

Scholars have devoted substantial research to political parties, but comparativists have not explored how presidentialism and parliamentarism differently affect party development, organization, and behavior. The parties' literature developed from explorations of European parliamentary systems, in which constitutional structure is not an independent variable, or from the U.S. case, in which the presidentialism is sometimes not related to party development. The result is a serious gap in the literature. In this article, the author argues that the institutions of presidentialism generate incentives for parties to organize and behave differently than they would otherwise under parliamentarism. I explore the consequences for party behavior of a shift from pure parliamentarism to semipresidentialism in France in 1958 and Israel in 1992. Given the paucity of research on how the separation of powers creates "presidentialized parties," the argument suggests scholars rethink parties' actual role in both within presidential systems as well as across democratic regime types

PRESIDENTIALIZED PARTIES

The Separation of Powers and Party Organization and Behavior

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Despite decades of research on political parties, political scientists have largely ignored the possibility that differences in constitutional structure might affect party origins, organization, and behavior. Comparative research on political parties truly began with the study of western Europe, where parliamentarism dominates and constitutional structure is thus not an independent variable. Because comparativists interested in political parties have largely built on concepts developed for the western European experi-

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ence and have ignored potential insights from presidentialism in the United States, we lack general hypotheses about how the separation of powers affects political parties. By exploring how presidentialism creates “presidentialized parties,” I begin to address the issue in this article.

Why should constitutional structure matter for party development, organization, and behavior? Under parliamentarism, parties organize to win legislative seats; capture of executive office is indirect and may even result from the postelection formation of a governing coalition. Under presidentialism, the possibility of capturing the executive branch directly provides parties with different organizational and behavioral incentives. Winning the executive branch, not legislative seats, may become parties’ driving goal. If parties organize to win executive elections, they will develop different organizational forms and adopt different electoral strategies than they would under parliamentarism. Thus, presidentialism imposes an institutional configuration on political parties that generates different organizational imperatives and electoral behavior. More specifically, presidentialism heightens the intensity of parties’ “vote-seeking” incentives (Strøm, 1990) relative to parliamentarism. However, as I will explain below, presidentialism’s influence is much more complex.

This point is especially relevant given that with two exceptions, every presidential system—including the United States—adopted presidentialism before a competitive party system emerged. Presidentialism can therefore be taken as exogenous and as having an independent impact on party development. As Pierson (2000) recently argued, institutions tend to generate incentives that induce the formation of new and complementary institutions. Thus, we have good reason to suppose that presidential constitutions encourage the development of specifically presidentialized parties.

To illustrate this claim, suppose that at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the United States had adopted parliamentarism. Scholars have long recognized that in the absence of presidential elections, U.S. parties would have developed differently. Legions of undergraduates learn that “the most obvious change” in the early U.S. party system was the emergence of competitive presidential elections (Beck, 1997, p. 22). McCormick (1979), Epstein (1967, 1986), and others have noted that party development in the United States did not emerge from societal cleavages, legislative divisions, or electoral polarization on particular issues, as theories developed for the European experience argue. True party competition in the United States first emerged around the presidential race, because the presidency “is the rough equivalent of the kind of executive power that parties in a parliamentary system organize to seek when they focus on legislative elections” (Epstein, 1986, p. 84). Thus, although parties seek executive power in both systems, “it

is the kind of party that results from the presidential focus that is necessarily distinctive, if only because it is separable from legislative party success or failure” (p. 84).

Comparativists have largely ignored any lessons from the United States about party development under presidential government. For example, Dix (1989) applied Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) model to Latin America but did not explore how differences in constitutional structure affect political parties. Likewise, Mainwaring and Scully’s (1995) exploration of Latin America focused on party system institutionalization but ignored presidentialism’s affect on parties themselves. Indeed, in a recent comprehensive review of the parties’ literature, Stokes (1999) mentioned no research on how presidentialism and parliamentarism might differently affect parties.

Similarly, few scholars of American political parties have placed the U.S. experience in comparative perspective. I am not suggesting that scholars have never noted that presidentialism makes a difference for party organization and behavior. For example, in a review of Duverger’s *Political Parties*, Beer (1953) suggested that the absence of any discussion of the impact of the separation of powers on party behavior seriously limited Duverger’s argument. Although scholars such as Schlesinger (1991) followed Beer to argue that a country’s institutional configuration provides an “opportunity structure” that conditions party behavior, to my knowledge, only Epstein (1967, 1986) has explicitly attempted to place the U.S. party experience with presidentialism in comparative perspective.

Epstein (1967, p. 35) argued that governmental structure conditions party development and that party leaders must adapt to these institutions. Unlike parliamentarism, presidentialism gives parties two electoral prizes, and the methods for winning each prize may conflict. Yet despite his insights, Epstein aimed only to explain why U.S. and European parties differ. He did not compare parties in presidential systems to each other or parties in presidential and parliamentary systems generally. Given the widespread use of presidentialism around the world today, we should continue to explore how the separation of powers affects political parties.

To test the hypothesis that parties behave differently under presidentialism and parliamentarism, we would ideally compare parties in countries that have shifted from one system to the other. However, no country has ever done this. Only two democracies have undertaken institutional changes close to this ideal: France in 1958 and Israel in 1992. I will explore the impact of constitutional change on party organization and behavior in these two quasi-experimental cases.

