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Introduction

In every pure parliamentary system a vote for any particular legislator – or for the party's list – is indirectly a vote for that party's leader as candidate for prime minister. In a sense, a "perfect correlation" exists between that party's votes for executive and legislative candidates. Yet in systems with popularly elected presidents, parties cannot take for granted the automatic alignment of the electoral bases of their executive and legislative "branches." Indeed, the notion of presidential coattail effects – well known to even casual observers of elections in presidential democracies – suggests that in such systems parties *expect* variation between their executive and legislative vote totals. When voters have two ballots, parties must hope that their presidential candidates encourage voters to *also* cast votes for their candidates in the legislative race.

In light of this fact, consider the 2006 reelection of Brazil's incumbent president, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva. At the same election, the party that Lula had helped found in the late 1970s and had led for over a decade, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party, PT), won the largest share of votes in Brazil's legislative elections. Yet while Lula won 49% of the votes, his party won only 15% that same day. Even more remarkably, in constituencies where Lula did well, the PT did poorly. That is, in 2006 there was a *negative* correlation between Lula's performance and the PT's performance, wholly contradicting the notion of presidential coattails. As we show in more detail in Chapter 5, a result as divergent as this is unusual but not unheard of. Such electoral outcomes reveal that under presidentialism the electoral bases – and presumably the policy preferences – of different "branches" of the same party can

diverge widely. In parliamentary systems such electoral divergence – and the resulting policy divergence between a prime minister and his or her party's median member – is, quite simply, impossible to imagine.[1]

Separate presidential and legislative elections can also cause partisan forces to realign in ways they would not in a pure parliamentary system. Consider the process of government formation after Romania's 2004 elections. Prior to the election the ruling Social Democratic Party and the Humanist Party joined forces in a coalition and explicitly agreed to form a government if they were to win the elections (BBC Monitoring Europe 2004c). Such pre-electoral alliances are common in parliamentary democracies; parties typically honor these agreements by apportioning ministries and other portfolios (Carroll 2007). Together these two parties won a plurality of 40% of the seats, and their presidential candidate emerged in the first round with an eight-point lead over the candidate from the opposition Democratic Party. Given the results, these parties immediately prepared to form a government, with the aid of several smaller parties.

However, Romania's requirement that presidents obtain an electoral majority threw a wrench into those plans, because the Democratic candidate, Traian Băsescu, came from behind to beat the Social Democrats' candidate in the runoff. The Democratic Party had won only 14% of the seats, and its own coalition partner – the National Liberal Party – had won another 19%. Băsescu became president but appeared headed for a situation of "cohabitation" in which he would have confronted an assembly controlled by the Social Democrats and the Humanists. However, he avoided cohabitation by first nominating as premier the leader of the National Liberals and then by convincing the Humanists to break their agreement with the Social Democrats and join his government. The results of the direct presidential election thus not only took government formation out of the hands of the largest parliamentary party and the largest parliamentary coalition, but also served to break a pre-election agreement, altering the partisan balance of forces that *parliamentary* coalitions and *parliamentary* elections had established.

In these two examples, direct presidential elections produced results that are unthinkable in pure parliamentary systems. A party as small as Lula's Workers Party likely could not have headed a parliamentary government and certainly could not have done so had there been a negative

[1] In Brazil, tension between presidents and their parties is not new: President Getúlio Vargas (1950–54) went so far as to commit suicide in the presidential palace because he felt betrayed by his allies.

correlation between its leader's popularity and the party's popularity. Similarly, without a presidential runoff election, a small party like the Democrats or Liberals in Romania would have almost no chance to form a government, since two larger parties had already formed a coalition and were close to reaching a majority.

Now consider a case of parliamentary democracy, and of a prime minister – Margaret Thatcher – who was so famous for her strong-willed leadership that she was known as the Iron Lady and was sometimes said to exert a presidential style of leadership.[2] Despite the moniker, Thatcher's political authority vanished in 1990, three and a half years after her third-straight landslide election win, when her Conservative Party colleague Michael Heseltine challenged her in the Conservative Party's annual internal leadership election – a process that normally simply reaffirms the incumbent's leadership for another year. Heseltine's challenge failed, but his effort served to expose Thatcher as politically vulnerable – and led her to resign as Conservative leader.

