

IPA: The Index of Presidential Authority.

Explorations into the measurement and impact of a political institution

By

Lars Johannsen

&

Ole Nørgaard

Department of Political Science
University of Aarhus, Denmark.

Prepared for the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops
Edinburgh, Mars 28–April 4, 2003

Constitutions matter

Constitutions matter for two reasons: they structure access and they empower political actors. They structure access because formal institutions prescribe which political actors may legitimately access and participate in decision-making and how they are to do it. And formal institutions empower actors because they provide legitimacy and formal rights to enter into political decision making and participate in implementation. Measuring the political effect of constitutions thus seems a fairly simple task, requiring only a matrix of formal institutions and actors in a given country context.

These general and elementary observations, however, become much more complex when applied to concrete research questions and incorporating the insights and controversies of new institutional theory. First, we face the question of constitutional validity. Is it the 'formal' institutions that are important when measuring the consequence of institutions? Or should we rather focus on the 'real' institutions: describe how decisions are made, by whom and with what degree of legitimacy (Lane, 1996)? Second, how do we measure institutional effects? How do we provide a valid and reliable measurement of the independent variable, the strengths and weaknesses of provisions embodied in particular constitutions and their concomitant impact on access, legitimacy and, ultimately, power of particular actors? Third, and related to the issue of validity: if we assume that observance and performance of constitutions are not constant but depend on the country context, what exactly is it in the context that makes 'the formal', respectively 'the real' institution important?

These questions will be addressed in this paper. Rather than dealing with the issues in the abstract or with constitutions in general, we apply the questions to the contentious issue of presidential versus parliamentary systems. The ambition is through this particular example to propose a solution to the issues of validity, reliability and context. Section one further elaborates on the theoretical assumptions behind the proposed measurement of presidential authority: the Index of Presidential Authority (IPA). Section two maps presidencies across the world based on the coding of 98 countries, while section three links IPA to outcomes. Section 4, finally, discusses the broader implications of IPA for the measurement of institutions and their effect.

There are three main arguments in the paper: (1) that IPA improves the institutional measurement of presidencies; (2) that this measurement improves our understanding of the character and role of constitutional systems, and (3) the IPA solution to the validity and reliability problems of institutional measurements may have broader implications.

Data and methodology

The purpose of this section is to clarify the theoretical preconditions of the Index of Presidential Authority, an index measuring the authority of a president in relations to other sources of power. First, we present a brief discussion of substantial arguments in previous research on the importance of the presidency-parliamentary nexus on outcomes. Next we criticize this tradition for not considering three methodological problems: the 'real' versus the 'formal' constitution dichotomy, the measurement problem, and for not considering the significance of country context for relations between formal and real constitutions. Finally, we define and stipulate the assumptions behind the IPA that will be explored in subsequent sections.

Presidents versus parliaments: anatomy of a discussion

The presidential-parliamentary dichotomy is arguably the most controversial issue in the literature on constitutions and constitutional design. While 'pure' presidential regimes with direct popular presidential election and total separation between legislative and executive powers is the most authentic manifestation of Montesquieu's trias politica, later discussions have been much more divided over the virtues and vices of presidential and parliamentary systems. Classical presidential systems all refer to the American constitution of 1787 and the first constitutional institutions in

France, which were later replicated in the Latin American regimes of the 19th century and post-colonial systems of the mid-late 20th century. Most recently, presidential regimes in more or less 'pure' variants have been instituted in a number of post-communist systems, in particular the former Soviet republics.

In particular the last two waves of presidential regimes, the post-colonial and the post-communist, have triggered a heated debate over whether parliamentary regimes with executives born of the legislature, or presidential regimes with a popular elected executive provide the best institutional framework for democratic and socioeconomic development. It has thus been argued that presidencies may provide the strength and political vigour needed to deal with the complex issues of development. A president may in addition to procedural legitimacy be charismatic, making it possible for him to handle conservative actors in society. This in particular is the core of Leftwich's (2000) argument about the developmental state, here replicating Myrdal's earlier argument (1968). Opponents of this view, as explicated the influential contributions of Linz (1990a; b) have focused on the danger of dual (and potentially conflicting) popular legitimacies between the legislature (and a prime minister) and the president, in particular in multiparty systems. Such conflicting legitimacies may, the argument goes, give rise to political instability, which again is damaging to economic investments and growth. This observation is primarily based on Latin American experiences. It has also been argued, however, that in particular presidential systems in post-communist countries are to a larger extent than parliaments exposed to capture from corporate economic groups embedded in the incumbent economic system, and that in this particular context parliamentary systems are conducive to democracy and development because popular enthusiasm and engagement here may offset the conservative influence of traditional industrial and political interests (Nørgaard, 2000; McFaul, 1994; Bruzst, 1992; Hellman, 1996). Still other authors have tried to strike more of a balance between the two regime forms, for example by arguing that having a strong executive may be advantageous under certain critical circumstances (high inflation, rapid liberalization) due their greater insulation from societal pressures, while long term structural adjustments fare better in parliamentary systems with closer contact to and legitimacy in broader groups in society (Haggard and Kaufman, 1992; Przeworski, 1991).

Finally, Lane and Ersson (2000) examined Linz' argument, i.e. the 'perils of presidentialism' and concluded that while there is a close relation between negative political and economic outcomes and the existence of presidential systems (but not multi party systems) they also pointed out that correlation is not causality, and that socio-economic development may be a cause rather than effect of regime type.

Caveats in measuring institutional effects

The debate over the virtues and vices of presidentialism and parliamentarism has, as we see it, not been settled because of three intractable issues: institutional validity, institutional reliability and the role of context.

