# Presidents, Prime Ministers, Parties, and Mandate-Representation: A Global Test 

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#### Abstract

How does presidentialism affect democratic representation, both in theory and in practice? In this paper, part of a larger book project, we build on our previous research (Samuels and Shugart 2003), which argued that all else equal, presidentialism impedes representation based on prospective government "mandates." Inspired by and building on research on Latin America by Susan Stokes (2001), here we empirically test the hypothesis that presidentialism works against prospective mandates by exploring the incidence of "policy-switching" under different democratic constitutional formats: presidentialism, semi-presidentialism, and parliamentarism. We compare the campaign promises and enacted policies before and after every democratic election around the world between 1978 and 2002 ( $\mathrm{N}=384$ ), and we confirm our hypothesis: on this measure at least, mandate-representation is far less likely under presidentialism, in particular under minority government. We explore the implications of our findings for theories of democratic representation through political parties.


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## 1. Introduction

To what extent is the quality and nature of political representation a function of the fusion or separation of executive and legislative powers? We follow Pitkin (1967) in defining representation as a relationship between citizens' interests and political outcomes in which rulers act to meet the interests of the public. According to conventional wisdom, political representation requires political parties. Governments are responsive when voters signal what they would like the government to do, parties propose policies, citizens use their vote to choose the best policies, and the party (or parties) that form the next government implements its proposal. This view of the connection between parties, elections and representation permeates theoretical as well as empirical research (see e.g. Klingeman, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994; Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes 1999; Powell 2000; Stokes 2001).

Although the study of representation has a long history, and although the majority of democracies now employ some form of the separation of powers, neither normative nor positive political theory has adequately explored the implications of the separation of powers on political representation. ${ }^{1}$ A prominent example illustrates the potential problem: Powell's (2000) excellent study of representation does not explore potential differences between presidential and parliamentary systems, focusing instead on (and finding) differences between "majoritarian" and "proportional" systems. Presidentialism cannot be easily shoehorned into either of these idealtypes: a two-party presidential system is not as majoritarian as a two-party parliamentary system, and a multiparty presidential system is not as proportional as a multiparty parliamentary system. ${ }^{2}$

This is not to say that scholars have never considered the question of how the separation

[^0]or fusion of executive and legislative powers shapes political representation. Indeed, scholars have long suggested that while no democratic system can guarantee representation, certain institutional configurations are likely to enhance or limit it. In earlier work (Samuels and Shugart 2003) we argued that presidentialism tends to maximize some forms of representation while simultaneously minimizing other forms. We sought to relate the separation of powers to Manin et al.'s (1999) distinction between electoral "responsiveness" and electoral "accountability." The former, called "mandate-representation," emphasizes prospective voting, in which politicians compete by offering policy alternatives, voters develop expectations about what policies politicians will implement, and election winners actually follow through on their campaign promises. In contrast, the latter emphasizes retrospective voting, in which voters assess politicians for their decisions and performance during the most recent term of office.

In this paper we extend our arguments about mandate representation. Consensus exists that parties seek to promote mandate consistency (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Klingeman, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994). Susan Stokes' excellent book (Stokes 2001) explained the puzzle of frequent violations of mandate consistency in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s. Our earlier theoretical research suggested that ceteris paribus, presidentialism creates disincentives for mandate representation. In this paper, which is part of a larger project that develops a new theory of the relationship between political parties as principals and their leaders as agents under different democratic regimes, we empirically test this proposition. Specifically, Stokes' research and our hypothesis suggest that we should see cases of what Stokes calls "policy-switching" more frequently under presidentialism. We test this hypothesis on a large sample of elections from every democratic country around the world and find that the difference between presidentialism and other forms of democratic constitutions swamps the effect of other variables Stokes identified as predictors of mandate violations in Latin America. At least for this measure
of political representation, we confirm that party leaders are far less likely to follow through on their parties' promises under pure presidentialism, and thus that the difference between the fusion and the separation of executive and legislative powers affects quality and nature of parties' efforts to represent citizens' interests. ${ }^{3}$ As long suspected, "responsible party government" is in fact less likely under presidentialism.

In the next section of this paper we explore the theoretical tensions between the notion of "mandate" representation and the separation of powers. We then present our empirical analysis, and in the final section we explore the implications of our argument for the relationship between parties and presidents and the problematic question of the quality of representation under different forms of government.

## 2. Parties, Presidents, and Political Representation

Mandate-representation occurs when politicians' and voters' interests coincide and/or when voters can reasonably expect that parties will do what they propose (Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes 1999, 30). ${ }^{4}$ Where does the separation of powers fit into this notion of "mandate representation?" Scholars have long criticized presidentialism for an institutional structure that allegedly impedes "responsible party government." The "responsible parties" notion finds a loud echo in the mandate representation view of how the democratic political process ought to work: parties articulate a distinctive platform, voters make decisions based on those distinctions, and parties govern according to their platform. This essentially Anglophile view has a long pedigree in American political discourse, having been advocated by such reformers as political scientist

[^1]and President Woodrow Wilson in the early $20^{\text {th }}$ century, the American Political Science Association's committee for a Responsible Party System in the mid- $20^{\text {th }}$ century, and, more recently, by the Committee on the Constitutional System (Sundquist 1992). Such reform advocates have blamed the American system of government for chaos, fragmentation, gridlock, and lack of capacity for parties or government to promote broad policies and respond to crises. For example, critics such as E.E. Schattschneider (1942) lamented that responsible parties are unlikely in the US because the separation of powers allows the president to be "above" his party and to switch directions independently of party dictates.

To what extent are these critics correct? Are such laments a fruit of "American exceptionalism," of presidentialism, or are "responsible" parties simply unlikely anywhere? Scholars such as Klingemann et al. (1994) and Stokes (2001) have expanded research on mandate representation into comparative politics. Klingemann and his colleagues noted a substantial degree of mandate consistency across eight established democracies, including the United States. In contrast, Stokes noted that mandate violations or "policy switches," which occur when a president not only abandons his or her campaign promises but governs contrary to the thrust of his or her campaign platform, are common in Latin America, especially when presidents lack legislative majorities.