For space reasons, in this article I focus on presidentialism’s impact on party behavior at the electoral stage of the political process only. This is the

tip of the iceberg: I leave to future work presidentialism's impact on party origins, development, and organization and party behavior at the governmental stage. To understand how presidentialism affects party behavior, in the next section I review Strøm's (1990) "A Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties" (see also Müller and Strøm, 2000). Although Strøm applied his framework only to party behavior under parliamentarism, the argument usefully illustrates the trade-offs all party leaders face between different potential goals. I then extend Strøm's approach to explain how presidentialism generates different incentives and thus encourages different party behavior than parliamentarism. Subsequently, I illustrate this argument with evidence from France and Israel. In the conclusion, I explore the implications of my findings for the comparative study of political parties.

PARTY BEHAVIOR: INSTITUTIONS AND THE INHERENCE OF TRADE-OFFS

Strøm's (1990) approach to modeling party behavior under parliamentarism provides a good starting point for exploring how presidentialism affects parties. Strøm integrated three competing approaches to party behavior: the vote-seeking party, the office-seeking party, and the policy-seeking party. Scholars had concluded that no single approach fits perfectly, and Strøm's innovation was to argue that one can observe all three kinds of behavior in all parties and that parties face inevitable trade-offs between these goals (p. 570).¹

Downs had claimed that parties maximize votes. However, votes may be instrumental to obtaining office and/or policy benefits, so Riker (and others) responded that parties maximize control over offices such as cabinet portfolios. This argument implies that parties seek votes only until they are relatively certain they will win office. Others countered that parties do not maximize either votes or office but instead seek to maximize influence over policy. According to this view, a party's success depends on its ability to move policy toward its preferences and/or prevent moves away from its preferences. These three goals are not mutually exclusive, but pursuing one goal incurs trade-offs in terms of the other goals. For example, pursuit of a "hard-line" policy would conflict with the goal of broadening a party's vote base. Strøm argued that party organization, along with electoral, legislative, and governmental institutions, influences party leaders' decisions to accept goal trade-

1. Strøm recognized that the separation of powers could affect party behavior (p. 566n) but did not elaborate.

offs between vote, office, and policy seeking. In what follows, I ignore the impact of party organization on party behavior to keep the discussion tractable and focus on how legislative, governmental, and primarily electoral institutions affect goal trade-offs.² I first briefly restate Strøm's arguments about how these institutions affect parties under parliamentarism. In the next section, I extend this logic to presidential parties.

Electoral institutions translate votes into seats. Disproportionality inevitably results between party vote and seat shares: for example, a single-member district system penalizes small parties and overrepresents larger parties. The degree of disproportionality depends on the electoral formula, district magnitude, thresholds, and whether the system has an upper tier. Strøm argued that the more predictable the system's distortions, the more incentives party leaders have to pursue votes. Unpredictable systems encourage parties to adopt risk-averse strategies in terms of vote seeking and instead adopt a policy- or office-seeking strategy.

Legislative institutions convert legislative representation into bargaining power. This is irrelevant in a two-party parliamentary system, in which a majority always emerges. However, multiparty systems complicate the relationship between legislative weight and bargaining power. As the number of parties increases, so does the complexity of the bargaining situation and the less predictable are the benefits of simple electoral strength. Parties will seek votes to the degree they are certain that legislative representation will translate into political power. But if leaders believe that pursuing votes will result in being left on the sidelines, then they may choose a policy- or office-seeking strategy, for example, by capturing some policy niche and then entering a governing coalition.

Government institutions involve the pay-offs from participation in the governing coalition in the executive branch. Those who participate control policy and office benefits, and whether parties pursue office or policy depends on the (subjectively determined) relative pay-off of each for being in the government. A party may actually choose to remain in the opposition, because being in the opposition does not automatically exclude a party from policy or office benefits (minority governments typically share power with the majority opposition), and entering government entails the risk of losing votes in the future. In some countries, governing parties monopolize the office and policy benefits, and other systems give opposition parties a share. The greater the "office" benefits to the party of being in the government ver-

2. Presidentialism not only affects party behavior (à la Strøm) but it also affects party organization (which Strøm used as an independent variable) as well as party development. I recognize that these are all endogenous but leave this issue aside to keep the discussion tractable. I assume that the constitutional structure and the electoral rules are exogenous.

sus the “policy” benefit of remaining in the opposition, the greater the incentives to seek office.

Strøm’s conceptualization of party goal trade-offs can be summarized: The more predictably votes translate into policy or office benefits, the more likely parties will pursue votes. Similarly, the relative availability of office versus policy pay-offs affects the trade-offs party leaders make between those two goals. Leaders base their strategy on the general impact of these institutions in each country as well as on contextual factors.

EXTENDING THE APPROACH TO PARTIES IN PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEMS

According to Strøm, institutions shape the incentives that party leaders face under parliamentarism. The same logic holds across constitutional regimes: Party leaders face different incentives under presidentialism, *ceteris paribus*. This generates two distinct research questions: How can we compare parties in presidential versus parliamentary systems and how can we compare parties across presidential systems? Extending Strøm’s argument complicates the study of parties in presidential systems because other questions follow these initial two: Which kind of votes do parties attempt to maximize and when—executive, legislative, or both? How do parties allocate resources for seeking votes in executive and/or legislative elections? Under what conditions do parties seek executive and/or legislative office or policy benefits? If parties are policy seekers, where do they see policy benefits as greatest—the executive or legislative branch? How do parties resolve these trade-offs? Only by assuming that the separation of powers is irrelevant for questions such as these can we ignore the potential for presidentialism to affect parties differently.