First, the hypothesis of the institutional effects of presidentialism rest ultimately, as summarized by Lane and Ersson (2000: 51), on the assumption of 'opportunistic behaviour' and 'principal agent' relations. We assume, in other words, that political actors behave rationally in relation to the established institutional (constitutional) framework and that a presidential (or alternatively parliamentary) system is superior to other forms of government in channelling the preferences of the principal (electorate) into actions of the agent (the executive). However, the first part of this equation remains highly doubtful. As recently summarized by Finnemore (1996), 'Western style rationality [...] is not an unproblematic bureaucratic organization, as most organization theorists assume' (p. 330).. And further '... one central feature of Western culture is the value it places on rationality and purposive action. By rationality, institutionalists mean simply the structuring of

action in terms of ends and means [but] one does not have to read very far before discovering that Western-style purposive rationality is not so obvious or natural to non-Westerners (or indeed to Westerners, though they would be loath to admit it)' (p. 331). People may construct and adhere to institutions for many other reasons, for example 'in terms of roles, rituals, duties and obligations, that are not consequentialist in a Western rational way but are effective guides to social behaviour nonetheless' (p. 331). This anti-rationalist interpretation, which seems self-evident to those of us working in non-Western societies and is echoed in main stream public administration textbooks (Wilson, 2000), is (in behavioural terms) echoed by Lane and Ersson (2000) when they repeatedly state that the 'real' constitution is rarely the same as the formal paragraphs, and that it is only when constitutional behaviour is in accordance with constitutional norms that a constitution is a valid measurement of institutional effects. This is also the problem we encounter when institutions are transposed to different contexts, with unpredictable results as described in the emerging literature on policy and institutional transfer (Dolowitz and March, 2000; Riggs, 2000). The problem is that to know the validity of institutional arrangements we have to carry out detailed case studies that traditionally exclude systematic comparisons.

The second and related question is measuring institutional effects, the reliability problem. Only a few have attempted comparative, statistical testing of the competing hypotheses over the virtues and vices of presidentialism. Linz' influential contributions are for example based on insightful comparative case studies of developments in Latin America. Lane and Ersson (2000), regardless of their explicit distinction between formal and real constitution, apply the formal categorization of Derbyshire and Derbyshire (1996) of constitutions as independent variables in the constitution-outcome equation, the only implicit qualification being that the length of time a constitution has been in force is assumed to increase its validity by securing more political stability. Shugart and Carey (1992) attempt a more ambitious measurement of the strength of a president. They have for 35 countries with directly elected presidents mapped and coded executive and decision making capacities and used the resulting indexes to obtain an interval scale ranking of the observed countries. However, the inclusion of only 'pure' presidencies with direct election and the small number of countries included limits the value of their methodology for broader comparative purposes. The classical dichotomy is maintained also in the contributions by Stepan & Skach (1993) and Przeworski et al. (1996). Both contributions find parliamentarism to be more conducive than presidentialism to democratic development. However, Power & Gasiorowski (1997) concluded that no firm evidence was found when they examined the dichotomy or the form of government in conjunction with the format of the party system.

Third, if for the sake of argument we uphold that actors are rational and purposive, identical institutional arrangement will obviously produce different outcomes in different contexts. Hence, if we assume rational actors it is merely a technical (although not easy) task to identify those dimensions of context, and in particular constellation of actors, that will impact outcomes in particular constitutional settings. However, if we abandon the assumption of purposive action, we are again left with too many unknowns to solve the equation by systematic comparisons. Or we have to deal with 'the constitutional dialectics, where the real constitutions are more important in some situations and the written constitution is primary in other situations', as it is more casually described by Lane and Ersson (2000: 294). Under these assumptions we have to maintain that 'the effect of organizations is a function of their impact on the rules of the game and the cultural beliefs of the society within which this game is embedded' (Greif, 1994: 944). Thus, the core and still intractable issue is whether rationality, the structuring of action in terms of ends and means, is a universal constant or a cultural value that may or may not exist in a given society.

So how do we solve the problems of validity, reliability and context when analysing the effect on institutions and constitutions? The problem is, of course, that the only way to really find out if

constitutional provisions are 'real' or merely 'formal' is through careful case studies. However, it may be argued that the validity problem becomes bigger the more generalized categories we are dealing with. In other words, we may argue that if we use categorical variables constructed on the basis of one criterion (formal rules guiding principal agent relations: direct or indirect elections of heads of state) the problems of constitutional validity and reliability are unnecessarily grave. We believe, however, that if we disaggregate general categories into more specific institutional (constitutional) provisions we obtain two advantages that may partly solve the validity and reliability problems. First, by looking into more specific provision we speculate that the distance between formal and real institutions are reduced. This is based on an assumption that elements of context, the 'interpretable combinations of elements' explained by 'different configurations of a specific set of attributes' (Ragin, 1987: 66), which are indiscernible in general categories, will find their way into specific paragraphs. It is, for example, reasonable to believe that Greif's (1994) distinction between collectivist and individualist societies will be discernible in specific provisions, but not in general constitutional structures. The same will arguably apply to Wilson's (2000: 303-310) cultural categories in his textbook on public administration: deference versus self-assertiveness, formality versus informality, groups versus individuals and impersonal versus personal modes of government. Second, focusing on individual provisions also implies that we move from categorical to ordinal (or even interval) scale measurements, which will provide more precise measurements than when we apply broad categories as independent variables in the institution-outcome effect.

We believe that the Index of Presidential Authority as presented in the following section will to some extent help solve of the problems of validity, measurement and context when analysing the effect of institutions on outcomes.