We seek to extend Stokes' hypotheses predicting policy-switches to all democracies. Stokes did echo Schattschneider in suggesting that "predictive campaigns" should occur more regularly in parliamentary systems (189). We seek to confirm this supposition, and suggest the following hypothesis: holding such factors as economic conditions, party fragmentation, the electoral rules and the degree of party competition constant, party leaders are more likely to abandon their party's mandate and undertake a policy "switch" under pure presidentialism. If this is the case, then party "mandate representation," a core element in democratic political
theory, is less likely under presidentialism. In the next section we explain why the separation of powers affects political parties and the likelihood of mandate representation. This discussion seeks to contribute to understanding political representation more generally.

## Comparing Incentives to Adhere to a Mandate across Regime Types

Why might a politician promise one thing during the campaign and then repudiate those promises once in office? To understand why parties' agents in the executive confront different incentives in different institutional contexts, we have to return to first principles about politicians' motivations. Politicians desire power and its trappings. ${ }^{5}$ A politician who has reached the apex of power within his or her party and who subsequently wins the right to occupy the highest office in the land no doubt desires to stay in that position, and to leave office with his or her reputation intact. To do so, he or she must propose and enact policies that please voters. Yet in terms of mandate-representation, there is a more important question: to what extent must those proposals also appeal to the very party members who placed the leaders in a position to gain executive power to begin with?

Stokes (2001) assumes that Latin American presidents switch policies because they believe doing so is the best way to advance their personal goals, which encompass acting as agents of both the citizens and their parties. She states that presidents measure their success as "victory of one's own party at the next election," (Stokes 2001, 66) even when term limits prevent them from running for reelection. This means that presidents switch policies believing they are acting as truly representative agents of both the citizens and of their own party - even if

[^2]citizens and party members vehemently disagree. To justify this assumption she argues that presidents are neither forced to switch by international financial agencies (Stokes 2001, 74, 92) nor motivated to switch by the prospect of personal gain (Stokes 2001, 85). Instead, switchers believe voters underestimate the effectiveness of efficiency-oriented policies, yet must hide this belief in order to win office; they further believe that switching to efficiency-oriented policies once in office is good for voters. Presidents who switch are thus acting in good faith as citizens' agents by proposing and enacting what they believe to be citizens' true interests even though they are not responding to citizens' expressed interests, and even though they are violating their party's expressed interests (ibid, see pp. 19, 56, 65).

Stokes' hypotheses about why presidents sometimes violate their mandates are not derived from the fact that presidents' incentives are shaped by the separation of powers. Moreover, Stokes shows that term limits do not influence the likelihood of a policy-switch. What then are the sources of an executive's incentives to stick with or violate his or her party's mandate? We have no a priori reason to believe that Stokes' motivational assumption politicians switch because they believe doing so is in their party's interest and in voters' interest, and therefore in their own personal interest - should differ across constitutional formats. Yet even if we assume politicians everywhere have similar motivations, the pertinent question remains whether different democratic institutions channel politicians' motivations in different ways, constraining their options or providing new opportunities. If so, we should observe policy-switching at different frequencies under different constitutional formats.

There is some baseline non-zero probability that a political leader will wake up one day and decide to switch policies. In a parliamentary system that likelihood might increase marginally if the PM believes he or she is irreplaceable for the near future - either because of personal popularity or because of lack of viable competition. The likelihood could also be
shaped by the institutional context, for example if the parliament requires a "constructive" vote of no confidence, which requires that an alternative government to be ready to fill the expelled PM's shoes immediately. A crafty PM could take advantage of the lack of a viable alternative government to attempt to switch policies. Nevertheless, even a PM who considers him/herself irreplaceable and/or who operates in a system with a constructive vote of no confidence faces greater constraints than a president. There are two reasons why presidents are less likely to act as faithful agents of the party than prime ministers: incentive incompatibility between the executive and legislative "branches" is far more likely under the separation of powers; and parties' ability to control agents to whom they have delegated powers is more difficult under the separation of powers.

## Presidentialism and Representation: A Thought Experiment

A thought experiment provides a way to illustrate these two points: let us assume two countries, one presidential and one parliamentary, both with unitary systems, similar distributions of voter interests, and single-member district electoral systems. What would be the differences in terms of mandate representation between the two countries? Let us also assume that we are talking about a presidential system that most resembles the prototypical "Westminster" parliamentary system, one in which the ballot is fused, the presidential election won by plurality, the elections are always concurrent, the regime is unitary, the legislature is unicameral, and the president has few constitutionally-prescribed powers.

This imaginary presidential system would come as close as possible to undermining the conception of the separation of powers articulated by James Madison in Federalist 51 because the executive and legislative branches would be highly dependent on each other for their electoral survival in office, and because the president would be fairly weak in terms of constitutional prerogatives. Nonetheless, the constitutional separation of the executive and
legislative branches would remain, meaning that the president's survival in office would not depend on the confidence of the legislature. This separation of survival, therefore, might still create tension between the president and legislators of the same party. For example, the president could use his position as a "bully pulpit" to badger legislators into passing his or her proposals, confident that his tenure is safe in a way that prime ministers' cannot be.

Thus even in a presidential system that resembles the "efficient" government of the Westminster type about as much as any presidential system could, the president has some freedom of movement to lead his party - perhaps away from the median legislator's ideal point without fear of being tossed from office. Of course, few presidential systems remotely resemble our example. Instead, in the modal presidential system the executive has far greater incentives and opportunities to "go it alone" and violate his party's ostensible mandate. Still, depending on those powers (which vary widely within and across presidential and semi-presidential systems), the degree to which party mandates can be violated will vary. Regardless, we can conclude that any presidential constitution offers the opportunity to violate mandate representation to a greater degree than a parliamentary form of government.

## The Impact of the Separation of Origin and Survival

For political parties, the separation of origin and survival that defines presidentialism generates distinct organizational and behavior patterns unknown in parliamentary systems. Presidents are much more apt to be elected for their personal qualities than is a parliamentary party for the personal qualities of the prime ministerial candidate, despite the alleged "presidentialization" of campaigns in parliamentary systems (cf. Poguntke and Webb 2005). More importantly, the separation of origin and survival encourages voters to see presidential candidates as distinct from their parties - even if they are long-time "party politicians". By contrast, parliamentary systems function well only with a high degree of collective action among
politicians sharing a common party label, thus enhancing the value of the party label in voters' selection of potential governing agents.

