

In praise of the edited volume in
comparative political science:
A case-study of the presidentialization of
politics in democratic society

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ECPR Seminar on Small and Large N Solutions to Comparative
Problems

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- Review development of comparative politics since 1945
- Make a particular case for the contemporary value of collaborative research and edited volumes
- Provide an example of such an approach in which we have both been involved in recent years.

Development of comparative politics

- Old institutionalism
 - Descriptive, formal institutional focus
- Global theory
 - Reaction against descriptive country studies
 - Focus on behaviour and non-formal actors
 - Shift in geographic focus
 - High-level abstract theory
- Mid-range theory
 - More limited geographic focus
 - New institutionalism
 - Lower level of abstraction than typified global theory
 - Often small(ish) 'N'
 - Qualitative data & method

Advantages & challenges of mid-range approach

- Problems of concept-stretching & 'travelling' diminish with smaller N
- Challenge: To know sufficiently well each of the cases under the lens so that indicators of functional equivalence are identified and correctly interpreted
- Solution: Assemble a team of researchers who between them carry the required knowledge of a range of national cases
- Next challenges:
 - Devise an acceptable common framework for analysis
 - Agree a common range of indicators and measures which are functional equivalents of each other across the various cases under scrutiny
 - Apply a shared interpretation of the common framework
 - Write in a disciplined way to the framework so that the same questions are addressed and equivalent evidence presented across all countries

Is the edited volume undervalued?

- UK Research Assessment Exercise?
- Attitudes across Europe?

Try to imagine the loss to political science if none of the following had been published...

J. LaPalombara & M. Weiner *Political Parties & Political Development* (Yale University Press, 1966)

Robert A. Dahl *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies* (Yale Uni Press 1966)

S.M. Lipset & S. Rokkan *Political Parties & Voter Alignments* (Free Press 1967)

Juan J. Linz & A. Stepan *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978)

S. Barnes, M. Kaase et al *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies* (Sage, 1979).

G. O'Donnell, P. Schmitter & L. Whitehead *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (Johns Hopkins Uni Press, 1986), 1 of a 4-volume series

R. Dalton, S. Flanagan & P. A Beck *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment?* (Princeton Uni Press 1984)

K. Lawson & P. Merkl *When Parties Fail* (Princeton Uni Press, 1988).

H-D Klingemann & D. Fuchs *Citizens and the State* (Oxford 1995), 1 of a 5 volume series.

L. Diamond, J. Plattner and Hung-Mao Tien *Consolidating Third Wave Democracies, Vols 1&2* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1997).

OXFORD

The Presidentialization of Politics

A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies

edited by
Thomas Poguntke and Paul Webb

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

The Concept of Presidentialization

- 1) increasing leadership power and autonomy within the political executive
- 2) increasing leadership power and autonomy within the political party and
- 3) increasingly leadership-centred electoral processes

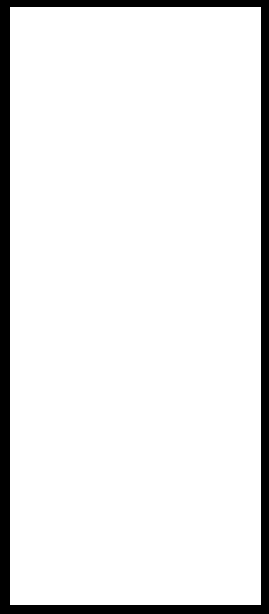
Figure 1: REGIME TYPE

presidentialized
government

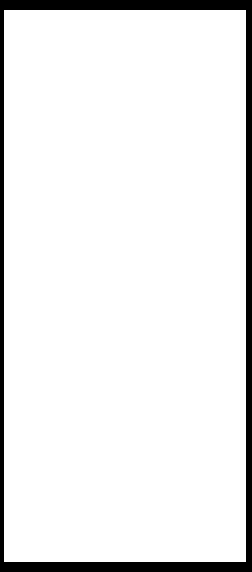


partified
government

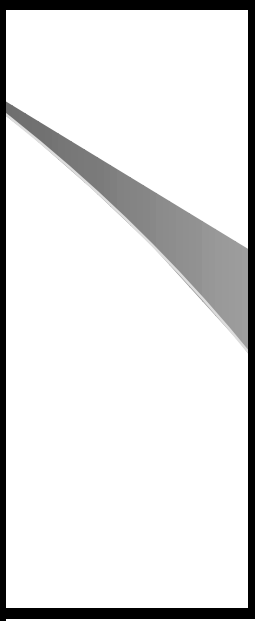
Parliamentary



Semi-
Presidential



Presidential



3 Faces of Presidentialization

- 1) intra-executive presidentialization
- 2) intra-party presidentialization
- 3) electoral presidentialization

Increase of Power

- 1) growth of zones of autonomous control
- 2) growth of capability to overcome resistance

Intra-executive Presidentialization

more resources for Chancellor

control government policy from the centre

dominance of cabinet by Chancellor

personalized mandate

Intra-executive Presidentialization

- more resources for chief executive
- control government policy from the centre
- dominance of cabinet by chief executive
- personalized mandate

Intra-party Presidentialization

- growth of leaders' offices (staff, finance)
- formal powers
- autonomy in programme/manifesto writing
- plebiscitary modes of communication with and mobilization of rank-and-file
- leaders' seeking personalized mandates
- institutionalization of direct leadership election

