



CANDIDATE

Berg, Olivier

TEST

Introduction to the Practice of Politics TT25

Parliamentarism etc.

- Very good answer. Clearly written and structure. It shows understanding and command of the material.
- The nuance on semi-presidentialism which you introduce later has consequences for your definition and argument, you could discuss that more fully, instead of putting it aside.
- Most of the variables you choose relate to governance itself. Perhaps you could consider other outcomes (social, economic, etc.), and show whether they are a result of those institutional and governance difference, or not.

- Mark: 78

Voters and parties

- A clear answer, with a linear argument, well supported by references to the literature.
- It could be improved with: more details about the empirical evidence; consideration and discussion of the alternative explanation, a more top-down approach — if you can then dismiss it, it will strengthen your original bottom-up argument.

- Mark: 73

Populism

- Very good. Strong structure, clear argument.
- As above, more detailed discussion of the empirical studies (and their limitations), beyond their summary results, would elevate your answer even further.

- Mark: 73

Overall mark: 75

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1 Introduction to the Practice of Politics

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Please type all your answers into the box below, clearly indicating the question number.

Fill in your answer here

1. Why is the distinction between parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential systems an important one?

In this essay, I will argue that the distinction between parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential systems is important because it leads to different political outcomes, but not that important because democratic survival is not very dependent on it, though semi-presidential systems can be an exception to this. First, I will explain the difference between parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential systems. Then, I will argue that this distinction can have significant effects on coalition formation and cabinet composition. That presidential regimes will have more minority coalitions, fewer multi-party coalitions and more non-partisan ministers. Lastly, I will argue that, contrary to traditional scholarship, the choice between presidential and parliamentary regimes does not have a significant effect on democratic survival. And that the phenomenon that presidential regimes do not survive as long is largely the effect of other social and economic factors. However, I will note that semi-presidential systems, especially president-parliamentary systems, do often have the problem of democratic survival, although this is somewhat overstated.

Whether a democracy is parliamentary, presidential or semi-presidential depends on whom the government is responsible to. If the government is not responsible to the legislature, it is a presidential system. If the government is responsible to the legislature, but there is also an elected head of state, it is a semi-presidential system. Otherwise, it is a parliamentary system, when there is no elected head of state and the government is responsible to the legislature (Clark et al.).

Coalitions

Because the president does not need the legislature for his government to stay in power in presidential regimes, it is not as necessary for her to build coalitions. As a result, there are less minority governments and coalition governments in presidential regimes. Cheibub et al. find after an election in which the largest party does not win an outright majority, a minority government was formed around 70% of the time in parliamentary system but only around 40% of the time in presidential systems. They also find that presidential systems are around 30% less likely to form coalition governments than parliamentary governments. Because the president is usually the formateur, the president's party will always have to be part of the government. And because the government does not necessarily need the confidence of the parliament, it is less likely that she builds a coalition. As a result, one will find that there will be more legislation-coalitions, these are coalitions required to pass specific legislation through the legislature, in presidential systems. However, because we do not live in a purely office-seeking world (where politicians only care about the government positions that they get), some coalitions are still formed when the government wants to pass more legislation.

Cabinet composition

Because the president does not need other parties to stay in power, it is less important that she gives them ministerial posts in presidential regimes. Whereas in parliamentary systems Gramson's law usually applies, this is the idea that the parties will get ministerial posts in proportion to their electoral size, this is less in presidential systems, this is less in presidential parties. Opposition parties do not have as much leverage over the government in presidential systems as they do in parliamentary systems. Therefore, they receive fewer ministerial posts, which makes it less proportional (Clarke et al.). For the same reason, there are also more non-partisan ministers in presidential regimes. Because ministerial posts

are not really bargaining chips as they are in parliamentary systems, it is easier to give them to experts.