Moreover, successful presidential candidates campaign on a platform that appeals to a wide swath of the electorate. Depending both on a candidate's individual appeal relative to his or her party's appeal and on the presidential and legislative electoral systems a country employs, the electorate of a successful presidential candidate may differ considerably from the electorate that voted for that candidate's copartisans in the legislative elections. These two electorates may differ on ideological or other grounds; the important consideration is that except in rare circumstances, the preferences of the voters who elected the president and the preferences of the voters who elected the president's party will not necessarily overlap, as they necessarily do in every parliamentary system.

The degree to which one sees cooperation or conflict between the executive and the legislative "branches" of a party in a presidential system is partly a function of the degree to which their respective constituencies overlap. The separation of origin of the legislature and the executive in presidential systems also raises the possibility of "mandates" being distinct for the politicians elected in each branch. Under parliamentarism, the constitutional fusion of executive and legislative branches makes such a conceptualization nonsensical, because the voter's agent is the party, which will control (or not) the executive and legislative branches simultaneously, whether alone or in coalition. In contrast, "separation of purpose" varies considerably across presidential systems (Samuels and Shugart 2003), meaning that legislators in presidential systems may enter office based on "mandates" that are quite distinct from those being promoted by presidential candidates, even of their own party. This possibility, which some might consider an advantage of presidentialism, was suggested by Shugart and Carey (1992, chapter 9) in their "inefficient secret model" (ISM), in which legislators campaign primarily on local issues and
leave the setting of a national-policy agenda to presidential candidates and, after the election, to the elected president.

The ISM model is the polar opposite to the "efficient" model we sketched in our thought experiment above. And while the efficient model of presidentialism is likely to be in tension with the regime type's very structure, the ISM is quite compatible with it: Legislators and executive are elected separately, do not depend on each other to remain in office, and may transact with one another in a series of inter-election policy trades. The ISM model assumes relatively little programmatic content to legislative campaigns, which are focused instead more on "bringing home the bacon" or brokering public services on behalf of a community, while the setting of the national agenda is in the hands of the executive. While this is not mandate representation in the sense of policy manifestos, any conception of "government mandate" should not by definition rule out situations in which the "mandate" that legislators receive is to attend to local or sectoral demands that might potentially conflict with national party priorities.

We can also conceptualize distinct programmatic mandates between legislators and executives, even those of the same party, as Johnson and Crisp (2003) suggest. Legislators may stand up for the ideological positions on which they believe their party was founded and that their constituents expect them to defend. They may do so against an executive of their own party who is taking positions at variance with the ideological reputation of the party on which the legislator (and perhaps also the president) was elected. In other words, a policy switch may entail the president and legislators of the same party disagreeing with one another. Thus, regardless of whether legislators campaign on local "pork" or on national policy, members of the same party in separate legislative and executive branches of government are less likely to fulfill a unified party mandate than under a fusion of powers. In general, this incentive incompatibility suggests greater problems of policy coordination in pure presidential systems.
"Incentive incompatibility" between principal and agent is a major source of contracting problems. Such divergence between principals and agents is more likely to emerge under presidentialism. Yet even supposing that both presidents and prime ministers held divergent beliefs from their parties, the separation of survival, a feature only of presidentialism, gives presidents far greater leeway to act upon their beliefs, and gives parties fewer means to rein in presidents whose incentives push them to diverge from the party platform. Legislators of a president's party can't replace the president with a no-confidence vote. In a parliamentary system, because survival is mutually dependent, the party and the prime minister have greater incentives to support each other. In contrast, in a presidential system the separation of survival makes intra-party negotiation over policy differences more difficult: a party may choose to accept presidential proposals, or it may choose to ignore or resist them. After all, there is no confidence vote to whip the party into line. In fact, because of the separation of survival, a president could achieve many of his policy goals even without his party, a situation that would never occur in a parliamentary system.

Because presidents' electoral and institutional incentives for governing may diverge from their party's under presidentialism, and because of the separation of survival, Madison's Dilemma is more likely to confound presidentialized parties than parliamentarized parties: political parties will have far greater difficulty holding their agents, elected to the highest office in the land, to the "contract" represented by the party's platform. A leader will only enact the party platform faithfully if agency slack is minimized and there is minimal potential for opportunism or potential gain from slacking.

In sum, in a presidential system, unlike a parliamentary system, the party that controls the executive branch is much less likely to be the voter's agent of representation. While the analogy of the president to a parliamentary majority party has been made in the literature (Moe and

Caldwell 1994), this analogy is quite a stretch. The key distinction is that whether there is a single party with a majority or a coalition or a minority government, parties in parliamentary systems almost always enter and exit government as a unit. Thus the party is the key agent of voters' representation. In presidential systems, the executive is the nearly exclusive domain of one man or woman, elected and surviving in office independently of the legislature -and also independently of his or her own party.

We are not saying presidents will never act as faithful agents of their party or even that presidents will always differ from their party's median position. It is certainly possible for presidents to act as faithful agents of parties, but less likely than under alternative institutional formats. ${ }^{6}$ We have only argued that executive mandate representation is relatively less likely under presidentialism than under alternative constitutional forms. All in all, presidents are less likely to implement the party's platform, and are more likely to engage in "policy-switching" than prime ministers. A president may choose to propose policies in party's interest or not; the fact that the party nominated an individual and helped him or her win executive office does not automatically mean that the president is beholden to the party's wishes. In short, executives are less accountable to their party in presidential systems, even though they may be more accountable to voters.