Index of Presidential Authority: Data and methodology

"Authority is what legitimizes acts or commands; as such it must be differentiated from power which indicates capacity rather than rights" (Evans & Newnham, 1990). Or it is 'A combination of political power and legitimacy, where power is the ability to get things done and legitimacy is the quality of ascribed entitlement to exercise that power (Birch, 1993: 32)? Following these definitions authority reflects the possibility to act as regulated and legitimized by constitutional provisions. Authority may in this understanding be embodied in regulations of more or more or less direct relevance to power relations between institutions. Symbolic resources like bestowing honours or rewards will endow institutions with authority to the extent that the symbols in question are valued by society. Still, such resources are of course not as important as the direct power related to the right to appoint person to position of power or direct rights as sole or ultimate decision-maker or commander in chief. It is this understanding of the relation between authority and power that lay behind the attempt to construct an index to measure the strength of a presidency vis-à-vis other institutions in society.

The IPA is based on three assumptions about the links between formal and informal institutions:

1. The further we disaggregate institutions with wide-ranging qualities and effects into understandable, operational and sanctionable sub-institutions (provisions), the greater the likelihood that they will be observed by actors, and hence, the greater the likelihood that the aggregate measure of a formal institution can serve as a proxy for the real behaviourally defined institution.
2. The further we disaggregate institutions with wide-ranging qualities and effects into understandable, operational and sanctionable sub-institutions (provisions), the greater the

likelihood that we will be able to obtain accurate measures of the individual features in a manner that is replicable, and hence that the aggregate measure is reliable.

3. The further we disaggregate institutions with wide-ranging qualities and effects into multiple understandable, operational and sanctionable sub-institutions (provisions), the greater the likelihood that any deviation between individual formal provisions and the associated real behaviour will be randomly distributed and that the aggregate measure of the formal institution will be valid and reliable.

The Index of Presidential Authority (IPA) measures and compares Presidential Authority based on constitutional provisions in individual countries. The IPA is constructed using three main constitutional power resources, (S) symbolic resources, (A) appointive resources and (P) political resources. In addition, the IPA seeks to account for the method of presidential election (E (Direct election or elected by parliament)) and length of presidential term (L). Each power resource is calculated on the basis of a number of powers. The president can either possess a power in full, in a qualified form or not at all. In the first case the power counts 1, qualified form counts 1/2, and no such power equals no score.

A few examples may illustrate how scores are assigned and some of the problems involved. Among appointive powers is the power to appoint the Prime Minister. Although all countries in some form require that a government is eventually supported or approved by a parliamentary majority, the coding here represents whether the president is empowered to appoint the Prime Minister. In Russia the president appoints the Prime Minister and can do so without consulting with either parliament or political parties.¹ Hence in the Russian case the coding is 1. In contrast, the Slovenian constitution stipulates that the president shall name the Prime Minister after consultations with the leaders of the various political groups in parliament.² A similar procedure is set forth in the Moldovan constitution. Thus in these cases the item is coded as a qualified power (1/2). In Turkmenistan the president is the executive power and chairs the Cabinet of Ministers.³ In this respect the constitutional system of Turkmenistan is a classical 'pure' presidential system. Since the president is de facto also the Prime Minister, we have chosen to code the Turkmen case as a full power. This may actually be an understatement of the true power of the president, but to code it as missing or absent would underestimate presidential power in Turkmenistan even more.

The formula for the IPA is: $IPA = (1(\sum S_{1-7}) + 2(\sum A_{1-13}) + 3(\sum P_{1-17})) * E * L = IS / 336 * 100$, where IS is the index score in relation to the maximum possible value (336). Each power resource is weighted in the final calculation. S weights 1, A weights 2 and P weights 3 according to their more or less direct implications for political power. The election method multiplies by 2 when the president is directly elected, and the length of term (L) is multiplied by 1.1 where l is the number of years in a term. If the president is elected for life L=2. The IPA value for each country is pictured in Figure 1.

Coding based on constitutional documents can be tricky, as we have attempted to apply a uniform coding procedure to documents written in different traditions. Furthermore, the provisions are in some cases unclear and may have given rise to later interpretations by the respective Constitutional Courts. Moreover, we run the risk that parts of the constitutions are not codified.⁴ To reduce the errors that may accrue because of different traditions, language problems etc., we have first sought standardized translations, i.e. preferring to use the ICL standard whenever possible.

¹ The constitution of the Russian Federation. Articles 83 (a) and 111 (4).

² The Constitution of Slovenia. Article 111 (1)

³ The Constitution of the Republic of Turkmenistan, Article 74 and 75.

⁴ For example: the principle of parliamentarism, i.e. that a government must resign following a vote of no confidence, is not codified in the Danish constitution.

Second, we have made several pilot codings comparing independently made code sheets for the same country.⁵

Mapping presidencies

A breakdown of the powers vested in the presidencies reveals that no presidency is completely like any other, and that all are unique combinations of the 37 symbolic, appointive and political powers coded in the IPA. This does not imply, however, that presidencies cannot be compared with respect to the different aspects of authority, nor preclude that meaningful qualities and typologies of presidencies can be discussed. On the contrary, the following mapping of the world's presidencies shows that the IPA provides a much more nuanced and operational typology than classical distinctions between parliamentary and presidential systems do.

Presidential powers

None of the presidencies included in our coding has the full range of 37 symbolic, appointive and political powers. But no power can be said to be specifically presidential because it is accorded all presidents (table 1). A first impression is the great variation in the allocation of powers. However, it is also possible to identify powers more commonly vested in presidencies and powers that constitution makers have been more careful to vest in presidents.