Semi-presidential systems

To determine the effects of a semi-presidential regime on political outcomes, it is essential to make a distinction between semi-presidential systems (Shugart & Cakely). There are premier-presidential systems in which the government is not responsible to the head of state. In these systems, the head of state serves more of a symbolical role than a political role, an example of this is Ireland where the head of state does not really have any power. And there are president-parliamentary systems in which the government is responsible to both the legislature and the president.

Because premier-presidential systems are so similar to 'pure' parliamentary systems, the political outcomes of these are largely the same. However, in president-parliamentary systems it is more complicated. When the party of the president is also the largest party in the legislature, it is pretty much the same as a 'pure' presidential systems because the president all the power if she can control her own party. Conversely, when the largest party in the legislature is not the president's party, this leads to cohabitation. This can be best illustrated with the example of France (Duverger). Cohabitation is when the prime-minister is of a different party as the president leading to a power struggle between them. Because, in France, the prime-minister has the power over domestic policy and the president over foreign policy, the de facto power is in the hands of the prime-minister. So when there is cohabitation, a president-parliamentary system acts more as a 'pure' parliamentary system. Amorim and Strom show that this leads to fewer non-partisan ministers than in presidential systems but more than in parliamentary systems.

Democratic survival

Linz (1990) argued that presidential regimes have a higher chance to turn into an autocracy. Because of the dual legitimacy (both the president and parliament) which can lead to deadlock and because of the symbolism associated with a 'president', they can more easily become autocratic. Parliamentary systems do not have these problems, the parliament and the prime-minister are very dominant (Lijphart, 2012).

Initially, the data seems to confirm this theory. In a study of non-OECD democracies from the 1960s to the 1980s, it was found that presidential regimes are more likely to turn into an autocracy. However, as Cheibub et al. argue, this is mainly caused by the fact that most presidential systems were founded in Latin America and most parliamentary systems in Eastern Europe. This suggests that the difference is mainly caused by other social, cultural and economic factors. Cheibub et al. (2020) also find that the location of where a new democracy is founded is a very accurate predictor for democratic survival, regardless of whether the system is presidential, parliamentary or semi-presidential. This is reinforced by Przeworski (2000) who finds that economic factors are a good predictor of democratic survival.

For premier-presidentialism, because it is so similar to a parliamentary regime, one would not expect that it decreases the likelihood of democratic survival. However, president-parliamentarism does have many problems. Because there is both a powerful president and prime-minister, this can lead to deadlock. In Ukraine, for instance, there was deadlock between the prime-minister and the president leading to destabilization. This is why, traditionally, president-parliamentary regimes are seen as less stable and more likely to become autocracies. However, it must be noted that this can also largely be a result of the place where it is and economic factors.

In conclusion, the distinction between parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential systems is important because it can lead to different political outcomes which can help constitutional engineers determine which system is

most suitable for different conditions. However, democratic survival is not as dependent on this distinction as traditionally thought.

10. Are the changing relationships between parties and voters a function of changing parties or of changing voters.

In this essay, I will argue that the changing relationships between parties and voters are mainly a result of changing voters, which is reinforced by changes in the media. These changes are then reinforced by the parties, who change their strategy because of the changed voters. First, I will explain how the relationship between parties and voters has changed. That fewer voters identify themselves with parties and that, for instance, the class vote has weakened. Then, I will argue that voters have, to an extent, become more rational because of education and more issue-focused because of new post-material values. Because of this, parties have converged to the median voter to optimise their vote share and have become more professional, catch-all parties who mainly focus on the party leader in their campaigns. This is reinforced by changes in the media, which also increasingly focus on the personality of the party-leader. These changes in the parties then reinforce the changing of the relationships between parties and voters.

Party identification

According to the sociological framework, voters mainly vote because of factors such as class, ethnicity, and region (Campbell et al.). Because of these factors, voters form strong relationships with parties. Together with socialization--such as conversations with people from your community--leads to very predictable and stable, and as Lipset and Rokkan argue, 'frozen' election outcomes. However, since the 1960s, these relationships have weakened, voters no longer identify as strongly with a specific party.