## 3. Policy-Switching or Mandate Representation: A Global Exploration

To test our hypothesis about the impact of the separation of powers on mandate representation, we developed a database containing information on all presidential and parliamentary elections in the world between 1978 and 2002 held in countries that scored a " 5 " or better on the POLITY IV index of democracy and that had a population greater than 500,000 . In presidential systems we analyzed the presidential candidates' campaign and governing

[^3]strategy. In parliamentary systems we looked at the prime minister's party. In semi-presidential systems we looked at both presidential and parliamentary election campaigns. Our database contains entries for 385 election-observations. By way of comparison, Stokes' dataset contained 42 observations. ${ }^{7}$

Following Stokes, we define an economic policy switch in the following way: During a campaign, "politicians will pronounce themselves in favor of job creation, growth, improvement in real wages, industrial policy, a gradualist approach to inflation stabilization, and limited repayment of the foreign debt, only to impose austerity and liberal reforms when elected" (Stokes, 43). Stokes calls the former sort of platform "security-oriented," while its opposite is an "efficiency" orientation. Given these definitions, we gathered information on the campaign position and the governing orientation of the party whose leader won the executive position in each election. We coded the winning candidate's campaign according to the expected future policy orientation: either a) "security-oriented;" b) "efficiency-oriented;" or c) too vague to classify. To contrast the campaign strategy with government policy, we then gathered information on the policies that the winning candidate subsequently pursued: again, either a) "security-oriented;" b) "efficiency-oriented;" or c) too vague to classify. ${ }^{8}$ Combining the two codings let us determine which governments had followed through on campaign promises and which had undertaken a policy switch after assuming office.

## Examples of Policy-Switches

Some policy-switches are well-known, especially given Stokes' systematic exploration of cases from Latin America. For example, Argentine president Carlos Menem (1989-99) campaigned on his Peronist party's historical trajectory, advocating a "nationalist and

[^4]expansionist" economic policy (Stokes, 45) that would avoid imposing hardships on the working and middle classes. Yet once in office, "Menem's economic team fashioned policies like the ones his opponents had advocated" (ibid, 47), including currency devaluation, spending cuts, privatization, and trade liberalization. Similarly, Venezuelan president Carlos Andrés Pérez (1989-93) violated his party's longstanding left-of-center reputation by implementing austerity programs following his election. Other cases of policy-switching in Latin America follow a similar pattern: leaders campaign on what Stokes calls "security-oriented" policies but govern with "efficiency-oriented" policies.

Not surprisingly, our research yielded several examples of similar policy-switches from around the globe. One example comes from Ireland, a parliamentary system, in 1987. That year witnessed a policy-reversal by Fianna Fail, which has long competed with Fine Gael for political preeminence. Those two parties differed mainly on the question of Northern Ireland and did not occupy opposite ends of the political spectrum in terms of economic policy. Nevertheless, Fianna Fail was known as "free-spending" (Economist 1989b), had previously advocated increasing taxes on business (Downie 1982), and its electorate was largely working-class (Economist 1989a). In the run-up for the 1987 election, Fianna Fail's main competitor Fianna Gael advocated economic austerity measures, including a large public spending cut (Clarity 1987). In contrast, Fianna Fail promised to maintain spending levels, to spend heavily on capital spending projects, and to "development thrust" in its economic policy (Joyce and Hearst 1987).

Fianna Fail came to power in a minority government situation. Despite its campaign promises, once in office Prime Minister Charles Haughey immediately launched an austerity plan that involved budget and capital spending cuts even beyond those proposed by Fine Gael. The government also reduced spending on health and education, froze public-sector wages, and imposed a hiring freeze (Ford 1987). London's Financial Times (Carnegy 1987) summed up the
switch this way:
> "Voters were chary of Mr. Haughey's past record in free-spending Fianna Fail governments and his rather woolly election talk of the need for Ireland to grow rather than cut its way out of depression...What happened instead has become the biggest political talking point in Ireland, labeled by many an Irish bar room wag as the greatest conversion since St Paul...Mr. Haughey, defying his own past...launched his minority government on the toughest austerity programme the country had witnessed. Withering criticism of [Fine Gael PM] FitzGerald's brutal cutback plans gave way to stern warnings of the harsh measures needed to confront the grave financial crisis facing the nation."

Haughey's party regarded these policies as a betrayal of principles: The Financial Times further reported that: "Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats are exasperated by having to, in effect, support a Prime Minister they have long distrusted" (ibid.); later, The Economist (1989a) suggested that because of these policies, Fianna Fail was "losing touch with its working-class supporters."

A similar policy-switch occurred ten years later in Korea. Presidential candidate Kim Dae-Jung had gained wide respect as an advocate for democracy. His core constituency consisted of farmers, small businesses and union members. Big business distrusted him, particularly because he had called for slashing the power of the powerful Korean economic conglomerates, the chaebols. Kim had opposed Korea's entry into the OECD, saying that the country was "not ready" for market opening (ibid.). Given his trajectory, one executive said, "You know what his economic policy will be" (Financial Times 1997). During his campaign Kim allied with the conservative United Liberal Democrat party, with which he shared "the same economic policy based on nationalism and a strong state role in guiding business." Given this, his policies were expected to favor "entrenched vested interests that would slow down controversial economic reforms" (ibid.). A week before election day, Kim also took out frontpage newspaper ads promising to "renegotiate" an IMF austerity package if elected. This was
"seen as a ploy to please an electorate worried that the IMF package would cause massive job layoffs" (Associated Press 1997). Academic experts did not expect him to tone down his antiIMF rhetoric after the election (Washington Post 1997). Overall, the campaign did little to dispel Kim's image as a populist (Courier Mail 1997; Deutsche Presse Agentur 1997).

Still, almost immediately after the election (and months before the inauguration), Kim backpedaled, "partly reversing himself" (New York Times 1997) and signaling a change of course (Agence France Presse 1997b). Kim used meetings with outgoing administration advisors "as a pretext to commit his new government fully to the IMF's harsh recovery program and to ditch an unrealistic election promise that he could stimulate the economy into full recovery within 18 months" (Chandler 1997). The rapidity of his one-week conversion suggests a considerable degree of dissimulation on the campaign trail, given that after the election Kim immediately proposed a "sweeping package of monetary policy and financial market reforms" (ibid.), including labor-market flexibility in exchange for an IMF bailout. Only a week earlier, Kim had taken out the campaign ads stating his intention to re-negotiate the terms of the IMF financial support plan. Not surprisingly, Kim's supporters regarded this turnaround as traitorous (Agence France Presse 1997a; The Australian 1997).

