

Political party internationals (PPIs)--transnational membership-based organizations made up of political parties--have been largely written off by scholars as glorified talk shops and imperfect agents for the ideological socialization of parties. Yet their ranks have swelled in recent decades, especially among parties from the Global South. What explains this development? I argue that PPIs can serve as critical venues for networking and advocacy by opposition parties, who can use them to cultivate international allies and encourage foreign pressure on the autocratic incumbents they challenge. In this paper, I present original cross-national data on PPI membership over time, demonstrating the dramatic growth of PPIs since the late-1980s and their increasing regional diversity. I also show that membership in a PPI is associated with democratic deficits and related issues being raised by allies in venues such as the European Parliament. I supplement this analysis with insights from qualitative interviews with politicians and PPI staff, demonstrating the extent to which these organizations can serve as useful venues for opposition networking and solidarity. In contrast to the limited previous work on these organizations, I demonstrate that PPIs have an important role in international politics with particular implications for domestic developments in autocracies.