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# New Tools in Comparative Political Economy: The Database of Political Institutions

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## Abstract

This article introduces a large new cross-country database, the Database of Political Institutions. It covers 177 countries over 21 years, 1975–95. The article presents the intuition, construction, and definitions of the different variables. Among the novel variables introduced are several measures of checks and balances, tenure and stability, identification of party affiliation with government or opposition, and fragmentation of opposition and government parties in the legislature.

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