The separation of powers matters a great deal for partisan politics in presidential regimes, implying that significant differences ought to exist across presidentialized party systems as well as between presidentialized parties and parliamentarized parties. Indeed, presidentialism presents party leaders with an even more complicated set of trade-offs than does parliamentarism. A modification of Strøm’s illustration of party policy evolution, presented in Figure 1, illustrates the complexity of the dilemmas under presidentialism.

A party begins with a policy position, at time $t + 1$. The top half of Figure 1 replicates Strøm’s conceptualization of party strategy under parliamentarism. Yet when we add the bottom half of Figure 1, we see that the separation of powers implies that parties face these same trade-offs for executive elections, too. Moreover, as the arrows indicate, parties can never separate the

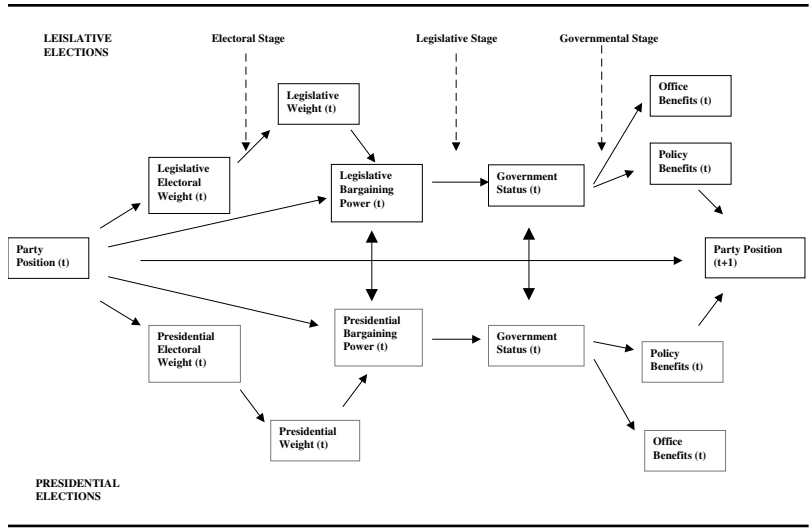


Figure 1: Party position evolution under presidentialism.

political impact of executive from legislative elections in presidential systems. Thus under presidentialism, nonconcurrent legislative elections are not equivalent to parliamentary elections. Presidentialism complicates party leaders' dilemmas by forcing them to face trade-offs between vote-, office-, and policy-seeking goals in two separate elections (often simultaneously). Party leaders also must face the likelihood that the trade-offs the party faces at one level are not the same that it faces at the other level and accept the fact that executive elections influence legislative elections.

Let us explore this dynamic further. As noted, I will concentrate in this article only on the goal trade-offs presidential parties experience in the electoral stage and leave for future research an exploration of the impact that presidentialism has on party organization, party cohesion, the distribution of agenda-setting power within the party, or other important arenas of party politics at the legislative or governmental stages of the political process.

Presidential elections generally encourage vote-seeking behavior. These incentives are much stronger, *ceteris paribus*, than any vote-seeking incentive that exists under parliamentarism, because no parliamentary system has a threshold of exclusion as high as every presidential system does for executive elections, in which the winner takes "each and every seat," so to speak. In particular, parties that are viable contenders in the presidential election have especially strong incentives to pursue a vote-seeking strategy in the presiden-

tial election. These incentives result from the nature of presidential elections: Regardless of the presidential electoral rules, parties that nominate presidential candidates must gain the votes of a large portion of the national electorate.³ This highlights the importance of viability for a party's electoral strategy, which in turn focuses attention on a party's decision to nominate a presidential candidate or not, a factor that is obviously irrelevant under parliamentarism.⁴

In addition, in contrast to parliamentarism, presidentialism forces parties to decide how to allocate resources and personnel to both executive and legislative races, often simultaneously. In general, we expect parties that can viably contend for the presidential race to concentrate their efforts and resources on the executive election as opposed to the legislative election.⁵ Two factors encourage this tendency. First, presidential elections dominate legislative campaigns through "coattail" effects. Scholars of the United States have long recognized the importance of coattail effects, "the ability of a candidate at the top of the ticket to carry into office . . . his party's candidates on the same ticket" (Beck, 1997, p. 251). Coattails link legislative candidates to their party's presidential candidate. The singularity and relative importance of the presidential campaign means voters pay greater attention to the executive race. Because presidential candidates typically obtain the lion's share of campaign finance and of national media attention and because the national party typically organizes presidential nominations and may also control campaign finance, candidates for legislative office may seek organizational and financial support from the national party and/or its candidate. Presidential coattails can swell a margin of victory—or even provide the margin of victory—for individual congressional candidates or for their entire legislative party lists. Party electoral organization will therefore concentrate on winning the presidential race, not on winning legislative seats.

3. Strøm argued that a predictable relationship between votes and seats encourages vote seeking. Presidential elections are by their nature highly unpredictable, because they involve potentially serious distortions between vote percentage and seat percentage. Yet presidential elections do not discourage vote seeking, because Strøm also noted that the greater the probability of a single-party majority, the more parties value votes. Under presidentialism, the probability of a single party holding "all the seats" in the executive branch is one. This swamps the vote-discouraging distortion inherent in presidential electoral rules and encourages a vote-seeking strategy.

4. The prominence of "outsiders" as presidential nominees versus the dominance of "insiders" as party leaders under parliamentarism is one piece of evidence that the processes for nominating a president versus electing a party leader under parliamentarism are not equivalent.