## Prominent Examples that are NOT Policy-Switches

There are two well-known cases that might be thought of as "switches" but are not coded as such in our data. It is worth briefly sketching these cases - France after the 1981 election and New Zealand in 1984 - because they illustrate what a policy-switch is not, according to our operationalization. In May 1981 Socialist leader Francois Mitterrand won election as President of France. Less than six weeks later the Socialist party smashed its rivals in the parliamentary elections, winning 269 of 491 seats. Finally given the chance to put its ideas into practice, Mitterrand's socialist government initially made a hard left turn, nationalizing important
industries and aggressively using fiscal policy to pump up France's economy. This strategy backfired badly and by 1983 Mitterrand had repudiated much of the socialist strategy and adopted policies that just a short time earlier would have been anathema (Schmidt 1996). This "Great U-turn" is clearly a policy-reversal, but it is not an example of policy-switching: Mitterrand campaigned as a socialist, and earnestly tried to govern as a socialist. As employed by Stokes and as employed here, the idea of a policy-switch suggests that the president or prime minister makes no real attempt to follow through on his or her campaign promises. Mitterrand switched only in the face of evidence that the socialist policies were not working; policyswitching requires no such evidence. Moreover, Mitterrand only switched after almost two years in office; our definition (which follows Stokes') requires switching after six months or less.

In New Zealand in 1984, the Labour party defeated the incumbent National government and immediately embarked upon a radical program of economic liberalization that contradicted the party's longstanding programmatic reputation. In a very short time, New Zealand moved from having one of the most protected economies among the rich countries to having one of the world's most open economies. Much of the literature on New Zealand (e.g. Bollard 1994; Nagel 1998) refers to this as a violation of the Labour party's manifesto commitments and points to public-opinion evidence that suggests voters believed the Labour party had used its power to lead them astray. However, our review of the campaign, and our ability to place the campaign in perspective of 384 other cases, suggests that the Labour party was vague about its commitments, and on several occasions even suggested to voters that a difficult period of economic adjustment would lie ahead. In fact, the then-shadow (and future) finance minister, Roger Douglas, had even authored a book entitled There's Got to be a Better Way (Douglas 1980) that sharply criticized the National Party's welfare-oriented policies and openly advocated "efficiencyoriented" economic reforms. Thus, while the government that came to power indeed
implemented policies at variance with the longstanding reputation of the Labour party, it is not a case of a policy switch because the party's 1984 campaign gave voters no clear indication that it was committed to maintaining economic "security" policies.

## Policy-Switches: Empirical Analysis

We were unable to classify 52 of our cases (13.5\% of the total) as either "efficiencyoriented" or "security-oriented" because the campaign was vague. (In comparison, Stokes could not classify 4 of the 42 elections for which she found information, or $9.5 \%$.) This leaves us with 333 cases in which a switch was possible. ${ }^{9}$ To be considered a policy-switcher in the sense that Stokes meant it (and thus in the sense that we mean it), a government must have reneged relatively quickly on its campaign position (Stokes, 43). We took this to mean "within six months of inauguration." After that time, one could reasonably argue that conditions had shifted sufficiently so that if policy changed, the incumbent was not switching but reacting to events and even acting in response to public opinion. Of our 333 elections, we found 25 policy switches (7.5\% of the total), listed in Table One. ${ }^{10}$

## [Insert Table One Here]

Our findings reveal that policy-switching is rare, but not unique to Latin America. Even in the narrow yet important area of economic policy, parties do switch policies from time to time

[^5]under all democratic institutional formats. Stokes recognized this, saying "the phenomenon of policy-switching is broader than Latin America and broader than economic policy" (2). ${ }^{11}$ How broad a phenomenon is economic policy-switching? Table One certainly suggests that more switches have occurred in presidential systems than in other democratic constitutional frameworks, but it says nothing about the relative frequency of policy-switches under different democratic regimes. Table Two shows the relative incidence of switches by regime type. In this simple breakdown, switching again appears to occur far more frequently under pure presidentialism. Only six elections out of 191 (or $3.1 \%$ ) in parliamentary systems resulted in a policy switch, while fifteen elections out of 88 elections (or about 17\%) in presidential systems did so. The rate for semi-presidential systems is much closer to that for parliamentary systems than to that for presidential systems (4 of 106 , or $1.9 \%$ ). ${ }^{12}$

## [Insert Table Two Here]

It is possible that policy switching is less likely in richer countries, perhaps because rich countries have either a lower demand for security policy promises (they can afford adjustments or voters better understand that adjustments are sometimes necessary) or a lesser need for adjustments (because of overall more diverse and better managed economies). So, in Table Two we also break down the incidence of switches in only middle-income and poorer countries. Doing so also partly corrects for the rich-country bias against presidentialism: Aside from the USA, all the world's richest democracies are parliamentary or semi-presidential. Thus, if country wealth depresses the incidence of policy switches but is highly correlated with parliamentary democracy (as it is), the impact of presidentialism on policy switching could be attenuated when we consider only the less wealthy countries. This analysis is shown in the lower panel of Table

[^6]Two. The results are hardly different from what we see in the full world sample.
The findings in Table Two strongly support our hypothesis that mandate-representation is less likely under presidentialism - at least in terms of economic policy. Yet perhaps other variables might confound this finding. To confirm our hypothesis, we conducted extensive multivariate statistical tests. We explored the impact of several political and economic variables that might be correlated with policy-switching. Our most important political variable relates to the structure of executive-legislative relations: dummy variables for Presidentialism, SemiPresidentialism, and Parliamentarism. We hypothesize that regardless of other variables included in the analysis, policy-switching should prove more likely under pure presidentialism than under the other two regime types.

We also included a variable for government status. One of Stokes' most important findings (101) was that single-party majority and coalition majority governments are less likely to switch. We create a dummy called Majority Government, which encompasses both singleparty and coalition majority situations. We then interact this variable with the regime variables, in order to distinguish the effect of regime type per se from the impact of regime type under only certain party-system configurations. ${ }^{13}$

Following Stokes, we also tested for the impact of Age of the prime minister's or president's party, and Years since a transition to democracy, to explore the hypotheses that switches are associated with less-institutionalized parties or party systems. Neither of these variables proved statistically significant. Finally, we explored the impact of the competitiveness of the election. Stokes suggested that tighter races encourage dissimulation, while big leads encourage politicians to truthfully reveal their future proposals (Stokes 58). We use the Margin of victory measured in percent as the indicator of electoral competitiveness.

