

October 21, 2025

Dear Deepika Acharya,

Thank you for considering my manuscript for publication in the *Journal of Political Science and Public Opinion*. I appreciate the reviewers' insightful comments on how to improve the paper. I have carefully incorporated their suggestions in my revisions, and the manuscript is significantly better as a result.

In this memo, I describe how I addressed the concerns of the reviewers in the revised manuscript.

Note that each of the reviewers provided feedback on the paper's title. Collectively considering all of these suggestions, I changed the title of the article to the following:

“Party Institutionalization and the Effect of Winning and Losing an Election on Satisfaction with Democracy in the Americas”

Thank you.

Reviewer 1

1. Reviewer 1 requested that I rewrite the abstract in the following ways.
 - a. The reviewer noted that the abstract could more clearly indicate how party institutionalization conditions the impact that winning or losing has on satisfaction with democracy.
 - b. The reviewer also noted that I should add a few details about the methodological strategy in the abstract.
 - c. The reviewer noted that I could add a more detailed definition of party institutionalization.
 - d. And the reviewer noted that I could add a discussion of how the findings of the paper have broader impacts for democratic outcomes in general.
 - e. To incorporate this feedback, I rewrote the abstract.
 - f. Here is the new abstract:

The body of scholarship on satisfaction with democracy has long recognized that election winners (or voters who vote for the winning candidates or parties) are more satisfied with democracy after an election than losers (or voters who vote for the losing candidates or parties) are. While winning might have a positive impact on satisfaction with democracy, the exact impact it will have will vary cross-nationally. In this article, I examine how party institutionalization conditions how winning impacts satisfaction with democracy. In countries with more institutionalized parties, party labels are meaningful and inform voters about the policies parties pursue in office. Hence, election winners should be more satisfied with democracy than losers are, as the winning party is likely to pursue the policies the winners prefer. In contrast, in countries with less institutionalized parties, party labels are less meaningful, so voters may not have the same expectations about the policies parties will pursue in office. As such, the impact of winning or losing on satisfaction should be minimal. Using data on

satisfaction with democracy in democracies in the Americas from the *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems* (CSES) dataset, and data on party institutionalization from the *Varieties of Democracy* (2022) dataset, I find that the positive impact of being an election winner has an increasingly positive impact on satisfaction with democracy as party institutionalization increases. The results of this analysis illustrate how party institutionalization could actually produce negative outcomes for voters who voted for losing parties.

2. Reviewer 1 noted that some portions of the paper seemed repetitive or redundant.
 - a. To incorporate this feedback, I made the following changes in the manuscript:
 - i. I re-wrote the “Introduction” to make it sound less repetitive and mechanical.
 - ii. I re-wrote sections of the theoretical argument to make the manuscript less redundant and less repetitive. See Page 5, Paragraph 2 and Page 6, Paragraph 1.
3. Reviewer 1 stated that Figures 1-3 were missing from the manuscript.
 - a. Figure 1 is on Page 8.
 - b. Figure 2 is on Page 14.
 - c. Figure 3 is on Page 14.
4. Reviewer 1 suggested that I remove Footnotes 2 and 3 and instead incorporate the information in the text of the paper and in the appendix.
 - a. To incorporate this feedback, I moved Footnotes 2 and 3 to the main text of the paper. See Page 9.

Reviewer 2

5. Reviewer 2 suggested that I streamline overlapping explanations of winners versus losers across sections.
 - a. To incorporate this feedback, I re-wrote sections of the theoretical argument to better connect the explanations of the theoretical argument across different sections of the paper. See Page 5, Paragraph 2 and Page 6, Paragraph 1.
6. Reviewer 2 suggested that I highlight key findings in the discussion of the results.
 - a. To incorporate this feedback, I expanded the discussion of the results in the “Results” section.
7. Reviewer 2 suggested that I make the conclusion slightly more concise.
 - a. I appreciate the reviewer’s suggestion. I revised the “Conclusion” to remove any unnecessary or excessive language.

