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978-0-521-86954-6 - Presidents, Parties, and Prime Ministers: How the Separation of Powers Affects Party Organization and Behavior

David J. Samuels and Matthew S. Shugart

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## Presidents, Parties, and Prime Ministers

### *How the Separation of Powers Affects Party Organization and Behavior*

This book provides a framework for analyzing the impact of the separation of powers on party politics. Conventional political science wisdom assumes that democracy is impossible without political parties, because parties fulfill all the key functions of democratic governance. They nominate candidates, coordinate campaigns, aggregate interests, formulate and implement policy, and manage government power. When scholars first asserted the essential connection between parties and democracy, most of the world's democracies were parliamentary. Yet by the dawn of the 21st century, most democracies had directly elected presidents. Given this, if parties are truly critical to democracy, then a systematic understanding of how the separation of powers shapes parties is long overdue. David J. Samuels and Matthew S. Shugart provide a theoretical framework for analyzing variation in the relationships among presidents, parties, and prime ministers across the world's democracies, revealing the important ways in which the separation of powers alters party organization and behavior – thereby changing the nature of democratic representation and accountability.

David J. Samuels is the Benjamin E. Lippincott Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of *Ambition, Federalism, and Legislative Politics in Brazil* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) and the coeditor of *Decentralization and Democracy in Latin America* (2004). He has published articles in the *American Political Science Review*, the *Journal of Politics*, *Comparative Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, and the *British Journal of Political Science*.

Matthew S. Shugart is Professor in the Department of Political Science and the School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, San Diego. Among his books are *Seats and Votes* (with Rein Taagepera, 1989), *Presidents and Assemblies* (with John Carey, Cambridge University Press, 1992), *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America* (coedited with Scott Mainwaring, Cambridge University Press, 1997), *Executive Decree Authority* (coedited with John Carey, Cambridge University Press, 1998), and *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems* (coedited with Martin Wattenberg, 2001). His articles have appeared in numerous journals, including the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *American Political Science Review*, the *British Journal of Political Science*, and *Electoral Studies*.

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*To our families, for all their support*

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## Preface and Acknowledgments

This book brings together strands each of us has been thinking about for many years. Shugart's interest in the "distinctiveness" of presidential democracy and its impact on legislative elections and political parties began as he was working on his dissertation at the University of California, Irvine. In the dissertation, inspired largely by the work of Leon Epstein as well as by his own observations of politics in the United States and several Latin American countries, Shugart (1988) noted that presidentialism had an impact on both the number of parties and their "nature." Yet developing just what that nature might be would lie dormant while he focused for a time on the number of parties and worked on other aspects of comparative presidentialism. Later, after taking up a faculty position at the University of California, San Diego, Shugart would begin exploring the "intraparty dimension" of parties – the idea that electoral institutions would shape the behavior and organization of parties as much as, and maybe even more profoundly than, they shape their number. However, he would not put together these two strands – that both presidentialism and *legislative* electoral institutions shape political parties – until some years later, in collaboration with Samuels.

In 1993, in his first semester of graduate school at the University of California, San Diego, Samuels scribbled a comment in the margins of Kaare Strøm's 1990 article, "A Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties" (*American Journal of Political Science* 34: 565–98). Samuels wrote, "But that is not how parties behave in presidential systems." Eventually, he tried to explain the sorts of behavioral incentives parties actually face in presidential systems in his 2002 article, "Presidentialized

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Parties: The Separation of Powers and Party Organization and Behavior” (*Comparative Political Studies* 35(4): 461–83), traces of which the reader will find in Chapter 5 of this book.

After publishing that article, Samuels realized that an article Shugart had published in 1998, “The Inverse Relationship between Party Strength and Executive Strength: A Theory of Politicians’ Constitutional Choices” (*British Journal of Political Science* 28: 1–29), essentially told the flip side of the story he’d articulated in his 2002 article. As Shugart told it, party organization influences the structure of executive-legislative relations when politicians get to rewrite the political rules of the game. And as Samuels told it, the structure of executive-legislative relations then influences party organization and behavior. Samuels then approached Shugart with the idea of building on their shared view that scholars had largely ignored the relationship between the separation of powers and political party organization and behavior.

Several years later, this book is the product of tying together the strands of our earlier work and graduate-seminar inspiration. For helping us along the way, we would like to thank the following people. For research assistance: Jason Arnold, Andrew Dickinson (in memoriam), Fernando Furquim, Michelle Hogler, Catalina Hotung, Kevin Lucas, Mihaela Mihailescu, Will Moody, Kuniaki Nemoto, Stephanie Payne, Matthew Roberts, Amit Ron, Jessica Schroeder, Kevin Watt, and Kimberly Wydeen. For comments and inspiration: Matthew Cleary, Scott Desposato, James Druckman, Leon Epstein, Jen Gandhi, Henry Hale, Reuven Hazan, Gretchen Helmke, Kathy Hochstetler, Yuko Kasuya, Ofer Kenig, Scott Mainwaring, Tom Round, Phil Shively, Georg Vanberg, Alisa Voznaya, and Erik Wibbels. Participants in Shugart’s graduate seminar on legislative and party organization in the spring of 2009 offered comments that helped improve the book, and the anonymous reviewer for Cambridge University Press helped us strengthen several of our arguments. We are also grateful to Robert Elgie for regularly answering queries about semi-presidential systems and cohabitation and to Eduardo Leoni for sharing his data on Brazilian roll-call votes. A grant from the National Science Foundation to Samuels made possible the collection of the district-level presidential election results used in Chapter 5.

We are indebted to Arend Lijphart, Gary Cox, and Kaare Strøm for their inspiration and comments on our work over many years. Shugart is particularly grateful to Rein Taagepera, not only for comments that



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improved this book, but also for more than 25 years of guidance. Finally, the field of comparative executive-legislative systems would never have enjoyed its resurgence without the contributions of Juan Linz, whose intellectual impact is felt throughout this book.

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