Among the political powers vested in a president is normally the post of Commander in Chief of the armed forces, a right that is largely symbolic except in times of crisis. The importance is thus likely related to the circumstances of the crisis and, it can be hypothesized, to the general standing of the president within the armed forces. Considering the checks and balances system vis-à-vis the parliament, a majority of the presidents are equipped with veto-rights in some form and more than half possess legislative initiative either in their own right or in qualified form. The executive nature of presidencies is illustrated by the right of more than half the presidents to participate in cabinet sessions and slightly less than half by the right to convene cabinet sessions. However, in just about one fourth of the cases presidents can also issue decrees in non-emergencies, which may blur the distinction between the legislative and executive branches of government. Furthermore, some presidents have the right of direct appeal to the electorate by referendums, a right that can be used both in the populist form or in order to break a possible dead-lock with parliament.

The possibility to influence or to control appointments to other institutions are important parts of overall presidential authority. It is not merely a question of creating a presidential administration or filling vacancies with supporters, but is also a reward and punishment system that allows presidents to exercise influence, often even beyond their own term. The appointive powers allow most presidents participate in government formation and in naming members to the Constitutional Court and/or Supreme Court, whereas few presidents, even in a qualified form, participate in setting up the Electoral Commission.

Symbolic powers may be the least important of the three types coded in the IPA. However, this does not imply that these can be disregarded. Symbolic events can be used by presidents to send political signals and the granting of amnesties and citizenship are potentially highly controversial political decisions. When most presidents sign and/or promulgate laws this should be considered in conjunction with veto-rights, but even presidents who do not have veto-rights may turn signing events into political statements.

⁵ Ole Hersted Hansen, Adam Jacobsen, Lars Johannsen and Ole Nørgaard have made separate trials coding constitutions, which were subsequently compared. In addition, we compared our coding whenever possible with McGregor's (1993) and Frye's (1997) alternative indices for the post communist countries. Credit is due to Ole Hersted Hansen and Adam Jacobsen who after the trial cases made the actual casework.

Table 1: The Powers of the Presidency. Pct. (N=98)*

<i>Political Powers</i>	<i>Has</i>	<i>Qualified</i>	<i>Does no havet</i>
Commander in chief of the armed forces	83.7	6.1	10.2
Chairs the National Security Council	38.8	2.0	59.2
Remand laws for consideration	65.3	14.3	20.4
Sends laws to Constitutional Court	50.0	7.1	42.9
Proposes legislation	39.8	17.3	42.9
Issues decrees in non-emergencies	25.5	21.4	53.1
Proposes amendments to constitution	35.7	11.2	53.1
Calls special sessions of parliament	66.3	8.2	25.5
Assumes special powers if parliament is not in session or unable to convene	17.3	19.4	63.3
Assumes emergency powers at other times	31.6	32.7	35.7
Dissolves parliament and calls elections	16.3	40.8	42.9
Calls referendums	24.5	20.4	55.1
Participates in parliamentary sessions	24.5	0.0	75.5
May address or send messages to parliament	71.4	1.0	27.6
May convene cabinet sessions	46.9	1.0	52.0
Participates in cabinet sessions	51.0	1.0	48.0
May request reports from government	22.4	1.0	76.5
<i>Appointive Powers</i>	<i>Have</i>	<i>Qualified</i>	<i>Have not</i>
Prime Minister	53.6	24.7	21.6
Ministers	38.8	44.9	16.3
Caretaker government	8.2	1.0	90.8
Constitutional Court and/or Supreme Court	9.2	60.2	30.6
Electoral Commission	4.1	14.3	81.6
Ombudsman	1.0	15.3	83.7
Judges	17.3	38.8	43.9
Prosecutor General	11.2	32.7	56.1
Central Bank officials	8.2	25.5	66.3
Security Council	17.3	11.2	71.4
Senior Civil Servants	32.7	23.5	43.9
Senior Commanders	42.9	27.6	29.6
Ambassadors	48.0	35.7	16.3
<i>Symbolic Powers</i>	<i>Have</i>	<i>Qualified</i>	<i>Have not</i>
Awards decorations. Titles. Honors	48.0	13.3	38.8
Convenes constituent session of the parliament	43.9	2.0	54.1
Grants pardons and/or amnesties	62.2	26.5	11.2
Grants Citizenship	19.4	3.1	77.6
Grants asylum	17.3	0.0	82.7
Signs and/or promulgates laws	83.7	9.2	7.1
Receives oaths of office	32.7	1.0	66.3

*The figures are rounded up and it therefore do not always sum to 100 pct.