5. This is tautologically true for nonconcurrent presidential elections as well as in concurrent executive and legislative elections, and even nonconcurrent legislative elections exhibit strong presidential traits as lead-ins to the next executive election.

Parties that nominate presidential candidates also concentrate resources on executive elections because, if elected, their party's candidate will serve as de facto party leader during his or her term, even if he or she is not formally the party's leader. Presidents articulate party positions, propose legislation, and act to maintain the party's image (often in their own mold, of course), thus playing a crucial role in distributing policy pay-offs to party members. Presidents also tend to concentrate the power to select bureaucratic personnel and distribute patronage, thereby dominating the distribution of office benefits.⁶

Not every party faces similar incentives to adopt a vote-seeking strategy in presidential elections. The extent to which parties pursue a vote-seeking strategy is largely a function of the degree to which they are viable contenders in the presidential election.⁷ Parties that are less viable in the presidential election ought to exhibit relatively less vote-seeking behavior. Because nominating a candidate and running a presidential campaign consume valuable resources and because presidential elections so dramatically distort the relationship between votes and seats, smaller parties have fewer incentives to nominate a candidate in the first place. Yet parties running only legislative candidates do not simply revert to a parliamentary parties' world, because the presence of the presidential election affects all parties' strategies in ways that parliamentary elections do not: Their strategies in both the presidential and legislative races are affected by what the larger parties do, and they in turn can affect larger parties' strategies.

For example, parties that do not nominate a presidential candidate could capitalize on other parties' decisions to adopt a vote-seeking strategy in the presidential race—which these same parties would, of course, not have chosen under parliamentarism, in which there are no presidential elections—by choosing to focus their efforts on a policy- or office-seeking strategy in the legislative race (as happened in Israel). Another option for smaller parties would be to enter an electoral coalition in the presidential race. This can be interpreted as either a policy- or office-seeking strategy, depending on what the larger coalition member agreed to “trade” for the bloc of votes that its presidential candidate would presumably gain by allying with the smaller

6. This also implies that the internal distribution of power will differ within presidential parties that hold the executive branch relative to parliamentary parties that hold a legislative majority.

7. The degree of vote seeking also depends partly on whether a one- or two-round system is used for presidential elections. A one-round system distorts the votes-seats relationship somewhat less than a two-round system. In a one-round system, the candidate with the most votes wins. However, in a two-round system, the second-place finisher in the first round may eventually win. Thus, in a two-round system, presidential candidates are relatively freer to conduct ideological campaigns in the first round. This merits further exploration.

party. Such a strategy saves resources for both the smaller and larger party: The larger party obtains its goal of winning as many votes as possible, and the smaller party obtains the goal of obtaining control over offices or influence over policy (if their coalition partner wins, of course) without having to pursue a costly vote-seeking strategy in the presidential race. Such trade-offs are nonsensical in parliamentary systems, which lack presidential elections.

A third option is to nominate a presidential candidate but at the same time run a policy-seeking campaign in both the presidential and legislative races, in the hopes of attracting attention for long-term party-building efforts and benefiting from presidential coattails in the legislative election. For example, a party might carve out a policy niche in both races simultaneously and hope that the presidential candidate helps elect candidates to the legislature, where they may later successfully influence policy as a member of the president's cabinet or governing coalition or as a member of the opposition.

I should note that for nonconcurrent legislative elections, all parties face relatively fewer incentives for vote-seeking behavior, but at these times they still will not revert to Strøm's parliamentary world. Parties' strategies in off-year elections may be entirely shaped by their position vis-à-vis the president: They may win or lose votes based on their position in or out of the president's cabinet, given the president's popularity. They cannot simply campaign as though a legislative victory would mean taking control of the government, as in a parliamentary system. In addition, presidents may actively campaign on behalf of their legislative contingent in off-year elections without fear of losing their own positions. Given presidents' inevitable leadership roles in electoral and legislative politics in both concurrent and nonconcurrent elections, even nonconcurrent legislative elections may take on a presidential character, especially those legislative elections that are viewed as a run-up to the next presidential election.

In sum, presidentialism affects the trade-offs that party leaders face. Before moving on to the two test cases, let me summarize my expectations. There are two key behavioral differences between presidential and parliamentary parties. First and most obviously, parliamentary parties never have to face the incentives that a direct executive election imposes. This focuses attention on the issue of parties' subjective evaluation of their viability in the presidential race—on which all their subsequent electoral strategy will be based—from whether to nominate a presidential candidate to how to campaign in the legislative race. For parties that decide to nominate a candidate, all else being equal, the institutions of presidentialism encourage relatively more vote-seeking behavior at the electoral stage than does parliamentarism. Specifically, presidentialism affects how parties decide to allocate campaign

finance or develop media campaigns: Policy concerns will be sacrificed, and party organization will be marginalized in setting the party's agenda and establishing the party's ideology. In addition, party campaign organizations also ought to evolve differently under presidentialism. Parties will tend to develop separate nuclei devoted to electing the chief executive in presidential systems, but central party organizations are more likely to retain control over the entire campaign in parliamentary systems.