Reviewer 3

8. Reviewer 3 suggested I re-run the models, only including countries with multiple elections over time.
 - a. I re-ran the models, only including countries with multiple elections. I now discuss the results of this analysis in the robustness check section (see Pages 12 and 15). I include the results of the analysis in Appendix B.
 - b. Note that the results were substantively the same as the original models.
9. Reviewer 3 suggested I re-run the models, excluding the United States and only including the Latin American countries.

- a. I re-ran the models, excluding the United States. I now discuss the results of the analysis in the robustness check section (see Page 15). I also include the results of the analysis in Appendix C.
 - b. The results of the analysis were substantively the same for Models 1 and 3. They were slightly different for Models 2 and 4. In those models, regardless of the level of party institutionalization, winners were simply more satisfied with democracy than losers were.
- 10. Reviewer 3 asked if I use the value for the party institutionalization variable for each country-election or use a single value per country.
 - a. I did not use a single value for each country. Instead, I used the value for each country-year in the V-Dem dataset.
- 11. Reviewer 3 requested a more detailed discussion of what typically led to changes in party institutionalization in a country over time.
 - a. The party institutionalization variable did not change much at all in the countries I examined in the analysis. The only countries that experienced any noticeable changes were Peru, the US, and Mexico. But these changes were very small (less than 0.07 difference from one year to the next).
 - b. There was a slight decrease in the variable for Mexico when Morena won the presidential election. Nevertheless, the other traditional parties (i.e. PRI, PAN, etc.) in Mexico still existed and were competitive in other elections at that time. As such, I think this is the reason why the variable did not change that much during that election cycle.
 - c. Now that Morena has won two presidential elections and is more competitive in other elections, it may be becoming more institutionalized. And the other parties may be becoming less institutionalized. But there has not been enough time to make that assessment. As such, it is unclear whether Morena's success during the last two presidential elections indicates a short-term fluctuation in party institutionalization in Mexico or a long-term shift.
- 12. Reviewer 3 would like a case study to examine how party institutionalization led to changes in how the winner-loser gap influenced satisfaction with democracy over time.
 - a. Since none of the countries experienced large, permanent changes in party institutionalization in the dataset over time, it is not possible to analyze how changes in party institutionalization in the long term affected how winning influences satisfaction with democracy.
 - b. Nevertheless, in the "Conclusion" of the paper, I now note that a future study could examine how short-term and long-term changes in party institutionalization over time could influence how winning impacts satisfaction with democracy in a country.
- 13. Reviewer 3 noted that the fixed effects were significant and questioned why this was the case.
 - a. I re-ran the models without the fixed effects, and the main results were substantively the same as the original models. As party institutionalization increases, the positive effect of winning on satisfaction increases. See Appendix D for the results.