Because the leader of the majority party in the British parliament automatically becomes prime minister, Thatcher also immediately resigned from that position, more than two years before the next scheduled parliamentary election. That is, the UK changed its national executive because of a regularly scheduled *intraparty* leadership election, outside of any formal parliamentary procedure and without any direct public input. Such events are fairly common in parliamentary systems. However, as we detail in Chapter 4, we found only one case in the modern history of democratic government in which purely intraparty squabbles forced an incumbent president from office early. After a presidential election, intraparty accountability virtually ceases, because once in office parties cannot "fire" their leaders as presidents.

These three examples illustrate the main point of this book: *parties and party politics differ under different constitutional formats*. Conventional political science wisdom preaches that mass democracy is impossible without political parties. We agree, because parties – defined as organizations that "seek benefits derived from public office by gaining representation in elections" (Strøm 1990, 574) – fulfill all the key functions of democratic governance. They nominate candidates, coordinate election campaigns, aggregate interests, formulate and implement policy proposals, and manage government power. When scholars first asserted the essential connection between political parties and modern

[2] See for example, Poguntke and Webb eds. (2005), p. 21.

democracy, most of the world's democracies were parliamentary. Yet, as we shall see below, by the end of the 20th century most democracies had directly elected presidents. Given this, if parties are truly critical to democracy, then a systematic understanding of how presidencies shape parties is long overdue. Providing a framework for analysis that fills this gap is the reason we wrote this book.

DEMOCRACIES WITH ELECTED PRESIDENTS ARE NOW IN THE MAJORITY

The great increase in the number of democracies in recent decades is by now well known and much celebrated (Huntington 1991; Geddes 1999). What is less well recognized is the dramatic evolution of the types of democracy throughout this period: where parliamentarism once was the rule and presidentialism the exception, forms of presidentialism now dominate. Throughout this book, we consider a country democratic if it scores at least 5 on the Polity IV scale for five or more years (a typical term length) in the post-war era.[3] Before proceeding further, we provide working definitions of each type of democratic regime. We develop these definitions more fully in Chapter 2, but by way of introduction we summarize the basic distinctions as follows: In a "pure" parliamentary democracy the executive branch consists of a prime minister and cabinet who are collectively responsible to parliament through the confidence mechanism, by which a parliamentary majority may remove and replace the executive between elections.

The other "pure" type, presidentialism, features both separate origin and separate survival of the executive branch. Separate origin means citizens separately elect both the executive and legislative branches of government – usually through direct universal suffrage.[4] Separate survival means that an assembly majority cannot remove the head of the executive branch. In other words, the executive's term in office is fixed – as is the legislature's term, unlike in most parliamentary systems.

[3] As of 2007; see http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm.

[4] An electoral college that consists of legislators or other politicians would not qualify as either direct or separate. However, an electoral college that mediates between popular votes and the final selection of a president (i.e., one that cannot propose candidates who did not seek popular votes) is still "separate election" for our purposes. Among the countries covered in this book, only the United States still has an electoral college and thus we frequently use the term "directly elected" to emphasize the absence of a role for legislators or other officials in the determination of a president (with occasional exceptions noted).

The third main type, semi-presidentialism, shares with pure presidentialism the separate election of a president who is head of state, but also shares with parliamentarism a prime minister who is head of government and who is, along with the cabinet, responsible to the assembly majority (Duverger 1980). In Chapter 2 we provide more details about all three of these democratic regime-types and various hybrids; for now, the key point is that semi-presidential systems share two critical characteristics with pure presidential systems: separate election and separate survival of the president.