Second, presidential parties confront different and potentially conflicting incentives from two levels of elections, executive and legislative. Presidentialism forces parties to make hard choices about candidate nomination, resource allocation, and electoral coalitions that parliamentary parties do not face. Whether held concurrently or not, presidential elections strongly influence legislative elections, which makes the decision process for presidentialized parties' electoral strategy different from parties in parliamentary systems. Within presidential systems, the degree of observed vote-, office-, or policy-seeking behavior depends largely on a party's subjective evaluation of its chances of winning the presidential election. This evaluation will then affect how the party behaves in both executive and legislative elections. If the party decides to nominate a presidential candidate, it has strong incentives to shift resources away from its legislative campaign and concentrate fully on the presidential race. In contrast, parties that believe they have little chance to win the presidential election may opt to pursue an office- or policy-seeking strategy.⁸ Parties that do not nominate a presidential candidate will behave differently from those that do, although the effect of the presidential election on the entire system implies that parties that do not nominate a presidential candidate will not behave as if they were simply in a parliamentary system.

I have focused almost exclusively on the trade-offs that presidentialism introduces at the electoral stage of the political process. Parties will confront similar trade-offs at other stages of the political game, and these trade-offs will affect the subsequent electoral process. For space reasons, I do not discuss these other issues either theoretically or empirically. Instead, in the next sections, I provide evidence that supports the theoretical claim that parties behave differently under presidentialism by exploring the cases of France and Israel, which moved from pure parliamentary systems to semipresidential systems.

8. This begs the question of what factors are behind a party's decision to nominate a presidential candidate. Size ought to be important: The relationship between party size and the decision to nominate ought to be S-shaped, because the relationship between a party's probability of victory and its size is S-shaped. However, I know of no studies relating party size and presidential nomination strategies.

PRESIDENTIALIZED PARTIES IN FRANCE

The French Fourth Republic's pure parliamentary system was noted for its undisciplined parties, fragmented party system, and a governability problem. In 1958, French leaders designed the Fifth Republic's constitution to ameliorate this political chaos (Cole & Campbell, 1989, pp. 176-177), creating a strong presidency to anchor the political system. The president does not depend on the legislature for survival in office, and he holds important institutional powers, including the power to appoint the prime minister (Article 8), call referenda (Article 11), and dissolve parliament and call new elections (Article 12).

This semipresidential regime has caused significant changes in French party politics, forcing the major parties to present credible presidential candidates and then focus energy and resources on the presidential election, as opposed to the parliamentary elections. This has likewise encouraged political personalization, a decline in the importance of ideology, and the marginalization of party organization from political campaigns. In short, the presidentialization of elections has transformed interparty competition and altered the character of France's main political parties (Cole, 1990a, 1993; Frears, 1991; Machin, 1989).

Direct presidential elections demand that parties present credible presidential candidates, not just a slate of credible legislative candidates. Given the electoral rules, credibility means that parties must broaden their base sufficiently not only to come in first or second in the first round but also to win the second round. Knapp (1990) confirms that this institutional requirement forces French parties to "differentiate themselves on a daily basis from their immediate rivals while also cultivating the broad, consensual appeal necessary to field a successful candidate at the second ballot of a presidential election" (p. 140). Their desire to win the presidential election has pushed parties to adjust their campaign strategies, reducing the importance of both ideology and party organization and increasing electoral personalization.

Across the spectrum, the need to field a credible presidential candidate has reduced the importance of ideology in French campaigns. Cole (1990a) notes that presidential candidates in France tend to "base [their] electoral campaigns upon the notion of *rassemblement*, the ecumenical appeal beyond the political space represented by any one political tendency" (p. 13). The incentives to reduce the importance of ideology in electoral strategy have been especially clear for the Socialist Party (PS). Gaffney (1990) notes that in the Third, Fourth, and early Fifth Republic the relationship between party organization, ideology, and strategy in the PS was "relatively noncontentious" (p. 64). The party aimed to gain legislative seats and build its municipal base.

By the 1970s, however, the PS had to face up to the presidentialization of the regime. Led by Mitterrand, the PS began to direct resources and energy toward presenting a “nationally known, credible, and respected figure at its head” (p. 64) to win a presidential election. This involved allowing Mitterrand to define himself as “larger” than the PS to reach centrist voters.

This strategic reorientation not only diluted socialist ideology, but it also personalized campaigns that were previously based on ideological appeals and party mobilization. Given the need to appear “above” party, Mitterrand developed his own personal campaign organization that was free of the “weighty democracy” of the party’s internal structure. Those who staffed this organization were responsible to Mitterrand alone, not to the party (Gaffney, 1990, p. 65). Mitterrand distanced himself to such an extent that during the 1981 campaign, there was virtually no contact between the party and the presidential campaign headquarters (Cole, 1990a, p. 13). In 1988, Mitterrand again ignored the party’s propositions, its stated platform, and instead “stood on his own presidential platform rather than the excessively constraining common (PCF-PS) programme” (Cole & Campbell, 1989, p. 114). His campaign was “pitched toward the center” (Northcutt, 1989, p. 291) and downplayed his attachment to the party and its ideological baggage.

On the right side of the political spectrum, presidentialization had a similar effect. The Rally for the Republic (RPR) had relied on de Gaulle to unite the party and overcome the dilemmas presidentialism imposed, and his personal popularity helped elect RPR legislative candidates and obviated the need for a strong organization (Knapp, 1990, p. 154). However, de Gaulle’s departure from the scene in 1969 forced the RPR to immediately reformulate its organization and strategy and to construct an actual political machine. The organization that emerged was highly presidentialized—its main function was to elect Jacques Chirac president (Cole, 1990a, p. 13).

Likewise, the Union for French Democracy (UDF) was formed in 1978 as a “presidential-inspired confederation” (Cole, 1990b, p. 126). Like the PS, the need to develop a broad-based appeal meant that during campaigns, the UDF’s presidential candidates paid the party organization little attention (Cole, 1990b, p. 127). Indeed, the UDF appears to have been formed exclusively as a presidential party. When leading the UDF’s formation, Giscard deliberately devoted few resources to building a grassroots support base. Instead, he hoped the party would be able to “articulate the president’s will” (Cole, 1990b, p. 128).