[^7]As for economic variables, like Stokes we hypothesize that generally speaking, we ought to observe policy-switching under conditions of economic crisis (Stokes, 97). We use the percentage real growth of GDP growth (Economy) in the year of the election if the election was held in the $3^{\text {rd }}$ or $4^{\text {th }}$ quarters of the year, and GDP growth in the year prior to the election if the election was held in the $1^{\text {st }}$ or $2^{\text {nd }}$ quarters. We also tested for the impact of inflation on the likelihood of a switch, but found no relationship. (We tested for the impact of inflation in the current quarter, as well as the four quarters prior to the election.)

Finally, we also explored the hypotheses that poorer countries and those more exposed to international markets are more likely to see policy-switches. Both variables are associated with all the countries Stokes explored - Latin American countries are low or middle-income economies, and generally vulnerable to international pressures. Hypothetically, in such countries politicians might be loath to acknowledge their country's relative economic weakness during a campaign. As such, they might advocate "security-oriented" policies on the campaign trail, only to reverse course after the election and implement the "efficiency-oriented" policies necessary to save their country's economy from ruin. There is no theoretical reason why any of these variables should be associated with a greater probability of policy-switching only in Latin America. If they are associated with policy-switching they should predict a switch anywhere in the world. However, we found that neither, GDP per capita, Trade as a percentage of GDP, or Foreign Direct Investment as a percentage of GDP was associated with the likelihood of a switch. In short, neither poverty nor exposure to the world economy predicts policy-switches.

## [Insert Table Three Here]

Table Three presents the results of our statistical analysis. Because we found no differences between parliamentary and semi-presidential systems, to simplify our presentation we combine those two regime types to serve as our base category, against which we compare
presidentialism. The results confirm that for a sample of elections from the whole world, economic crisis is associated with the likelihood of a switch. In addition, we see that generally speaking, as the margin of victory increases, policy-switches become less likely.

The interpretation of the three political variables requires explanation. At first glance, it appears that presidentialism is strongly associated with a policy switch. However, because we have interacted Presidentialism and Majority Government, we must calculate conditional coefficients and standard errors. The coefficient on Presidentialism measures the impact of that regime type when Majority Government $=0$, that is, under conditions of minority government. Thus we can confirm that under those situations, we are far more likely to see a switch.

However, the conditional coefficient on Presidentialism when Majority Government $=1$ is .252 and the standard error is .388 , which indicates that under majority government, we are no more or less likely to see a policy switch under presidentialism than under any alternative form of government. (See Appendix 1 for the raw results and calculations of the conditional coefficient and S.E.) A helpful way to present our finding is through the use of simulations. Table Four calculates the predicted probabilities of a switch under different democratic regimes, varying only the government status variable.
[Table Four Here]
Although the predicted probability of a switch under majority presidentialism is twice as large as under majority government in other democratic regimes, the difference is not statistically significant. In contrast, the probability of a switch under minority presidentialism is far higher, and the difference is statistically significant. According to these simulations, we are likely to see a policy-switch one-third of the time under minority presidentialism. According to our data, in the real world, minority governments occur $54.5 \%$ of the time. One-third of $54.5 \%$ is $18 \%$, almost precisely the frequency of actual policy-switches under presidentialism as presented in

Table Two. To be precise, minority governments occur when the percentage of seats obtained by the president's party and/or the parties allied with the president do not exceed $50 \%$ in the year following the election. Presidents may subsequently obtain a majority - perhaps even due to the fact that they engaged in a policy-switch, but that is not our concern.

Our statistical results cannot confirm that policy-switches are more likely under presidentialism, all else equal. Policy-switches are far more likely under minority presidentialism, whether the president leads a single-party minority government or multiparty minority government (a breakdown of these two categories found no substantial differences in terms of the likelihood of a switch). Interestingly, policy-switches are not more likely under minority situations in either parliamentary or semi-presidential government. This finding follows from our argument above: incentive incompatibility between the president and his party, as discussed above, increases as the size of the president's legislative party decreases. Thus we have good reason to expect policy-switching to occur more frequently under minority presidential government. In contrast, under majority government incentive incompatibility lower. The separation of origin and survival still provide presidents with greater leeway than prime ministers, but perhaps they have fewer incentives to engage in wholesale policy switches. The extent of divergence between presidents and their parties under different government situations merits further research.

## Where does Semi-Presidentialism Fit?

[To Be Developed]

## Is Policy Switching a "Latin" Phenomenon?

Is there something about Latin America that drives our results? On the one hand the obvious answer is "no," since policy-switching is not unique to Latin America - it happens all around the world. Still, we face a potential methodological problem: of our 87 cases from Latin

America and the Caribbean, 74 are presidential (Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica are parliamentary). All cases from Spanish and/or Portuguese-speaking countries are presidential. Moreover, 74 of the 91 presidential cases are from Latin America, and 14 of the 15 policy switches under presidentialism occurred in Latin America. The only non-Latin American presidential switch is Korea 1997.

An alternative hypothesis might suggest that some cultural trait explains the high frequency of policy switches in Latin America. This notion assumes that there is something common to all Latin American political cultures and that the commonalities overwhelm any salient cultural differences. Moreover, it assumes this cultural commonality finds expression in the actions of political leaders, which further implies that culture plays a greater role in the political process than political leaders' capacity to make strategic political decisions.

Are Latin American publics and political leaders sufficiently similar so that we can blame policy-switching on their shared cultural traits, rather than the shared institutional context of presidentialism? Research from the World Values Survey (Inglehart and Carballo 1997) does indicate that cultural similarities exist across Latin America and differentiate Latin cultures relative to clusters of countries from other geographical regions. This finding echoes scholars' long-standing attempts to identify elements of "Latin American" culture - traits that vary little from the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego. In our view such a hypothesis amounts to little more than a crudely racist notion that Latin American leaders are intemperate, impetuous caudillos and thus simply "unpredictable," and are thus far more likely to engage in policy-switching.

## 4. Conclusion

Building on Shugart and Carey (1992) Manin et al. (1999), and Stokes (2001) we began with the idea that under presidentialism, voters can expect members of a given party who occupy the executive and legislative branches of a presidential system to "represent" their interests in
different ways. Voters may also hold those same members of a given party who occupy different branches of government accountable in different ways. Both sorts of dynamics are highly unlikely in a parliamentary system. This implies that political parties in presidential systems are unlikely, under most conditions, to act as agents of representation as they do in parliamentary systems. The conceptualization of representation in parliamentary systems assumes the "executive" and "legislative" branches of political parties always act in unison. However, this is less likely under pure presidentialism, especially under situations of minority government. In short, presidential systems are more likely to generate different forms of representation and accountability, in which voters have different expectations for each branch of government and hold each branch of government accountable for different things.