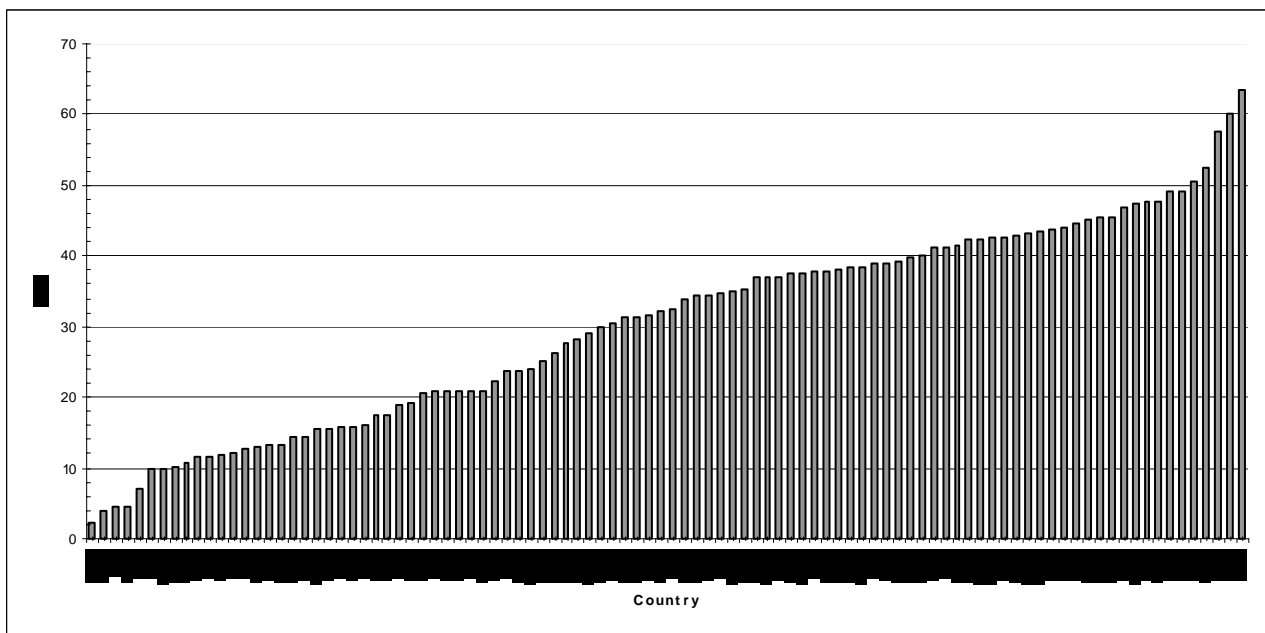
The individual powers, a select set or the breakdown of presidential powers into symbolic, appointive and political powers, may in their own right provide a basis for new comparative inquiries. That is not within the scope of the present paper, which is more concerned with the overall validity and reliability of the index and in illuminating its applicability to a select set of prominent discussions within the literature.

As a further inquiry into the validity and reliability of the IPA we looked into the political dynamics impeachment procedures. We assume that if otherwise powerful presidents are easily

removed from office the validity of the index would be inconsistent. However, it was in general observed that directly elected presidents are better protected against impeachment by complex procedures than indirectly elected presidents. There is a certain logic in this since parliaments who elect presidents can also withdraw their support, whereas it should be more difficult to remove a president with direct popular mandate. This lends further credit to, or at least is not inconsistent with, accepting the axiom that a direct mandate enhances the authority of a presidency when the sums of the symbolic, appointive and political powers are used to calculate the Index of Presidential Authority.⁶

The impression that some presidents commands little authority according to their country's constitution and that some are very powerful indeed is quickly grasped by looking at Figure 1, a graphic representation of the IPA for each country. At the extremes the presidents of Israel and India are among the least powerful, and those of Kazakhstan and Syria among the most powerful in the sample. Close to the mean (30.2) we find the presidents of Columbia and Ecuador.

Figure 1: The Index of Presidential Authority by country.



However, given the variation in the Index of Presidential Authority, and not least the variation in the different symbolic, appointive and political powers, it seem fair to claim that the classical distinction by method of election can at best provide a rough estimate. In particular, when we disregard the extremes we are left with a group of presidents who do play important roles within their political system but may not, according to the constitution, be neither movers and shakers nor only symbolic figureheads.

⁶ The main indices in the index are homogenous at a satisfactory level and constitute one dimension in a factor analysis. Certain problems appear with the length of the presidential term, which seems to introduce 'noise' and hence should perhaps be omitted from the index. But we have chosen not to alter the index calculation in this paper in order to evaluate the index performance when compared to the original research on the post-communist countries published in Nørgaard (2000) and Johannsen (2000).

Types of presidencies

In about three quarters of our cases presidents are directly elected. If the sums of symbolic, appointive and political powers are compared by method of election (Table 2), presidents with a direct mandate on average exercise a fuller range of rights, be it symbolic, appointive or political, than their indirectly elected colleagues. There is also a striking variation within the two groups, however. The minimum and maximum sums of symbolic, appointive and political powers across the two groups show that some indirectly elected presidents enjoy more rights than directly elected presidents.

