

## Chapter 32: Executive Leadership in Semi-Presidential Systems

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Paul 't Hart and R.A.W. Rhodes (eds.), *Oxford Handbook Of Political Leadership*, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 472-486, ISBN 978-0-19-965388-1.

### **Abstract**

Relative to presidentialism and parliamentarism, the study of semi-presidentialism is still in its infancy. The term was coined in 1970 and, apart from the pioneering work of Maurice Duverger, systematic study began only in the 1990s. Previously, the definition of semi-presidentialism was the subject of much debate. Now, most scholars agree that semi-presidentialism is where there is both a directly elected fixed-term president and a prime minister and cabinet that are collectively responsible to the legislature. The key contribution of recent scholarship is that semi-presidentialism is not a unimodal category. Instead, there is a tremendous variety of executive politics in countries with a semi-presidential constitution. This work has identified the effects of such variation on topics such as democratic performance and both government formation and termination. Given so many countries now have semi-presidential constitutions, the study of this topic is likely to remain salient. In the future, there should be more comparative studies of semi-presidential countries and more systematic comparisons of semi-presidentialism with presidentialism and parliamentarism.

### **Keywords**

Semi-presidentialism, executive politics, president, prime minister, leadership

Compared with the study of presidentialism and parliamentarism, the study of semi-presidentialism is still in its infancy. While the concept was first operationalized at the beginning of the 1970s, work in this area only became part of the mainstream political science research agenda at the beginning of the 1990s. Over the course of the last 20 years our understanding of semi-presidentialism has been transformed. The key point to take away from the recent scholarship is that semi-presidentialism is not a unimodal category. Previously, the folk wisdom understood semi-presidentialism as the situation where there was a dual authority structure with a president and prime minister battling for control of the executive. Recent scholarship has demonstrated that there is a tremendous variety of executive politics under semi-presidentialism and has identified some of the effects of this variety. This chapter places the study of executive politics under semi-presidentialism in context, identifies some of the major scholarly

developments over the last two decades, and outlines a research agenda for the future.

## 1 THE STUDY OF SEMI-PRESIDENTIALISM IN HISTORICAL AND INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

The term 'semi-presidential' was used only sporadically until the late 1950s and 1960s. At that time, it came to be used more frequently to describe the Constitution of the Fifth French Republic. In 1970, the study of semi-presidentialism began in earnest when Maurice Duverger became the first person to use the term systematically. In the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of his French textbook, he identified a set of 'semi-presidential regimes', including France, Austria, Finland and the defunct system in Weimar Germany (Duverger 1970, 279). Over the course of the next decade, Duverger refined his definition and extended his examples to include Iceland, Ireland and Portugal. This work culminated in his book, *Échec au Roi*, which constitutes the mature statement of Duverger's analysis in French (Duverger 1978). In 1980 he summarized his book in an English-language article that brought his work to a much wider audience (Duverger 1980).

In the 1980s, almost exclusively as a result of Duverger's work, the concept of semi-presidentialism was studied somewhat more widely. The concept was accepted as part of the Portuguese political lexicon (e.g. Pereira 1984). In Spanish, Noguiera Alcalá (1986) helped to popularize the term, arguing that a semi-presidential system should be introduced in Chile. All the same, the study of semi-presidentialism was still confined to a relatively small number of scholars who applied the concept to a fairly limited number of countries. This situation was transformed in the early 1990s with the wave of democratization and constitutional change at that time. There was an increase in the literature on semi-presidentialism in German (e.g. Bahro and Veser 1995), partly because of the presence of semi-presidentialism in so many countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Debates about the reform of the Italian system generated a considerable literature there (e.g. Ceccanti et al. 1996). In English, the first edited volume devoted to the topic appeared in 1999 (Elgie 1999). Given the spread of semi-

presidential constitutions across the globe, there is now a scholarly interest in the topic almost everywhere.

In the period since 1990, the question of how to define semi-presidentialism has been ever present. At the beginning of the period, Duverger's definition was unquestioningly accepted. In his 1980 article, he defined the concept as follows:

"[a] political regime is considered as semi-presidential if the constitution which established it combines three elements: (1) the president of the republic is elected by universal suffrage; (2) he possesses quite considerable powers; (3) he has opposite him, however, a prime minister and ministers who possess executive and governmental power and can stay in office only if the parliament does not show its opposition to them (Duverger 1980, 166)."