Before 1981, loyalty to Giscard unified the UDF. However, the necessity of having a credible presidential candidate as party leader caused tremendous intraparty conflict when Giscard lost in 1981 to Mitterrand. As in the PS, intraparty disputes revolved around UDF leaders’ rivalry for future presiden-

tial nominations (Cole, 1990a, p. 12); the UDF *présidentiables* included Giscard and Barre and later Chirac and Leótard. Cole (1990b) concludes that the UDF provides a “model study for the potentially negative impact of presidentialism upon the cohesion of political parties” (p. 127).

Direct presidential elections have also changed the nature of interparty competition by forcing parties on each side of the political spectrum to compete for dominance within their bloc in the run-up to the first round of the presidential election (Cole & Campbell, 1989, p. 113), because it is unlikely that the second round would involve a race between two candidates from only one side of the political spectrum.⁹ Voters have responded in kind to the institutional incentives and “tend increasingly to back the candidate within each coalition who was most likely to succeed on the second” (p. 177). Thus, presidentialism has forced parties in each bloc to seek policy in a different way than they would (and probably did) under parliamentarism.

Presidential elections’ effect on interparty competition has had the most damaging impact on the fortunes of the French Communist Party (PCF). By supporting the socialist Mitterrand in 1974, the PCF admitted that a communist could never be elected president. This move “accustomed” communist voters to voting for a socialist in presidential contests and “gave a tremendous advantage to the socialist left (which could attract centrist voters) over the communist left (which alienated centrist voters)” (Cole & Campbell, 1989, p. 114). That is, the PCF early on confronted the vote-seeking requirements of the system. The problem was that by conceding that it lacked a viable presidential candidate, it ultimately sacrificed policy and office pay-offs as well. By 1978, the PCF had realized the problem it faced and had withdrawn from its alliance with the PS because it feared for its own survival. In 1981, the PCF ran its own presidential candidate to undermine Mitterrand’s candidacy, which did nothing to advance its own fortunes. The PCF’s electoral fortunes continued to decline. Under a parliamentary system, interparty competition would not have revolved around presidential elections and the PCF might have not endured such a decline.

Presidential elections also gained increasing importance because party leaders recognized the pay-offs from coattail effects. Pierce (1995, pp. 189-199) demonstrates that executive elections affect legislative elections relatively more so in France than in the United States. And after his 1981 victory, Mitterrand immediately dissolved the assembly to benefit from coattail effects. Legislative elections were held 6 weeks later, and the PS was able to capture an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies (Cole & Campbell,

9. The single member district system used for legislative elections may have also contributed to bipolarization.

1989, p. 130). However, the presidentialization of legislative elections can also have a negative impact. The PS lost a great number of seats in the subsequent parliamentary election (1986) because of Mitterrand's temporary unpopularity (Gaffney, 1990, p. 72). Thus the "surge and decline" phenomenon associated with the United States' on- and off-year House elections also appears in France. Empirically, this demonstrates that parties' legislative election success depends a great deal on their presidential candidate's success.

Presidentialism has also reduced party organizations' influence in setting and promoting the political agenda. Cole (1990a, p. 10) goes so far as to argue that Mitterrand's 1981 election transformed the PS into "the prevalent model of the presidential party in the Fifth Republic, the *parti de godillots* (party of bootlickers)," to illustrate parties' position of subservience to the president and/or to the presidential candidates. The PS organization ceded influence over the formation of government policy and "rapidly gave up any pretence that it could give a lead to government activity, rather than follow its orders" (Cole, 1990a, p. 10). This has become true of the other parties as well—their presidents govern largely independently of the party and make their own decision as to whether to stand for reelection (Cole, 1993; Gaffney, 1990, p. 74).

By 1981, the presidentialization of the French party system was complete. French parties no longer conform to a parliamentary model: Presidentialism has transformed parties into "rallies around their 'presidential' leaders" (Cole, 1990a, p. 4), reduced the importance of ideology, decreased the importance of party organization in campaigns and in policy formulation, and increased the level of personalization in both interparty competition and intraparty disputes. This lends credence to the hypothesis that presidentialism has significantly affected the organizational evolution and strategic behavior of the main French parties. Let us now turn to the second quasi-experimental case, Israel, for additional evidence.

PRESIDENTIALIZED PARTIES IN ISRAEL

A presidentialist dynamic came to Israeli politics only in 1996. Prior to that year's election, the country had operated under a pure parliamentary system, with one national constituency that elected all 120 Knesset members. This huge district magnitude, along with a very low threshold of exclusion, generated significant electoral and parliamentary fragmentation, which in turn generated nettlesome governability problems. In an attempt to address this issue, in 1992 the Knesset passed a law to directly elect the prime minis-

ter. Scholars noted that this unique system remained more parliamentary than presidential, because the prime minister could still lose office through a no-confidence vote. Nevertheless, the direct election of the prime minister radically altered the nature of Israeli party politics in ways that are revealingly similar to what has transpired in France. Israeli parties became presidentialized during the country's experiment with direct prime ministerial elections.