Table 2: Symbolic, appointive and political powers by method of election

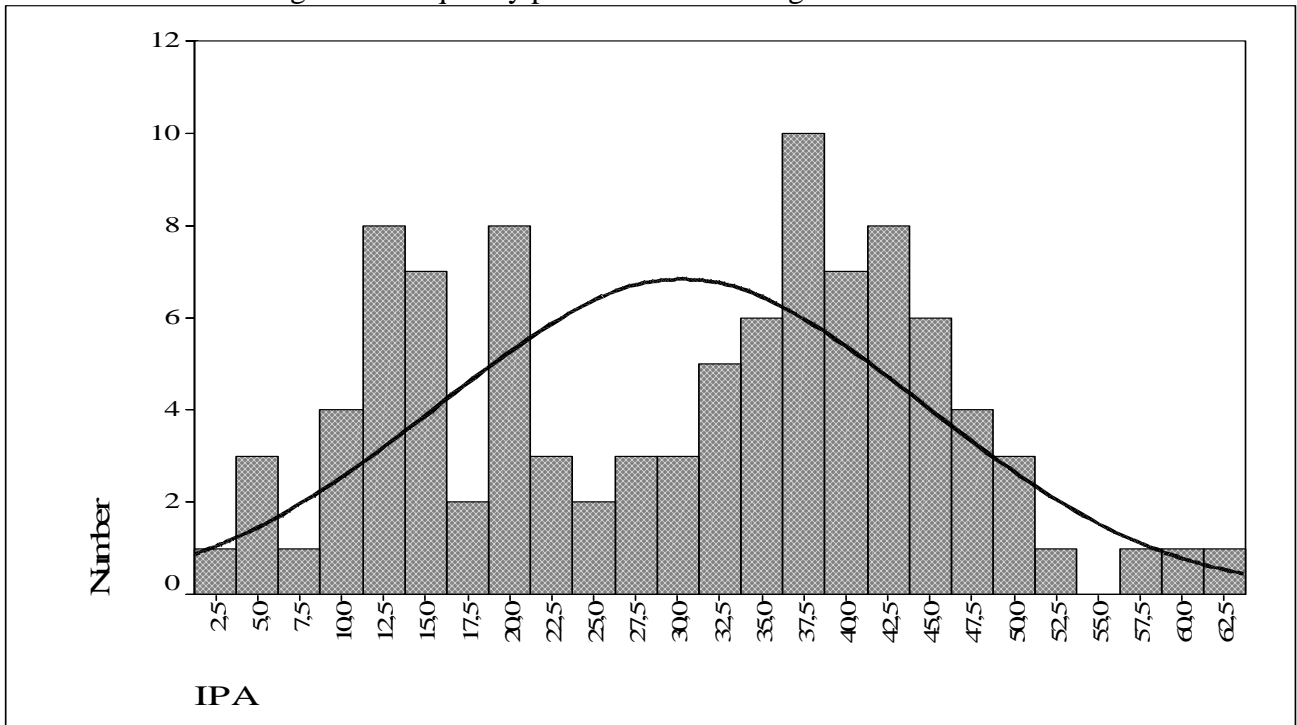
	Indirect election (N=25)	Direct election (N=73)	Total (N=98)
Symbolic			
-mean	3.02	3.46	3.35
-minimum	1.00	0.00	0.00
-maximum	5.50	7.00	7.00
Appointive			
-mean	3.72	5.03	4.70
-minimum	1.00	2.00	1.00
-maximum	8.00	8.00	8.00
Political			
-mean	5.46	9.05	8.14
-minimum	0.00	2.00	0.00
-maximum	10.00	16.00	16.00

Note: Significant mean differences are found between symbolic, appointive and political powers at 0.01 or better.

Furthermore, a frequency bar of the Index of Presidential Authority shows two peaks (Figure 2). These peaks indicate the existence of the traditional distinction, but equally important, a large number of presidencies fall between these peaks. Calling them neither fish nor fowl does not suffice. The in-between group thus encompasses indirectly elected presidents endowed with a rather extensive list of rights, making them a force within the political system, and directly elected presidents who, despite a popular mandate, have fewer rights than full executive presidencies.

A classical solution to differentiate this in-between-group was proposed by Duverger (1992) and further discussed by Sartori (1994). It distinguished between pure presidential systems and semi-presidential systems, in which an elected president shares executive power with the prime minister who, in turn, depends on the consent and support of a parliamentary majority (see Johannsen, 2000 for a discussion). However, some directly elected presidents have virtually no executive power. They serve as elected symbolic monarchs, and if they do have some executive power it is only the possibility to react, in a very limited sense, to the initiatives of the legislature and government. The problem remains to establish when executive power is shared in reality.

Figure 2: Frequency plot of IPA including the normal curve



To find a solution to these considerations we conducted a K-means cluster analysis, segmenting the cases by identifying relatively homogenous groups based on the characteristics of the IPA.⁷ Thus to paraphrase the division discussed above, 3 cluster centers are established as reported in Table 3. The table shows that the clusters are characterized by increasing symbolic, appointive and political powers, and hence by the overall political authority vested in the presidency.

Table 3: Presidential clusters: Types and means.

	Symbolic	Appointive	Political	IPA
1. Reactive and symbolic presidency (N=39)	2.85	3.51	5.18	15.04
2. Shared executive presidency (N=34)	3.15	4.95	8.87	35.13
3. Executive presidency (N=25)	4.40	6.20	11.76	47.26
Total (N=98)	3.35	4.70	8.14	30.23

In the first cluster, *reactive and symbolic presidencies*, comprises all 25 indirectly elected presidents. However, it should be noted that the group also includes 14 presidencies in which the president has a direct popular mandate. So knowing whether a president is directly or indirectly elected is not sufficient information to establish membership of the first group. With respect to the other two clusters, *shared executive presidency* and *executive presidency*, all presidents have a direct mandate, but it is only by looking at the total allocation of authority that group membership can be established. When a full cross tabulation on all the powers is made none of the powers is either necessary or sufficient information to establish membership of any group. For example, all executive presidents have some right of veto and participate in the nomination and appointment of

⁷ The use of variance statistics is admittedly rather opportunistic as the procedure attempts to form groups that do differ. It should be noted that we ran into problems when including the length of presidential term. However, a cross check of the clusters reveals that group membership is not altered if the length of the presidential term is dropped from the procedure. In any case this suggests that the power of the presidential term as a variable is very limited indeed.

the prime minister, but so do the majority of presidents who share executive power and a few reactive and symbolic president also have a say.

The IPA thus offers not only the possibility to escape the traditional dichotomy but can also be used to construct new typologies, here applied to specify the range of powers to attempt to distinguish between shared executive and executive presidencies.

Presidents around the world

The allocation of powers in the presidency differs from country to country and there are distinct differences between the regions of the world. In some regions presidents on average are not only more powerful than in other regions but there is also a corresponding a preference for a certain type of presidency (Table 4).