As we discuss in detail in Chapter 2, the differences among these three regime-types have important implications for political parties. Changes in the distribution of democratic regime-types in the past few decades provide good reason to pursue the connection between democratic regime-type and party politics. Figure 1.1 shows that parliamentarism has lost its dominance among the world's growing number of democracies relative to pure and semi-presidentialism. In 1950 there were 20 democracies, twelve of which were parliamentary. The number of democracies doubled by 1983, and fully half remained parliamentary. Yet since that year the percentage of parliamentary democracies has never exceeded 50%. Democratization in Latin America in the 1980s moved presidentialism into second place among the three main types, but democratization in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s gave semi-presidentialism the lead among democracies with elected presidencies. As the 21st century dawned, semi-presidentialism gained a narrow plurality of all the world's democracies, and by 2005, there were eighty-one democracies by our criteria, of which 29 were semi-presidential, 28 parliamentary, and 24 pure presidential – meaning 65.4% of all democracies had directly elected presidents.

Despite the sustained growth in the absolute and relative number of democracies with elected presidencies, comparativists lack theoretical understanding of how political parties operate in such systems. Scholars have paid considerable attention to the ways in which different democratic regimes impact politics. Major topics in this literature include whether differences between presidentialism, parliamentarism, and semi-presidentialism affect regime survival, policy stability or change, or the possibilities of democratic representation and accountability.[5] Yet scholars of political parties have yet to focus much attention on how, why,

[5] See e.g. Cheibub (2006); Haggard and McCubbins (2001); Persson and Tabellini (2002); Samuels and Shugart (2003); Samuels (2007).

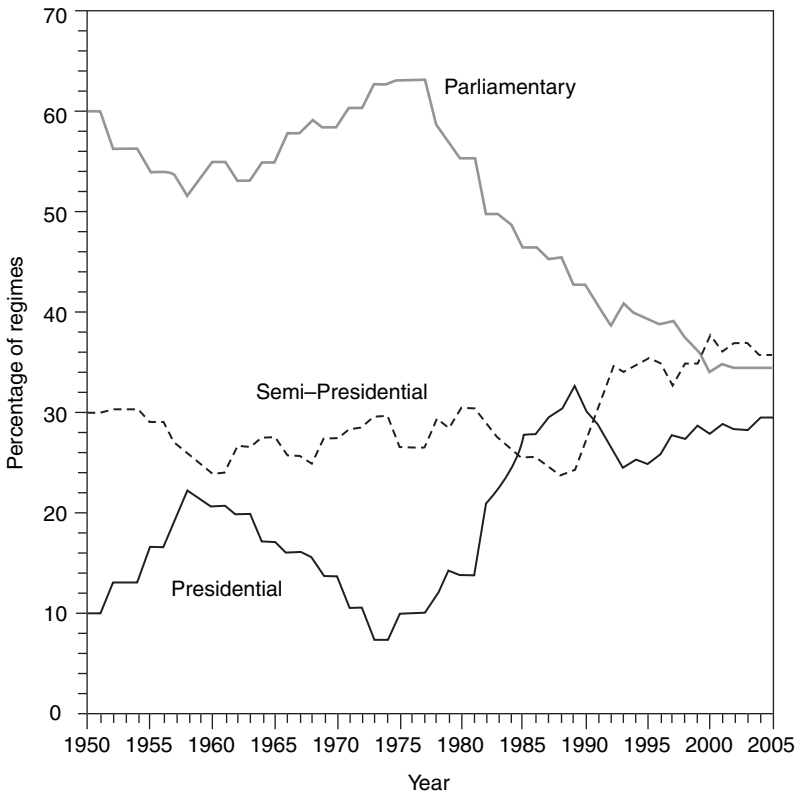

FIGURE 1.1. Percentage of Democratic Regimes by Executive–Legislative Structure, 1950–2005.

and to what extent *political parties themselves* differ under different democratic institutional contexts.

This book focuses on the phenomenon we call the "presidentialization" of political parties. We define presidentialization as *the way the separation of powers fundamentally shapes parties' organizational and behavioral characteristics, in ways that are distinct from the organization and behavior of parties in parliamentary systems.* Before explaining this concept in more detail, we briefly review scholarship on comparative political parties, focusing on the ways scholars have both ignored and taken into account variation in executive–legislative structure.