Political scientists have yet to link our knowledge of different institutional structures, and our theories about how regime characteristics affect such things as party systems and regime survival, to truly comparative theories of democratic representation. In this paper we attempted to reconceptualize how we think of representation in presidential systems. Representation - the links between citizens and elected officials - involves different processes given different constitutional structures, so perhaps it should be obvious that the quality of citizen interest representation is likely to differ under presidential or parliamentary government. What might be surprising is the relative lack of scholarly research confronting this issue.

Traditional notions of "responsible party government," and thus of citizens' representation by political parties as their agents, include both the enactment of new policies and the preservation of certain established policies. Parties' promises to do both, through efforts to establish and maintain their collective reputation, are viewed as the key to their survival and as the main normative criterion by which we should judge whether party government is operating successfully. To what extent can parties undertake such promises under different constitutional
regimes? Stokes explored whether party "strength" - their cohesiveness, their need to maintain their 'brand name' - is associated with the likelihood of mandate representation. Her findings confound the conventional wisdom, because she found no connection between party strength and mandate representation whatsoever: policy switches occurred under both weak and strong parties.

Our findings can be compared against Stokes'. Mandate violations may occur under both strong and weak parties, but it occurs far more frequently under minority presidential government. The causes of mandate-representation are thus not with parties per se but with the impact of presidentialism on certain party-system configurations, in particular in situations where the executive does not have a legislative majority. This is the situation in which intra-party interests most diverge between the members of the "executive" and "legislative" branches of a single party. Our findings thus follow from our theoretical argument: incentive incompatibility between the president and his party increases as the size of the president's legislative party decreases, and these divergent incentives are frequently associated with policy-switches. Analogous situations are inconceivable under parliamentarism (of course, as our regression analysis shows, policy-switching may several sources). In short, political representation differs across democratic regimes because different democratic regimes make the parties different - and this difference is especially evident when there is no majority government.

Our argument has several obvious empirical extensions, and testing the arguments in this paper would push political science research a long way forward toward understanding the nature and prospects for representation under presidentialism. Unfortunately, very little research of this kind exists. We articulated a straightforward hypothesis: parties under presidential and parliamentary systems will differ in terms of the degree to which they follow through on professed mandates. We found this to be true under a common situation, minority government.

In a sense, our argument seeks to confirm the long-standing belief that "responsible party government" is less likely under presidential systems - if one takes the definition of responsible party government to be the degree to which a party in power follows through on the set of policies it offered to voters as its platform.

Table 1: Policy-Switches Worldwide, 1978-2002

| Country | Year | System |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Argentina | 1989 | PRES |
| Australia | 1983 | PARL |
| Bolivia | 1989 | PRES |
| Costa Rica | 1990 | PRES |
| Costa Rica | 1994 | PRES |
| Dominican Rep. | 1982 | PRES |
| Dominican Rep. | 1990 | PRES |
| Ecuador | 1988 | PRES |
| Ecuador | 1992 | PRES |


| Ecuador | 1996 | PRES |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Ecuador | 2002 | PRES |
| France | 1995 | SEMI |
| France | 1997 | SEMI |
| Germany | 2002 | PARL |
| Greece | 1981 | PARL |
| Greece | 1985 | PARL |
| India | 1991 | PARL |
| Ireland | 1987 | PARL |
| Korea | 1997 | PRES |
| Panama | 1994 | PRES |
| Peru | 1990 | PRES |
| Poland | 1993 | SEMI |
| Romania | 1992 | SEMI |
| Venezuela | 1988 | PRES |
| Venezuela | 1993 | PRES |

Table 2: Frequency of Policy-Switching, 1978-2002

## All cases:

|  | Switches | Cases | \%Swit |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |
| Parliamentary | 6 | 191 | 3.14 |
| Presidential | 15 | 88 | 17.05 |
| Semi-presidential | 4 | 106 | 1.89 |

## Excluding the richest countries (those with GDP per capita over US\$15,000):

|  | Switches | Cases | \%Switches |
| :--- | :---: | :--- | :---: |
| Parliamentary | 4 | 91 | 4.40 |
| Presidential | 15 | 78 | 19.23 |
| Semi-presidential | 2 | 67 | 2.99 |

Table 3:
Probit Regression: Correlates of Policy-Switches around the World

| Variable | Coefficient (S.E.) | $\mathbf{P}>\|\mathbf{z}\|$ |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Presidentialism | $1.143(.347)$ | .001 |
| Majority Government | $-.043(.338)$ | .899 |
| Presidentialism * Majority Government | $-.891(.513)$ | .082 |
| Margin | $-.015(.007)$ | .026 |
| Economy | $-.041(.017)$ | .016 |
| Constant | $-1.594(.250)$ | .000 |
| $\mathrm{~N}=343$ |  |  |

Table 4:
Predicted Probabilities (\%) of a Switch (95\% confidence interval)

|  | Presidentialism | Not Presidentialism |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Majority Government | 9.90 | 5.33 |
|  | $(1.86-25.29)$ | $(2.01-10.72)$ |
| Minority Government | 32.95 | 6.19 |
|  | $(18.71-48.76)$ | $(2.01-13.85)$ |

## Appendix 1: Raw Results

Regressions were run using STATA 9.0 for Mac OS X.

| Probit regres Log pseudolik | ihood $=-7$ | 146794 |  | Numb Wald Prob Pse | of obs <br> i2 (5) <br> chi2 <br> R2 |  | $\begin{array}{r} 343 \\ 29.61 \\ 0.0000 \\ 0.1590 \end{array}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| switch1 | Coef. | Robust Std. Err. | z | P> $\mid$ z \| | [95\% |  | Interval] |
| pres | 1.143148 | . 3473888 | 3.29 | 0.001 | . 4622 |  | 1.824017 |
| coalmajor | -. 042835 | . 3384732 | -0.13 | 0.899 | -. 7062 |  | . 6205603 |
| presxcoalmaj | -. 8907721 | . 5129123 | -1.74 | 0.082 | -1.8960 |  | . 1145175 |
| margin | -. 0153307 | . 0068678 | -2.23 | 0.026 | -. 0287 |  | -. 00187 |
| dgdp | -. 0409466 | . 0169516 | -2.42 | 0.016 | -. 0741 |  | -. 0077221 |
| _cons | -1.594177 | .2501391 | -6.37 | 0.000 | -2.08 |  | -1.103913 |