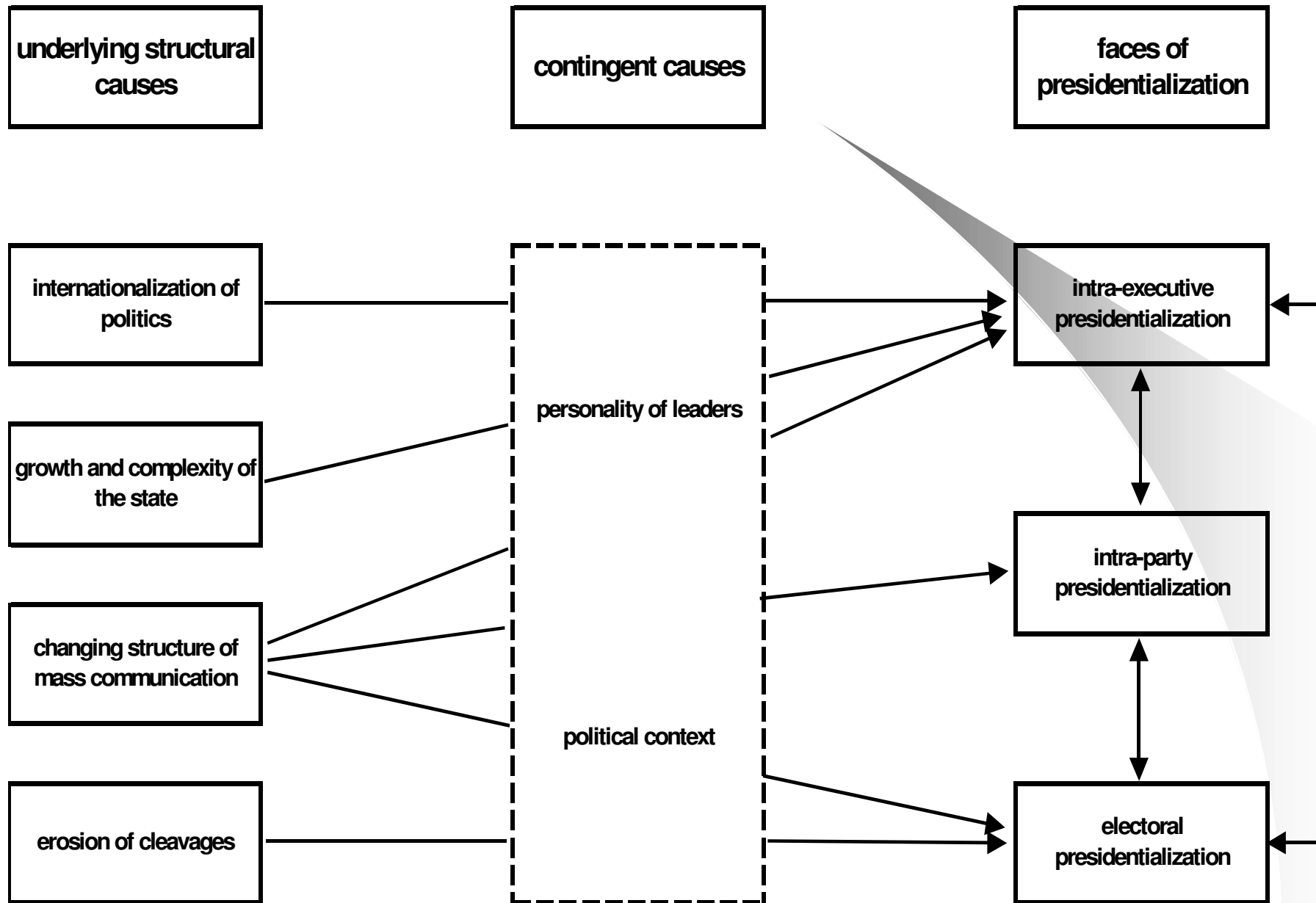
Electoral Presidentialization

Leader-focus in media coverage

Leader-focus in campaign styles

Leader effects in voting behaviour

Figure 1.3: The Major Causal Flows Involved in Explaining the Presidentialization of Politics



Agenda 2010

it was not the result of a discussion process within the party

it was put together quickly by a small group of advisors

it represented a massive departure from the SPD's dominant philosophy

it was based on executive leadership

Example: Early Election in Germany

- highly unilateral decision by Chancellor Schroeder
- no consultation with own party
- no consultation with coalition partner
- inner circle wrote manifesto

Example: CDU/CSU Campaign

- campaign entirely controlled by Angela Merkel
- very few involved in decision to nominate Prof Kirchhof
- would have made her very strong in victory
- will make her very vulnerable in defeat

How did we do it?

- two alternatives:
- a) development of formalized, quantifiable indicators
- b) development of a rigid framework for analysis which was to be applied by country experts

Presidentialization

**majoritarian system
(bipolar structure of
competition)**

**large zone of
autonomy**

**power is contingent
upon tolerance of
majority party(ies)**

**more immediate
power; power needs
to be maintained by
defending control
over zones of
autonomy against
own party**

**consensual system
(minority
governments, broad
coalitions)**

**small zone of
autonomy**

**power is contingent
upon ability of
leader to moderate
between veto
players**

**power needs to be
acquired through
extending zone of
autonomy by
dominating veto
players**