Table 4: IPA and type of presidency by region.*

	N	Mean				IPA	Cluster		
		S	A	P	1		2	3	
East Asia and Pacific	9	2.8	3.4	4.5	14.7	8	1	0	
Europe and Central Asia	28	4.6	5.5	9.3	34.9	10	4	14	
Latin America and Caribbean	19	2.5	4.4	7.2	27.2	9	9	1	
Middle East and North Africa	9	3.3	4.3	8.8	32.2	4	2	3	
South Asia	4	3.4	4.5	6.3	18.2	3	1	0	
Sub-Saharan Africa	29	2.9	4.7	8.8	33.5	5	17	7	
Total	98	3.3	4.7	8.1	30.2	29	34	25	

*Regions by World Bank regional code. Note: When testing the mean differences for IPA (anova, post-hoc) only the differences between Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe and Central Asian with East Asia and the Pacific are found to be significant at the 0.05 level or better.

The presidents of East Asia and South Asia are on average found to be the weakest, whereas the presidents in Europe and Central Asia together with their Sub-Saharan colleagues rank among the more powerful. However, because of the limited size of the subset and the division into no less than 6 regions few of the IPA means differences are found to be significant. Interesting research observations nevertheless turn up when the distribution on clusters is compared . First, the majority of the countries within the region of Europe and Central Asia are post-communist countries, and so it seems that the collapse of communism and the rewriting of the constitutions have resulted in a striking division of symbolic and executive presidencies. While not strictly following a geographical pattern CIS presidencies tend to be executive and Central and East European to be more symbolic or share executive power. Second, very few executive presidencies remain in Latin America. That region, which first gave rise to what has later been labelled the ‘perils of presidentialism’ (Linz, 1990a) has in the last two decades reduced the formal influence of their presidents.

The impact of constitutional system

The real test of the IPA as an institutional measure is to see if it provides new evidence in the debates about the impact of alternative constitutional structures. That is the purpose of this section, which looks into two of the core issues in the discussions about presidentialism versus parliamentarism: the impact on democratization and economic freedom.

Table 5 lists the bivariate correlations between presidential authority, democracy, economic development and economic freedom as a first estimate of the relationships. The direction of relationship is in all cases as expected. Democracy, economic freedom and prosperity are all

positively related.⁸ It is also shown that higher levels of presidential authority correspond to less economic freedom and (but not significant) to fewer political and civil rights.

Table 5: Bivariate correlations between GDP, Freedom House, Economic Freedom and IPA

	GDP Per Capita 1997 (PPP, Int\$)	Freedom House Ratings 1997-1998	Index of economic freedom 1997	IPA
GDP Per Capita 1997 (PPP, Int\$)	1,000	-,454**	,719**	-,217*
N	172	171	120	92
Freedom House Ratings 1997-1998	-,454**	1,000	-,617**	,134
N	171	192	122	98
Index of economic freedom 1997	,719**	-,617**	1,000	-,402**
N	120	122	122	67
IPA	-,217*	,134	-,402**	1,000
N	92	98	67	98

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The IPA does not as such provide any firm evidence to the debate begun by Linz⁹ about constitutional regimes and democracy. The use of Freedom House data in a cross sectional analysis does not, however, give full credit to the Linz' argument because the durability and stability of democracy is not considered. The stability of democracy is in itself a lengthy discussion (see, for example, Stepan and Skach, 1993; Shugart and Carey, 1992) and a test along these specifications will require a reorganization of the data presently available.

In our approach to the discussion about economic freedom we decided to use a univariate analysis of the presidential clusters because it allows for a direct control for economic affluence. It has long been established that more-well-to-do nations also have the most open economic environments and it is still an open question if economic freedom is fostered by socio-economic developments rather than by regime type.

The analysis shows (Table 6) that the symbolic and shared executive clusters are positively correlated with increasing economic freedom, and that higher levels of economic development are likewise associated with economic freedom. This means that we expect countries with symbolic presidencies to lie between 0.68 and 2.02 points higher on the Index of Economic Freedom than to countries with executive presidents. This is the theoretical estimate of the impact of form of government. Furthermore, the use of IPA generated clusters not only increases the explained variance compared with a regression on economic freedom with only GDP from 34.2 (ad. R^2) to 49.2 (ad. R^2), but equally important, a control analysis shows that if we instead apply the classical dichotomy the correlation is insignificant. Hence, the IPA has established a connection we could not see when we used the classical presidential-parliamentary dichotomy as independent variable.

⁸ Note that we have chosen not to alter the combined Freedom House ranking as a proxy for democracy (Gastil, 1991). That is, on a scale from 2 to 14 with 2 equalling full democracy and 14 full authoritarian regime. That is why the relation appears as negative in table 5. To measure economic freedom we apply the Index of Economic Freedom developed by the Fraser Institute (www.fraserinstitute.ca) under the direction of James D. Gwartney and Robert A. Lawson. Running from 0 to 10, higher numbers reflecting relatively more freedom, the index consists of 23 components reflecting institutional arrangements and policies with reference to 7 different areas of economic freedom.

⁹ A test using the presidential/parliamentary dichotomy shows that when controlled for the influence of GDP, neither the IPA generated clusters nor the dichotomy contributes significantly to the explanation.

Table 6. *Economic wealth, presidential authority and economic freedom. Univariate analysis upon economic freedom. 1997. N= 66**

	B	95% confidence interval		Between-subject effects significance
		Lower	Upper	
Intercept	-2.11	-1.60	0.53	0.115
GDP per capita (PPP, log)	0.90	0.58	0.53	0.000
Presidential Clusters				0.000
1.Symbolic/reactive	1.35	0.68	2.02	
2. Shared executive	1.08	0.40	1.76	
3. Executive†	.	.	.	