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE MISSING VARIABLE OF REGIME-TYPE

Scholars have been exploring party politics for over a century. Yet most comparative scholarship on parties, party systems, and party-voter linkages has little or even nothing to say about the relationship between democratic regime-type and the parties that operate within those institutions.[6] Some scholarship goes so far as to explicitly dismiss the potential impact of constitutional structure on party politics or party-system development. Even Maurice Duverger (1954) – though remembered as a founder of modern institutionalist research in political science – ignored the separation of powers in his classic book, a fact that attracted prominent criticism at the time (Beer 1953) but has gone largely unexplored since.[7] Duverger even ignored the impact of regime-type on parties in the widely cited article in which he introduced the concept of "semi-presidential" government (Duverger 1980).

The most important reason scholars have not considered the influence of the separation of powers on parties is because comparative research on parties is intellectually rooted in the historical experience of Western Europe, where parliamentarism dominates (Janda 1993). The classics in the literature on parties all implicitly assume that the study of parliamentary parties *is* the study of political parties.[8] Even when such research focuses on party organizations as institutions, by omission it assumes away the possibility that the separation of powers might matter.[9] In any case, the starting point for much research is not *institutional* structure but rather *social* structure, focusing on how cultural and economic cleavages translate into parties and party systems. Research on the emergence and evolution of party "types" reflects this focus. Thus, regardless of the geographic or institutional context,

[6] See e.g. Janda (1993); Ware (1996); Stokes (1999); Diamond and Gunther (2001); Gunther, Montero, and Linz (2002); Katz and Crotty (2006); Boix (2007); Kitschelt (2007); Hagopian (2007).

[7] Beer was reviewing the French edition of Duverger's book. McCormick (1966, 4) made essentially the same point about scholars' tendency to erase the presidency from the study of American political parties.

[8] See e.g. Michels [1911] (1962); Weber [1919] (1958); Duverger (1954); Lipset and Rokkan (1967); Sartori (1976); Panebianco (1988); Strøm (1990); Kitschelt (1994).

[9] As Ware (1996, 270–1) notes, "Panebianco (1988, xv) famously excluded American parties from his analysis by asserting that the factors affecting their emergence and development were different, but without discussing what the difference actually was."

political scientists have long referred to "elite," "mass," and "cadre" party types, formulated specifically for the late-19th- and early-20th-century Western European context, and then to "catch-all" and later "cartel" parties, which emerged largely as a function of socioeconomic transformations in that same European context in the second half of the 20th century.[10]

Research on party *systems'* emergence and consolidation has also reflected scholars' concern with the impact of social-structural change – in particular industrialization, urbanization, and technological modernization – on political mobilization and competition, and on the ability of social groups to win parliamentary representation. Lipset and Rokkan (1967), building on concepts from Marx, Weber, Parsons, and others, inferred the development of both parties and party systems from the consequences of political, social, and economic modernization in Western Europe. Subsequent scholarship echoes this emphasis on how sociocultural cleavages impact party emergence and evolution (e.g. Inglehart 1987; Dalton 2008; Kitschelt 1994). Even today, somewhat ironically, research on the alleged "presidentialization" of parties (Poguntke and Webb 2005a) downplays variation in executive-legislative institutions across Europe and focuses instead on the impact of long-term structural and social change.

A second reason scholarship has yet to fully appreciate the potential impact of the separation of powers is due to a tension in the study of political parties in the United States. American parties have been subject to scrutiny since the late 19th century (Bryce 1888) and were the object of the first explicitly comparative study (Ostrogorski [1902] 1964). On the one hand, some scholars of US political parties give the separation of powers pride of place. For example, McCormick (1966; 1979), Burnham (1979), and Epstein (1967) observed long ago that American parties did not emerge from societal cleavages or legislative divisions, as theories developed for Europe suggest.[11] Instead, they noted that party competition in the United States first emerged and consolidated around presidential elections (Epstein 1986, 84; see also Davis 1992; Milkis 1993; Rae 2006). This view highlights the powerful impact separate executive elections have on party emergence, organization, and behavior. According to Philip Klinkner (1994, 2),

[10] See e.g. Duverger (1954); LaPalombara and Weiner (1966); Kirchheimer (1966); Katz and Mair (1995); Diamond and Gunther (2001); Wolinetz (2002).

