority of first preferences, s/he is elected. If not, then the least successful candidates (based on first-preferences) are eliminated and their votes reallocated to the second-preferences. This process is repeated until a candidate reaches 50% +1 of the votes.
- 3: Block vote in multi-member districts. Electors have as many votes as there are seats within that district and can rank-order them (within or across parties) as they please.
- 4: Party block vote in multi-member districts. Voters cast a vote for a single party (but not for individual candidates within the party's list). The party with the most votes (i.e., a plurality) wins all the seats in that district.
- 5: Parallel (SMD/PR). Some seats are in single-member districts (allocated by FPP or two-round electoral rules) and other seats are in multimember districts (allocated by some form of PR). These districts are overlapping, meaning that each elector votes twice: once in the single-member district race and once in the multi-member district race. Results are independent.
- 6: Mixed-member proportional (SMD with PR compensatory seats). Some seats are in single-member districts (allocated by FPP or two-round electoral rules) and other seats are in multimember districts (allocated by some form of PR). These districts are overlapping, meaning that each elector votes twice: once in the single-member district race and once in the multi-member district race. Results are not independent. Specifically, the multimember seats are used to rectify disproportionalities achieved in the single-member district election — by adding seats, as necessary. This means that the representation of parties in the legislature is determined entirely by the PR ballot. It also means that the result of an MMP election is similar to the result of a PR election: parties achieve representation according to their nationwide vote share (on the PR ballot).
- 7: List PR with small multi-member districts (mean district size < 7). Each party presents a list of candidates for election within a district. Electors vote for a party, and parties receive seats in (rough) proportion to their overall share of the vote. Mean district size is less than seven.
- 8: List PR with large multi-member districts (mean district size > 7). Each party presents a list of candidates for election within a district. Electors vote for a party, and parties receive seats in (rough) proportion to their overall share of the vote. Mean district size is greater than seven.
- 9: Single-transferable Vote (STV) in multi-member districts. Electors rank-order candidates nominated for a district. Candidates that surpass a specified quota of first-preference votes are elected. The remaining seats are chosen by reallocating the votes of the least successful candidates to elector's second- (or third-) preferences until the specified quota is reached. This process is repeated until all seats for that district are filled.
- 10: Single non-transferable Vote (SNTV) in multi-member districts. Each elector chooses a single candidate. The candidates

with the most votes (a plurality) win. (The number of winners is of course determined by the size of the district.)
11: Limited Vote in multi-member districts. Electors have more than one vote but fewer votes than the number of seats in the district. The candidates with the most votes (a plurality) win. (The number of winners is of course

Source: V-Dem (2020) and V-Party (2020)

Appendix 3: Party-group linkages

Figure 9 – Party-group linkages



Source: V-Party (2020), n=1,922.