- b. The R-Square values were somewhat larger in the original models, implying that the fixed effects in the original models were capturing some differences in cross-national variation in satisfaction with democracy.
 - c. Additionally, the results for the control variables were different in the models without fixed effects. The coefficient for *GDP per Capita* lost significance in Models D1 and D3, and the coefficient for the *Unemployment Rate* lost significance in Models D2 and D3. And the coefficient for *Age of Democracy* became positive. Hence, including the fixed effects affected the results for the control variables, but not the main variables of theoretical interest (i.e. *Winner* and *Party Institutionalization*).
 - d. I discuss these new results in the “Robustness Check” section of the article (Page 15).
14. Reviewer 3 asked for summary statistics on satisfaction with democracy and institutionalization by country-year. And Reviewer 3 asked if satisfaction changed over time.
- a. I display the distribution of *Satisfaction with Democracy* for winners and losers for each election year in the histograms in Figures E1-E15 in Appendix E. I display each country from the lowest average level of party institutionalization (Peru) to the highest average level (Uruguay). I display the first-round models first and the second-round models second.
 - b. Overall, as party institutionalization increases, winners become increasingly more satisfied with democracy.
 - i. Overall, there seems to be a limited difference in satisfaction with democracy between winners and losers in the countries with the lowest levels of party institutionalization (i.e. Peru and Costa Rica). But in the countries at the highest levels of party institutionalization, there are large differences (i.e. the US, Chile, and Uruguay).
 - ii. Nevertheless, the extent to which there is a gap between winning and losing varies from year to year in the countries with the most institutionalized parties. These variations might be partially explained by economic factors, which are included in the models in Table 1.
 - 1. In the US models, the gap in satisfaction between winners and losers declines over time. The unemployment rate in the US also rises slightly over time. And in 2020, it was high due to the pandemic. Hence, overall satisfaction with democracy may have declined due to a rise in unemployment, which the statistical models in Table 1 captured.
 - 2. With respect to Uruguay, there was a shift in the results between the third and fifth modules. The results were somewhat stronger in the third module. If I had to speculate, this was likely due to the popularity of the incumbent presidential candidate, José Mujica, in the election in Module 3. Economic conditions in Uruguay improved dramatically during his first term. But in the statistical model, I only account for economic factors in the year the survey was conducted in each country. So, the statistical model did not take Uruguay’s prior economic growth into account in Module 3.

Additionally, economic conditions had slightly declined in Uruguay by the election in Module 5.

- a. Background information about President José Mujica:
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0j71402z58o>
3. Explaining the changes in Chile between Modules 2 and 5 is a bit more nuanced. In the election in Module 2, Chile had just elected its first woman president, Michelle Bachelet, a socialist. It is possible that this had a positive impact on satisfaction with democracy. The results for the election in Module 5 were different. While a coalition of right-leaning parties supported the winning candidate in Chile in 2017, the candidate himself (Sebastián Piñera) was an independent. Hence, the linkages between the candidate and the voters may have been weaker because of this independent status (even though he had an electoral alliance with institutionalized parties), reducing the impact that his winning had on satisfaction with democracy.
- c. I discuss these new results in the “Robustness Check” section of the article (Page 16).

Reviewer 4

15. Reviewer 4 suggested I rewrite the introduction to make it less repetitive.
 - a. Several reviewers noted that the paper was a bit repetitive overall. To incorporate this feedback, I made the following changes in the manuscript:
 - i. I re-wrote the “Introduction” to make it sound less repetitive and mechanical.
 - ii. I re-wrote sections of the theoretical argument to make the manuscript less redundant and less repetitive. See Page 5, Paragraph 2 and Page 6, Paragraph 1.
16. Reviewer 4 suggested I add a discussion about the link between ideology and policy.
 - a. I now include a few sentences about the links between ideology and policy in the theoretical argument. See Pages 5 and 6.
17. Reviewer 4 suggested I add a discussion of the accuracy of self-reports of voters’ choices.
 - a. I now include a discussion of self-reports of vote choice on Page 9 of the manuscript.
18. Reviewer 4 suggested I discuss the impact of the economic control variables earlier in the manuscript.
 - a. To incorporate this feedback, I moved the discussion of how economic factors influence satisfaction with democracy to the beginning of the “Satisfaction with Democracy” literature review section early in the paper.
19. Reviewer 4 suggested I discuss the role of elections in satisfaction with democracy in the “Conclusion”.
 - a. At the end of the “Conclusion,” I now include a discussion of the role that elections play in a democracy, and how party institutionalization can influence the role that elections play.

20. Reviewer 4 suggested I discuss the implications of satisfaction with democracy for democratic legitimacy and stability in the “Introduction”.
 - a. In the fourth paragraph of the “Introduction,” I add two sentences that focus on how the article’s findings have implications for democratic legitimacy.
21. Reviewer 4 suggested I incorporate *Majority Rule* by Elaine Spitz to flesh out the discussion of various types of democracy and the importance of competitive elections.
 - a. I now include a short discussion of Spitz in the “Introduction,” theoretical argument, and the “Conclusion.”