[11] Epstein's (1967) fundamental point was to dispute Duverger's claim that the "mass" party was the modern norm.

in such an environment parties suffer "at best benign neglect and at worst outright hostility" from presidents and presidential candidates, who take it upon themselves to articulate the party's policy positions. Candidates and incumbent presidents can do this because they know that their separate election gives them "their own political constituencies and power bases, apart from those of Congress" (Epstein 1986, 87).

This separate election of the executive and legislative branches *of government* enhances the incentives for politicians in different branches *of the same party* to go their own way. Legislative majorities can defeat presidents without driving them from office – but they cannot force presidents to abandon their proposals. And presidents, for their part, can veto legislative proposals – but they cannot threaten legislators with parliamentary dissolution and new elections. This mutually assured survival in office means that neither "branch" of a single party is bound to support the other as in a parliamentary system. In this way, the constitutional separation of powers provides a recipe for intraparty conflict.

Given these electoral and institutional incentives, scholars such as Steven Skowronek (1997, 49) have concluded that "the institutional imperatives of the presidency lie on the side of independent political action, and that independence drives a wedge between partisanship and presidential conceptions of political responsibility." The same holds true for legislators: the institutional context generates incentives to protect legislative autonomy from executive encroachment. Thus Robin Kolodny suggests that comparing legislators' incentives across democratic regimes is an exercise in comparing apples and oranges, because under the separation of powers legislators' primary interest is serving in the majority in their legislative chamber, *regardless of whether their party's presidential candidate wins or not* (1998, 5).

In short, for many scholars of American politics the presidential and congressional branches of a single political party cannot be considered a single actor. As Richard Neustadt astutely observed, "What the Constitution separates, our political parties do not combine" (1960, 33–34). Given this, many prominent scholars blame the separation of powers for American democracy's shortcomings, suggesting that presidentialism frustrates "responsible" party government, again in contrast to European parliamentary systems. It was for this reason that Woodrow Wilson (1908), in his capacity as political scientist and not as US president, urged amending the US constitution to adopt parliamentarism.

E. E. Schattschneider repeated Wilson's lament decades later (1942), and his view gained an enduring readership in the form of the statement by the American Political Science Association's Committee on Political Parties (1950), which appears on course syllabi to this day. The critique of "irresponsible" parties resurges intermittently in discussions of American politics.[12]

If this view of American parties were consensual, we would simply ask why comparativists have failed to learn anything from the US experience. Yet despite these scholars' eminence and the prominence of their arguments, the separation of powers vanishes entirely from some discussions of American political parties. Indeed, the influential treatment inspired by V. O. Key (1952) and Frank Sorauf (1968) draws attention to the "three faces" of parties – in government, in the electorate, and as organizations – but largely ignores the separation of powers.[13] (See Hershey 2008 for the 13th edition of the undergraduate textbook built around this conceptualization.) The high profile and theoretically sophisticated debate about the status of *legislative* parties in the United States also ignores the separation of powers. For example, Aldrich's *Why Parties?* (1995) and Cox and McCubbins' two books (1993; 2005), among the most-cited books on American parties – and ones which comparativists frequently cite and use for teaching purposes – all treat American parties as if they existed in a unicameral parliamentary system and discuss the separation of powers hardly at all.

Given this intellectual schizophrenia, comparative scholars of political parties rarely seek – much less derive – lessons from the US experience. To our knowledge, only Leon Epstein (1967; 1986) has explicitly and systematically placed American parties *as institutions or organizations* in comparative perspective.[14] Epstein argued that constitutional structure conditions party development and that party leaders must adapt to this institutional context. He focused on the implications of the

[12] See e.g. Helms (1949); Long (1951); Cutler (1980); Fiorina (1988); Katz (1987); Janda (1992); Sundquist (1992); Katz and Kolodny (1994).

[13] Poguntke and Webb (2005) essentially replicate, without acknowledgment, the tripartite nature of political parties that Key and Sorauf articulated so long ago.

[14] However, see also Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina (1987), which focuses on the difference in party appeals to the electorate between the United States and the UK and which has inspired substantial comparative research (e.g. Carey and Shugart 1995). A few scholars have also begun to respond to Poguntke and Webb's (2005) characterizations (e.g. Heffernan 2005).