Dalton (2013) and Holmberg confirm this by doing a regression analysis for party identification in postindustrial countries. They find that in almost all countries that they test, party identification has weakened. Knutsen (2007) also finds that the traditional class vote which was the most important predictor of vote choice (Butler & Stokes), has weakened. This process is called dealignment.

Changes in voters

This can be primarily explained by changes in voters. Dalton (2000) argues that voters have become more rational because of improved education and easier access to political information. He call this cognitive mobilisation. He empirically proves this by showing that young, more educated voters vote more rationally and more easily change which party they vote for. The fact that they are young is important because party identification becomes stronger overtime and electoral change is mainly a result of generational replacement (Van der Eijck).

As Inglehart argues, voters also find material values less important than they used to. Because of the economic affluence since the 1960s, young voters are less worried about material values and more with post-material values such as environmentalism, autonomy or gender equality. Voters have gone from survival to self-expression. As a result of this, voters have started to vote based on specific issues instead of creating strong party identifications (Keegan-Krause). This has allowed for the rise of new parties such as green parties or far-right parties. Franklin et al. confirm this by showing that issues-based models have become better at predicting voter choice than before.

Although this issue-based voting does indicate an increase of rational voting but it is important to note here that many voters still vote for certain issues because of identity and not because they have become that much more rational. Still, I argue that voters have become more rational and are voting more in line with Downs' spatial model and Stokes' valence model. The spatial model argues that voters vote for the party which optimises their own utility. Valence issues are

issues where there is a consensus between the parties on an issue such as low unemployment or inflation, but where voters vote for the party which they think is most capable at dealing with these problems.

Changes in parties

Because voters have become more rational, parties have converged to the median voter. This is, as Downs argues, what rational parties do when they attempt to maximise their vote share. This explains the electoral success of, for example, Tony Blair when he won the elections by moving to the centre. However, this further reinforces the changing relationships between voters and parties because the parties no longer have a coherent, long-term ideology and become more similar.

The second way that parties have changed is that they have become more professionalized. For Labour parties, for instance, instead of relying on grassroots organisations such as Unions they have become more professional, catch-all parties to try to get as many seats as possible. This is because the grassroots organisations were becoming less popular and parties had to accommodate by becoming more professional. The reason that grassroots organisations became less popular is because of the decrease of the manual working class and the transition to a postindustrial society (Knutsen 2007). The increased professionalization then further reinforced the fact that grassroots organisations became less popular.

Lastly, parties have started focussing more on their party-leader during campaigns (Clarke et al., 2004). This is partially caused by the fact that voters have become less focussed on party identification and more rational. A party-leader is a good heuristic to understand what a party stands for which decreases the mental cost of voting. The media also have contributed to this by shining the spotlight on the party leader and making campaigns more personalistic. This also reinforces the changing relationships between parties and voters for the same

reason that the convergence to the centre did. Parties no longer have a coherent, long-term ideology, instead it is more fluid depending on the person in charge of the party.

In conclusion, the changing relationships between parties and voters is a mainly a function of changing voters. They have become more rational and issue-focussed to decide which party they vote for. Because of this, parties have had to accommodate by converging to the centre, professionalizing and focussing more on the party leader which reinforces the changing relationships.

11. What constraints does the rise of populism face?

In this essay, I will argue that the rise of populism faces two types of constraints: demand-side factors and supply-side factors. I will then argue that populism can only be successful if there is both sufficient demand and supply for it. First, I will explain what populism is, for this I will use the ideational approach. To get demand for populism, there need to be sufficient economic, cultural and modernization grievances caused by, for instance, unemployment, corruption and globalization. However, even if there is demand for populism, the supply of populism can also be constrained by supply-side factors. Other parties can boycott the populist parties, the leader of the populist parties has to be sufficiently charismatic, and the electoral system can limit the success of populist parties. Lastly, I will argue that there are also factors which constrain whether or not populist parties can get things done once they are in government such as international organizations such as the European Union or liberal institutions which act as checks and balances against majority power.