Note: although we have 385 cases, the $\mathrm{N}=343$ in the regression because of missing economic and/or political data. Using the above results, conditional coefficients were calculated as follows:

```
.gen dydx=_b[ pres] + _b[ presxcoalmaj]
. matrix V = get(VCE)
.matrix C1 = V[3,1]
.gen column1 = 1
.mkmat column1, matrix(col1)
. matrix cov_pres_presxcoalmaj = C1*col1
. svmat cov_pres_presxcoalmaj, name(cov_pres_presxcoalmaj)
.gen vardydx=(_se[ pres])^2 + (_se[ presxcoalmaj])^2 + 2*cov_pres_presxcoalmaj
.gen sedydx=sqrt(vardydx)
. tab dydx
```

| dydx | Freq. | Percent | Cum. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| . 2523759 | 385 | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| Total | 385 | 100.00 |  |

. tab sedydx

| sedydx | Freq. | Percent | Cum. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| . 3879933 | 385 | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| Total | 385 | 100.00 |  |

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[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ Once can note the absence of attention to the presidency as a source of representational influence in the US in Miller and Stokes (1966), an absence repeated in Converse and Pierce's study of France (1986).
    ${ }^{2}$ Criticism of presidentialism for its alleged drawbacks, including "dual democratic legitimacies" and a tendency for political "outsiders" to gain office (see e.g. Linz 1990; Linz 1994; Mainwaring 1993; Stepan and Skach 1993) has been highly suggestive, but has yet to fully consider the impact of variation on the separation or fusion of executive and legislative powers on political representation per se.

[^1]:    ${ }^{3}$ This paper represents one of the "empirical" chapters in a book manuscript in preparation. The "theory" chapter of this book manuscript is also available on the PROceedings website for APSA 2006.
    ${ }^{4}$ Of course, no democracy enforces mandate representation, and with good reason: when circumstances change, a party may need to violate its mandate in order to adequately represent citizens' interests. The fact that voters' interests change in response to changing environmental conditions implies that they might not even want parties to stick to their mandates. If the social, economic, or political context changes (e.g.. a recession or terrorist attack occurs) voters might certainly want the party in power to devise appropriate solutions for new problems. Politicians might also be strategic and believe that voters have incorrect information about the "best" policy. They might thus engage in dissimulation on the campaign trail and then switch policies once in office, believing that voters will reward them if the policy proves successful, even if it violated the party's professed campaign platform.

[^2]:    ${ }^{5}$ Stokes found that presidential term limits were irrelevant to her argument and findings. At present we are skeptical that term limits are necessary conditions for violations of mandates across democratic regimes. Political scientists typically assume that politicians desire reelection, because acting to assure reelection is the best way to ensure continued access to the various forms of power and its trappings. Both presidents and prime ministers have shorter time-horizons in terms of their political career than the average legislator, regardless off whether executive reelection is permitted or not. The key, we argue, are the incentives that presidents and prime minister have to act as faithful agents of their parties. These incentives are fundamentally determined by the separation of origin and survival, and the potential for reelection in some presidential systems is a secondary concern. We discuss this issue in the theoretical chapter of this project, also presented at this APSA meeting.

[^3]:    ${ }^{6}$ An interesting parallel can be found in corporate governance structures, which resemble parliamentary systems; few corporations adopt a presidential form of governance. There is a reason: shareholders perceive the risks to their investments as higher under a system that grants the CEO the sort of autonomy that a president enjoys.

[^4]:    ${ }^{7}$ There were 44 elections held during the 1982-95 period in the countries Stokes explored, but Stokes could not find any information on two elections held during that period; see Stokes, note 12.
    ${ }^{8}$ Our research, as well as Stokes', relied heavily on news media accounts of campaigns and subsequent policies. We employed the "Lexis-Nexis Academic" on-line search engine, which consults hundreds of global news sources.

[^5]:    ${ }^{9}$ Of course, both our analysis and Stokes' preclude analysis of "strategic electoral ambiguity" on the part of prospective presidents or prime ministers. This merits additional exploration.
    ${ }^{10}$ For the Latin American cases, our classifications agree with Stokes' in every case except one: Colombia 1982, which Stokes classified as a switch and we do not. President Betancur campaigned on a security-oriented platform and was elected in May 1982. We found no evidence that he switched policies within six months of taking office; media coverage indicates that Betancur continued the "security-oriented" policies after he took office in August. For example, in November 1982 the Washington Post (Washington Post, The Washington Post 1982) called Betancur a "populist." A December 2 New York Times article indicated no change in the president's policies (New York Times 1982). Echoing his "populist" appeal, In November Betancur warned that he might resort to nationalizations in an attempt to stabilize the economy (Latin America Weekly Report, November 19, 1982). It is true that a year later, Betancur was forced by changing circumstances to adopt heterodox policies to combat an economic downturn (Latin America Regional Reports: Andean Group, 9/2/83, 10/7/83, and 11/11/83).
    Nevertheless, he continued to resist orthodox shock therapy. Betancur does not qualify in Stokes' sense as a policyswitcher, because he did not switch from "security" to "efficiency" policies within the first six months of his administration and only partially switched due to changing circumstances. Of course, including Betancur in our analysis would only bolster support for our hypothesis.

[^6]:    ${ }^{11}$ Another recognized difficulty with this kind of analysis is that we do not measure policy switches that were attempted but that failed or policy switches that were desired but were not attempted - but the same could be said of Stokes.
    ${ }^{12}$ Two of the switches under semi-presidentialism were "presidential" switches, while two were "parliamentary party" switches.

[^7]:    ${ }^{13}$ Stokes included a "term limits" variable but found no effect. We ignore this variable because it is almost perfectly correlated with presidentialism.