On the basis of this definition a country was classed as semi-presidential if it had a fairly powerful president. For some people, it did not even matter whether or not the president was directly elected (O'Neil 1993) as long as the president was more powerful than a standard indirectly elected president but less powerful than a typical directly elected president. In the mid-1990s Giovanni Sartori (1997 131-32) reformulated the definition, but in a way that was fundamentally consistent with Duverger's version. The problem with Duverger's definition was that it rested on a fundamental ambiguity as to what constituted a president with "quite considerable powers". What one writer believed to be quite considerable was not what another person believed it to be. The result was that the list of semi-presidential countries varied from one scholar to the next. This variation did not facilitate reliable cross-national comparisons. Moreover, this way of understanding semi-presidentialism generated a cottage industry of publications by country experts claiming that their country was or, more usually, was not semi-presidential because they considered their president to have either too few or too many powers than could rightly be counted as "quite considerable". The solution to this problem and the confusion it generated was to remove any reference to the powers of the president from the definition of the concept. To this end, Elgie (1999 13) proposed the following definition:

Semi-presidentialism is the situation where a constitution makes provision for both a directly elected fixed-term president and a

prime minister and cabinet who are collectively responsible to the legislature.

One advantage of this definition is that countries can be classed as semi-presidential or otherwise simply by referring to a small number of constitutional criteria that can almost always be identified unambiguously. Therefore, one person's list of semi-presidential countries should be identical to any other person's. According to a recent review of the literature on semi-presidentialism, "the majority" of scholars has now been adopted this definition (Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2009a, 874).

This post-Duvergerian definition of semi-presidentialism is purely taxonomic. On the basis of a small number of publicly available criteria and without the need for any country-level expertise, it allows countries with semi-presidential constitutions to be reliably distinguished from those with presidential constitutions – where there is a directly elected (or popularly elected) fixed-term president and where cabinet members are not collectively responsible to the legislature – and parliamentary constitutions – where there is either a monarch or an indirectly elected president and where the prime minister and cabinet are collectively responsible to the legislature. Crucially, the post-Duvergerian definition of semi-presidentialism is not explanatory. While it allows countries with semi-presidential constitutions to be reliably classified, it has the effect of generating a very heterogeneous set of semi-presidential countries. (For a list, see Elgie 2011, 24). For example, Ireland with its very weak president is just as semi-presidential as Mozambique with its very strong president. Consequently, there is no reason to expect the set of semi-presidential countries to operate in one particular way. This means that semi-presidentialism should not be used as a discrete explanatory variable. This heterogeneity still leads some observers to question the validity of the concept and/or its empirical usefulness (Reestman 2006). It should be appreciated, though, that there is variation within both presidentialism and parliamentarism too. Presidentialism in the US with its system of separation of powers and checks and balances is very different from presidentialism in Venezuela. Parliamentarism in the UK with its strong prime minister is different from parliamentarism in Japan.

The heterogeneity of the set of semi-presidential regimes has obliged scholars to try to capture the variation within semi-presidentialism in a systematic way. Generally, this exercise leads to either a dichotomous or a continuous sub-classification of semi-presidential countries. The standard example of the former is Shugart and Carey's (1992) distinction between president-parliamentary and premier-presidential forms of semi-presidentialism. For Shugart (2005 333), "Under premier-presidentialism, the prime minister and cabinet are exclusively accountable to the assembly majority, while under president-parliamentarism, the prime minister and cabinet are dually accountable to the president and the assembly majority." So, this exercise takes the form of an additional classification rule that allows a distinction to be drawn between two sub-types of semi-presidentialism. The advantage of this rule is that, as with the post-Duvergerian definition itself, it is based on a publicly available constitutional criterion and requires no specialist country knowledge, thus generating a reliable classification of the two sub-types. An alternative way of capturing variation within semi-presidentialism is to take a continuous measure of presidential power, such as the ones proposed by either Siaroff (2003) or Metcalf (2000), and to distinguish between semi-presidential countries on the basis of the relative power of the president. The advantage of this approach is that it allows more fine-grained distinctions to be made within semi-presidentialism. A disadvantage is that any measure of presidential power may suffer from a problem of construct validity. Overall, whereas the post-Duvergerian definition of semi-presidentialism is purely taxonomic, these sub-classifications are explicitly explanatory. They allow the effect of institutional variation within semi-presidentialism to be studied as well as the outcome of such variation relative to the effects of presidentialism and parliamentarism.