Defining populism

It is difficult to define exactly what populism is because it can have many different forms and because it has negative connotation: politicians often criticize their opponents by stating that they are populists. In Latin America,

populism is often more left-wing or even neoliberal (van der Torre, 2017) but in Europe it is usually right-wing and usually focusses on immigration (Taggart, 2017). Because of this, Mudde (2017) defines populism as a thin-centered ideology. It can attach itself to different ideologies which means that it does not have to be left- or right-wing. He argues that populism considers the population as two homogenous, antagonistic groups, the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite', and that it is in favour of majority rule, that the general will should be the most important. Left-wing populism usually adds an economic element to this and right-wing populism an ethno-cultural element (Mudde, 2007).

Demand-side factors

Without demand for populism, it cannot be successful. Demand is can be caused by different factors. Firstly, modernization grievances can create demand. There are two ways in which this works. Firstly, the increased globalization and postindustrialization can make it more difficult for working class and lower middle class people to sustain themselves (Golder, 2016). An example of this is the so-called China shock. Because China could produce things so cheaply, the United States deindustrialized leaving many people without a job, these 'losers of modernity' were an important factor in the reelection of Donald Trump. The second way in which modernization can create demand for populism is because of a cultural backlash. Because of the transition from materialism to postmaterialism (Inglehart) people have found issues such as environmentalism or gender equality more important. However, there are many people with more traditional morality who can be mobilized to vote for populist parties. Norris and Inglehart (2020) find that this second way is the most important for creating demand for populism, though it mainly explains right-wing populism in the United States and Europe.

Demand can also be caused by economic grievances or a weak state. Low unemployment can make people disgruntled by the political elite and vote for an outsider. Golder (2016) does show that for this to create anti-immigration

sentiment it is necessary that there is also high levels of immigration which causes the idea that there is competition between the immigrants and the 'native' people. Economic factors are also the main reasons for populism in Latin America. Van der Torre (2017) discerns three waves of Latin American populism which were all mainly caused by economic factors but also by corruption. Corruption, and a weak state in general, can also create demand for populism (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

Supply-side factors

On the supply side, many other factors can constrain populism. Firstly, the charisma of the party-leader is very important. Although this is very tautological: when a party-leader is popular he is seen as charismatic so this does not really mean much. However, there are clear cases of a party-leader just being quite 'weird' and 'creepy' such as Hans Janmaat in the Netherlands (van Kessel, 2017). A charismatic party leader is not enough though, it is also important that there is a strong party organization. The populist party LPF (List Pim Fortuyn), for instance, quickly collapsed after the elections because of infighting in the party.

Another constraint of party success is the reaction of the other parties. In many countries, more centrist parties have completely boycotted the populist parties by not working together with them. However, lately this has changed in many European countries with populist parties coming into power. Krause et al. (2022) argue that excluding the parties is generally better to prevent them from being successful and they show that accommodation rarely works. Though it must be noted that some argue that accommodation can work if done quickly and robustly (Golder, 2016). The electoral system can also limit populist parties from getting into power. In a disproportionate electoral system, it is more difficult for populists to get into power because the larger parties are favoured.

There are also constraints on populist parties once they are in power. International organizations such as the EU can prevent them from getting things

done. In Europe, for instance, because the EU has the power over immigration policy, individual countries cannot unilaterally decide to change their immigration policy. Secondly, liberal checks and balances on power can prevent populist parties from completely using their mandate and doing anything they want (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). This is why populism is often seen as a threat to liberal democracy (Rummens, 2017) because it is a fundamental odds with liberal institutions because populism is in favour of majority rule. However, both of these factors can also make populist parties more successful because populist parties can blame the judges (liberal institutions) or the EU when they do not get things done.

In conclusion, there are both demand-side constraints and supply-side constraints on populism. And without both demand and supply for populism, it will not be successful.

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Answered.