Under this system, Israel kept the 120-seat, single national district for Knesset elections; the prime ministerial and Knesset elections were held concurrently; and voters could split their ticket. Thus, small parties could still find a niche and win a few seats. In contrast, France uses a single-member district system for National Assembly elections that penalizes small parties. Thus the adoption of direct prime ministerial elections in Israel did not force all parties to field a credible candidate for prime minister. Only Labor and Likud, Israel's two largest parties, opted to do so. As expected, the adoption of direct executive elections divided Israeli parties into those with credible aspirations to elect the prime minister and those that concentrated on winning seats in the Knesset and hoped to enter the governing coalition as junior members (Stellman, 1996).

Both large and small parties strategically responded to the "experimental treatment" of direct prime ministerial elections in ways that my argument suggests. Both Labor and Likud altered their campaign strategies relative to the pre-1996 period in very similar ways. As in France, given the need to win a majority contest, they confronted the trade-off between sticking to their ideological roots and broadening their base. Labor and Likud chose the latter path, understanding that to win, their prime ministerial candidate had to attract voters from other parties, including from the opposing major party. The prime ministerial candidates aimed to appear to be "above" parties (Hazan & Rahat, 2000) and focused their campaigns on attracting undecided, centrist voters (Hazan, 1999, p. 163).

Consequently, and as in France, the large Israeli parties reduced the salience of ideology in their campaigns and increased the focus on their prime ministerial candidates' personal characteristics. In 1996, Hazan (in press) noted that the two parties' campaigns were "practically devoid of a party connection." Labor explicitly moved to the center: Prior to the 1996 contest, the party enacted new articles in its charter that "downgraded the more dovish tendencies associated with Peres in exchange for more of a centrist path" (Hazan, in press). Likud followed suit: Netanyahu moderated his party's opposition to the peace process and distanced his party from the far right parties. Hazan argues that this drive to the center was even more pronounced in 1999, when "both sides decided to blur their differences in order

to attract the undecided voters, with whom victory rested in the more important prime ministerial race” (pp. 5-6).

Like France’s major parties, Labor and Likud also diverted resources away from the Knesset race to concentrate on the prime ministerial race. Because the candidate elected prime minister would form the governing coalition and because one of the two main parties was bound to be in the opposition if it did not win the prime ministerial race, the prime ministerial race became much more important than winning Knesset seats for Labor and Likud. Both parties initially struggled internally over the question of favoring the prime ministerial race over the Knesset campaign (Torgovnik, 2000), but both ended up devoting most of their campaign resources to the prime ministerial race, downplaying the Knesset race (Mendilow, 1999). Believing that “appealing to the loyal and identified voters was a waste of time” and resources, both parties held fewer large rallies, because only already-committed voters tended to show up (Hazan, in press). Instead they devoted more attention to TV advertising in their attempts to attract undecided voters (Hazan, in press). In sum, in both 1996 and 1999, Israel’s two major parties were prepared to lose seats in the Knesset to win the prime ministership (Hazan & Rahat, 2000).

The need to attract other parties’ supporters to win the prime ministerial race also drove Labor and Likud to downplay the Knesset elections. Both parties had to adopt a broad vote-seeking strategy to win the prime ministerial race, but this meant that neither could afford to compete heavily with (much less attack) their ideological rivals in the legislative race, because they needed those parties’ supporters’ votes to win the prime ministerial race. Both feared that the smaller parties would not support their candidate for prime minister if they were challenged in the Knesset race. Bick (1998) reports that Labor explicitly toned down its rhetoric in 1996 and adopted a policy of not responding to rhetorical attacks from any of its rivals. Bick quotes Haim Ramon, head of Peres’s campaign, as saying that “it is only important that Peres wins. There is no point . . . if Labor ends up with 50 seats and Peres is not elected prime minister” (p. 126). Likud even sacrificed one third of its spots on its Knesset list to two smaller parties in exchange for their support in the prime ministerial race. The direct election of the prime minister thus reduced the level of ideological competition in the Knesset election and enabled the smaller parties to run without particularly hostile opposition from either Labor or Likud (p. 128).

The smaller parties also saw an opportunity in voters’ ability to split their tickets, realizing quickly that the two larger parties would adopt a vote-seeking strategy to concentrate on the prime ministerial race. They responded

strategically by adopting an office-seeking strategy, concentrating exclusively on the Knesset race and encouraging their supporters to split their tickets (Goldberg, 1998, p. 71; Mahler, 1997; Stellman, 1996, p. 659). Nearly half of all voters split their vote and gave one vote to the smaller parties for the Knesset race and one to the larger parties for the prime ministerial race (Bick, 1998, pp. 126-128).

In terms of my argument, the adoption of the direct prime ministerial election transformed Israel's two largest parties into vote-seeking parties, away from their more ideologically rooted, policy-seeking origins. In contrast, the smaller parties assessed their probability of winning the prime ministerial race as nil, adopted an office-seeking strategy, and concentrated on the legislative race. Labor and Likud have subsequently lost seats, whereas the smaller parties have increased their share of parliamentary seats.