Appendix 4: Variables average by countries

Table 6 - Variables average by countries

	Countries	Party-group linkage	Party strength	Financial linkage	Magnitude Average (M)	Intraparty efficiency index	Candidate selection Inclusiveness	Intraparty cohesion	Number of Parties
1	Albania	-2.11	0.46	-1.43	11.7	-1.07	-2.09	-0.71	5
2	Argentina	0.65	0.45	-0.02	5.3	-1.07	1.69	-0.4	18
3	Austria	0.58	0.81	0.2	5.45	-0.02	0.95	0.67	8
4	Belgium	0.64	1.71	-1.57	12.7	-0.02	2.68	1.12	16
5	Bolivia	0.15	-1.39	-0.25	14.4	-1.07	-0.77	0.27	8
6	Brazil	-0.59	-0.92	-0.38	19	1.04	0.39	0.31	18
7	Bulgaria	-1.07	0.3	-0.22	7.7	-1.07	-0.85	-0.2	16
8	Chile	0.27	-0.37	0.39	3.5	0.27	0.29	-0.12	10
9	Colombia	1.15	-0.87	0.05	4.9	1.45	-0.17	-0.72	11
10	Costa Rica	0.69	-2.62	-0.52	8.1	-1.07	0.3	-1.11	9
11	Croatia	-0.83	0.86	-0.05	12.6	-0.23	0.14	0.61	16
12	Cyprus	0.7	1.59	-1.32	9.3	1.04	0.76	0.02	7
13	Czech Republic	-0.68	-0.57	-0.59	18	-0.02	0.99	-0.17	20
14	Denmark	0.08	-0.35	1.6	1	1.04	1.72	0.95	10
15	Dominican Republic	1.55	0.88	-0.1	4.7	0.12	1.21	-0.24	5
16	Ecuador	-0.92	-1.43	0.32	3.3	0.01	-1.6	0.6	27
17	El Salvador	1.31	0.79	0.01	4.8	-0.48	-0.25	-0.02	7
18	Estonia	-1.4	0.2	-1.17	8.4	1.04	0.61	0.03	20
19	Finland	0.74	-1	1.49	13.5	1.57	2.06	1.46	10
20	Greece	1.22	1.58	0.45	5.2	0.4	-0.5	-0.24	10
21	Guatemala	-0.59	-2.18	-0.79	5.7	-1.07	-1.26	0.92	28
22	Honduras	2.46	1.09	0.63	7.1	0.14	1.56	0.15	5
23	Iceland	0.47	0.35	-0.32	8.4	-0.02	1.58	1.26	11
24	Ireland	-0.5	1.52	0.88	3.9	2.1	1.42	1.28	6
25	Israel	-0.25	-0.08	-1.56	12	-1.07	-0.05	0.25	17
26	Italy	-0.64	-0.21	0.2	22	-0.73	1.35	-0.11	22
27	Japan	1.17	1.25	2.08	3.9	2.1	0.04	0.31	6
28	Kosovo	0.49	0.57	0.29	60	1.04	-0.84	0.1	10
29	Latvia	-0.71	0.22	0.15	20	-0.02	0.1	0.23	28
30	Luxembourg	-1.1	-0.98	0.27	15	1.04	1.34	1.69	6
31	Malta	1.5	1.07	0.97	5	2.1	-0.4	-0.21	2
32	Montenegro	0.55	1.38	-1.17	81	-1.07	-0.58	0.72	16

33	Netherlands	-0.96	-2.95	1.02	150	-0.02	1.31	0.78	8
34	Nicaragua	1.56	-0.14	-0.57	5.2	-1.07	-0.31	0.63	7
35	Norway	-1.47	0.91	-1.1	8.4	-1.07	1.34	-0.18	7
36	Paraguay	0.59	-0.23	-1.22	4.4	-1.07	2.48	-0.47	8
37	Peru	-1.1	-2.22	0.2	5.4	1.03	-1.4	0.88	25
38	Poland	0.16	0.39	1.04	10.8	1.39	0.06	-0.33	23
39	Portugal	1.12	1.72	0.14	10.5	-1.07	0.77	-0.91	5
40	Romania	-2.02	0.27	-0.64	7.7	-1.07	0.07	0.8	11
41	Serbia	-0.76	-0.3	-0.14	250	-1.07	-0.95	0.12	29
42	Slovakia	-1.17	-0.29	-0.98	150	-0.02	-0.12	-0.78	23
43	Slovenia	0.74	1.06	0.2	10	0.81	1.11	0.33	16
44	Spain	0.46	0.94	0.88	6.7	-1.07	0.68	0.26	11
45	Sweden	-0.69	0.04	-0.87	11.6	-0.02	1.32	0.01	9
46	Switzerland	2.42	1.11	5.22	7.7	1.04	1.32	-	17
47	Ukraine	1.42	0.62	0.02	450	-1.07	-0.7	0.54	5
48	Uruguay	1.62	-1.22	-1.14	5.2	-1.07	1.76	-1.04	5

Source: V-Dem (2021) and V-Party (2020).

Appendix 5: Panel Analyses

Table 3 - Results for Panel Analyses with Fixed Effects (2006 to 2019).

VARIABLES	
Electoral-system	
Magnitude_magnitude (M)	0.0159 (0.0352)
Modified intraparty efficiency index	-0.111** (0.0441)
Party organization	
Party strength	0.266*** (0.0453)
Internal cohesion	0.0133 (0.0145)
Financial linkage	0.0716** (0.0332)
Candidate selection inclusiveness	-0.0417 (0.0316)
Control-variables	
Division of power index (federal-unitary)	0.373 (0.293)
Educational equality	-0.0383 (0.0408)
Civil society index	-0.0898 (0.185)
Compulsory voting	-0.0371 (0.0824)
Presidentialism index	0.375 (0.255)
Observations	947
Number of political parties	414
R-squared	0.096

Standard errors in parentheses *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. **Source:** Author's elaboration from V-Party (2020) and V-Dem (2020) datasets. Dependent variable: party-group linkages.