R Squared = ,492 (Adjusted R Squared = ,468); † The parameter is set to zero because it is redundant. Independent and dependent variables are coded from the same year. However, when measures for GDP per capita were not available, the decision was to use data from 1996 or 1998, or an average of the two if both were available.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to explore a strategy for measuring the effect of institutions, in the process overcoming the classical discrepancy and dilemma between formal institutions (which we can measure) and informal institutions, which are what really matter, but cannot be measured. To overcome this dilemma we established a three step procedure. First, we designed a procedure where we desegregated general typologies into variables consisting of specific and sanctionable rules and provisions. Second, we established conventions for measuring the difference between these variables. Third, we re-aggregate the variables into interval (or possibly ordinal) scale measures. This procedure will, we hypothesize, narrow the gap between formal and informal institutions, because people are more likely to adapt to concrete rules and provisions than to general typologies, and because we assume that context is reflected in the total set of rules To explore this assumption we replicated the classical analysis of categorization and impact of presidential versus parliamentary systems. For this purpose we disaggregated 98 constitutions into three categories of authority (symbolic, appointive and political), comprising altogether 39 provisions and rules (variables) to develop the Index of Presidential Authority, which again can be used to distinguish between segments of constitutional systems. Each variable was dichotomized and the scores eventually re-aggregated into overall country scores. The subsequent statistical analyses first demonstrated that the measure provided us with a much more nuanced picture of the occurrence of executive authority around the world than the traditional dichotomy. Secondly, we found a statistically significant negative relationship between strength of presidency and economic freedom that did not turn up we applied the classical dichotomy. We have so far not succeeded in establishing a clear relationship to democracy.

We find that this explorative analyses merits two conclusions. On methodology we find that our proposal to overcome the gap between formal and informal institutions should be explored further in other cases. Specifically on the strength of presidential authority, we find that the results merit further exploration into the relations and impacts of the IPA on other institutional and contextual variables.

References

- Birch, Anthony H. (1993). *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Democracy*, London: Routledge.
- Bruzst, L. (1992). 'Transformation Politics in East Central Europe', in *East European Politics and Societies*, 6 (1), pp. 52-70.
- Derbyshire, J. D. & I. Derbyshire I. (1996). *Political Systems of the World*. Oxford: Helicon.
- Dolowitz, David P. & David Marsh (2000). 'Learning from abroad: The role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making'. *Governance* 13 (1): 5-24.
- Duverger, Maurice (1992). 'A New Political System Model: Semi-Presidential Government', pp. 142-149 in Arend Lijphart (ed.), *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Evans, Graham & Jeffrey Newnham (1990). *The Dictionary of World Politics. A Reference Guide to Concepts, Ideas and Institutions*. New York: Harvester, Wheatsheaf.
- Finnemore, Martha (1996). 'Norms, culture, and world politics: insights from sociology's institutionalism'. *International Organization* 50 (2): 325-47.
- Frye, Timothy (1997). 'A Politics of Institutional Choice: Post-Comunist Precedencies', *Comparative Political Studies* 30 (5): 523-552.
- Greif, Avner (1994). 'Cultural beliefs and the organization of society: A historical and theoretical reflection on collectivist and individualist societies'. *The Journal of Political Economy* 102 (5): 912-950.
- Haggard, Stephan and Robert R. Kaufman (1992). 'The political economy of Inflation and stabilization in middle income countries', pp. 270-315 in S. Haggard and R. Kaufman (eds), *The politics of economic adjustments, International constraints, Distributive conflicts and the State*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Johannsen, Lars (2000). *The Constitution and Democracy: The Choice and Consequence of the Constitution in Post-Communist Countries*. Aarhus: Politica.
- Lane, Jan-Erik (1996). *Constitutions and political theory*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- Lane, Jan-Erik & Svante Ersson (2000). *The New Institutional Politics: Performance and Outcomes*. London: Routledge.
- Leftwich, Adrian (2000). *States of Development: On the Primacy of Politics in Development*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Linz, Juan J. (1990a). 'The Perils of Presidentialism', *Journal of Democracy*, Winter, pp. 51-69.
- Linz, Juan J. (1990b). 'The Virtues of Parliamentarism', *Journal of Democracy*, Fall, pp. 84-91.
- McFaul, Michael (1994). 'State Power, Institutional Change, and the Politics of Privatization in Russia'. *World Politics* 20: 210-43.
- McGregor, James (1993). 'How Electoral Laws Shape Eastern Europe's Parliaments', *RFE/RL Research Report* Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 11-18.
- Myrdal, Gunnar (1968). *The Asian Drama, I-III*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Nørgaard, Ole (2000). *Economic Institutions and Democratic Reform: A Comparative Analysis of Post-Communist Countries*. Ronald J. Hill, *Economies and Societies in Transition*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Power, Timothy J. & Mark J. Gasiorowski (1997). 'Institutional Design and Democratic Consolidation in the Third World', *Comparative Political Studies*, 30 (2): 123-155.
- Przeworsky, Adam (1991). *Democracy and the Market*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Przeworski, Adam, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub & Fernando Limongi (1996). 'What makes Democracies endure', *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (1): 39-55.
- Ragin, Charles C. (1987). *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press.
- Riggs, Fred W. Exporting Governance? [Web Page] (2000). Accessed December 2002. Available at: <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~fredr/aladin.htm>.
- Sartori, Giovanni (1997) (1994). *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An inquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes* Vol. 2. Houndsmill: Macmillan Press.
- Shugart, Matthew Soberg & John M. Carey (1992). *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Stepan, Alfred & Cindy Skach (1993). 'Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarianism versus Presidentialism', *World Politics* 46 (1): 1-22.
- Wilson, James Q. (2000). *Bureaucracy*. New York: Basic Books.