The presidentialization of the major parties happened much faster in Israel than in France because there was no personalistic leader of mythic proportions like de Gaulle around whom political competition revolved, because the first election was not only direct but also held concurrently with legislative elections, and because Israel's national-district electoral system for legislative elections is likely to be the best in the world at separating parties into those that run executive candidates and those that do not. In any case, both the French and Israeli cases provide ample evidence supporting the hypothesis that parties behave differently under presidential and parliamentary systems. Parties responded strategically in similar ways in both countries: Imposing presidentialist rules encouraged (a) vote-seeking behavior among the large parties, (b) a decline in the importance of party organization, (c) an increase in electoral personalization, and (d) a decrease in the importance of legislative elections.¹⁰

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Political science has yet to adequately explore how the separation of powers affects political parties. This article presents a preliminary effort to understand the extent to which the institutions of presidentialism generate incentives for parties to behave differently than under parliamentarism. Evidence from France and Israel supports this theoretical notion, but as these countries

10. The decision in France to unify the presidential and legislative electoral calendars is additional evidence that French politicians recognize the critical importance of presidential elections to parties and the party system. Likewise, Israel returned in early 2001 to a pure parliamentary system after evidence mounted that presidentialization in the absence of a higher parliamentary threshold and/or smaller electoral constituencies exacted too high a cost on many parties.

shifted only to *semipresidentialism*, we might expect the separation of powers to have an even stronger impact in fully presidential systems.

It is my hope that this article answers some questions but raises even more about the impact of presidential institutions on political parties. I concentrated almost exclusively on the trade-offs that presidentialism introduces at the electoral stage of the political process. Future research should attempt to draw out the implications of this argument as well as explore how presidential institutions affect party emergence and organizational development at other stages of the political process. Below I present some initial suggestions.

All else being equal, parties emerging under presidentialism ought to face different dilemmas than parties in parliamentary systems. To my knowledge, only Epstein (1967) has addressed this issue and then only briefly to debate Duverger's claim that the "mass" party was the modern norm. We already know that presidentialism generates smaller party systems (i.e., a lower effective number of parties) than parliamentarism through the reductive effect of presidential elections (Cox, 1997). But presently only a thin slice of comparativists—quantitative electoral studies scholars—have explored how presidentialism affects party systems. If their argument is true, we must begin exploring how presidentialism affects the parties themselves, not just the effective number of parties. The reductive effect is the mechanical equivalent of the vote-seeking incentives of presidential institutions, but scholars have not explored how the strategic vote-seeking element of party behavior results in the emergence of particular parties or party systems. If presidentialism tends to reduce the number of parties in a party system, this logically implies either that fewer incentives exist for groups to form political parties on their own or that greater incentives exist for social groups to form broader alliances before officially forming a party. The various scholarly explanations for party emergence have not addressed these issues. Comparativists ought to learn from the United States' experience that the institutions of presidentialism strongly affected early party emergence. We ought to develop research designs that could carefully compare the emergence of parties in both kinds of systems.

Similarly, if we accept that presidentialism affects party and party-system emergence, we are likely to accept the hypothesis that presidentialism affects the development of party organizations. Again, to my knowledge, this argument has never been systematically addressed for non-U.S. cases. Much of the party development literature has an organizational sociology bent that pays little attention to the potential impact of electoral and other institutions. Even so, prominent sociologically oriented scholars recognize that a party's institutional environment can affect its development. For example, Panebianco (1988) held that the shape a party takes early on in its development largely

explains its later developmental path. If parties take on a “presidential” character, they will retain these characteristics over time. Following up on Epstein’s suggestion to compare party development in presidential versus parliamentary systems ought to generate substantial new insights.

The illustrations of how presidentialism has affected party behavior in France and Israel also allow us to draw out several other testable hypotheses. For example, do ideologically similar (whether leftist or rightist) parties behave differently in presidential and parliamentary regimes? If we could adequately control for ideological position, this claim could be tested. Ideologically similar parties ought to present different platforms (testable through content analysis perhaps). Likewise, ideologically similar parties under different constitutional rules ought to engage in different coalitional strategies, organize their campaigns differently, and allocate resources differently. Understanding these differences will require careful research designs, but the pay-offs in terms of understanding presidentialized parties ought to be significant.

Another aspect to ponder is the relevance of the argument about presidentialized parties for understanding presidential democracy more generally. Presidentialism, with the prominence if not dominance of the president relative to the party organization, complicates parties’ ability to perform the tasks that political theorists assign to them as vehicles of democratic representation, such as aggregating and articulating interests and transforming those interests into policy proposals and output. Presidentialism forces parties to stake their hopes in an individual—organizational control over whom is by no means guaranteed subsequent to the election—and to downplay the importance of collective (i.e., legislative) representation. Campaign personalization reduces the relevance of party platforms and party organization in all kinds of parties. The implications of presidential preeminence in party politics should be explored more fully.

The focus on the impact of presidential institutions on political parties should also encourage another look at the debate about accountability in presidential versus parliamentary systems. Shugart and Carey (1992), Linz (1993), Mainwaring and Shugart (1997), and other institutionally oriented scholars have debated this issue, but scholars of parties themselves have yet to pick up on the debate’s implications. For example, how do party leaders confront the problem of party responsibility in presidential versus parliamentary systems? Indeed, to what extent does presidentialism permit party responsibility in its traditional conception? What does the necessity of executive-legislative negotiation, within both unified and divided presidential government, do to party organization and behavior? What implications for democratic representation through parties does this have?

Presidentialism creates presidentialized parties: Parties will emerge, develop, and behave differently in presidential and parliamentary regimes. This article has focused mainly on party electoral behavior under presidentialism but has barely scratched the surface of even that aspect of how the separation of powers affects parties. The research frontier in the electoral studies literature is on how social and institutional structures interact to shape partisan competition (Cox, 1997). Comparativists have thus far ignored the impact of presidential institutions on party development and behavior, focusing almost exclusively on how social structure shapes the emergence of parties and party systems. Given the dramatic increase in the number of presidential democracies over the last 20 years, scholars ought now to focus on how presidentialism affects political parties.

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