The controversy over how the concept of semi-presidentialism should be understood and operationalized dogged the study of this form of government in the immediate post-1990 period. Nonetheless, substantive empirical work has now been conducted. Much of this work has comprised single-country studies in academic journals (Protsyk 2003; Pugačiasuskas 2002) or collections of country studies in edited books (Costa Lobo and Amorim Neto eds. 2010; Elgie ed. 1999; Elgie and Moestrup eds. 2007; 2008; Elgie, Moestrup and Wu eds. 2011). There is

a limited literature in journals that focuses solely on semi-presidentialism but that is explicitly comparative (Cheibub and Chernykh 2008; Shugart 2005), although most of this work tends to compare countries in a particular region of the world (Kirschke 2007), usually Europe and/or the former USSR (Protsyk 2005a; 2005b; 2006; Roper 2002; Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2010; Sedelius and Ekman 2010). There is a very small number of monographs devoted solely to the comparative study of semi-presidentialism (Elgie 2011; Frison-Roche 2005; Skach 2005). Finally, there is a limited but growing number of comparative studies that includes semi-presidential countries alongside presidential and/or parliamentary countries (Cheibub and Chernykh 2009; Hellwig and Samuels 2007; Samuels and Shugart 2010). Overall, the development of a standard definition and more rigorous empirical work has led Schleiter and Morgan-Jones (2009a 891) to conclude that “scholars have made impressive progress in the study of semi-presidentialism over recent years”. In the next section, some of the main findings of this work are presented.

## **2 SEMI-PRESIDENTIALISM AND EXECUTIVE POLITICS**

What do we know about executive politics under semi-presidentialism? We know that on the basis of a post-Duvergerian definition of the concept there is no single answer to the question ‘who is in charge?’ (Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2010). The variation in executive leadership within the set of countries with a semi-presidential constitution is so great that the answer to the question depends on the particular circumstances in the country or the set of countries that is being studied. So, contrary to Tavits’ (2009) interpretation of the existing work, scholars of semi-presidentialism do not claim that direct election necessarily makes any inherent difference to the functioning of a regime. There are countries with a directly elected president that operate in a manner that is perfectly consistent with countries that have a purely parliamentary system of government with an indirectly elected president. For example, Ireland has a semi-presidential constitution, but the Irish president is so weak that the country operates in a manner that is equivalent to a standard parliamentary regime. Consequently, in Ireland the general answer to the question ‘who is in charge?’ is very clear, the

prime minister. Equally, there are countries with a directly elected president where the answer to the question is equally clear, but different. In these countries, the president is in charge and the prime minister is merely an assistant. This situation characterizes many of the less democratic semi-presidential countries where parties are highly presidentialized and where there are very few checks and balances in the system. There are also countries where to a greater or lesser extent both the president and the prime minister are relevant political actors. In these countries, there is likely to be considerable variation in presidential/prime ministerial relations over time. For example, periods of presidential predominance may be interspersed with periods of prime ministerial government. France is the standard case in this regard. Overall, semi-presidentialism is not a unimodal category. There is variation in presidential and prime ministerial power both across the set of semi-presidential countries as well as variation across time within all countries, but particularly in those where there is a mix of presidential and prime ministerial/legislative power.

Why are presidents in some semi-presidential countries generally more powerful than others? At least part of the reason is due to variation in the constitutional powers of semi-presidential presidents. So, Siaroff's (2003) index of presidential power shows that on a scale from 0-9 countries with semi-presidential constitutions register scores between 1 and 8. By contrast, the equivalent range for presidential countries and parliamentary countries with an indirectly elected president is 6-8 and 0-5 respectively. Thus, reference to constitutional powers can help to explain both why semi-presidential Mozambique with a Siaroff score of 8 has a highly presidentialized system, and why semi-presidential Slovenia with a Siaroff score of 1 has a president who is almost always merely a figurehead and a prime minister who is in charge of the government's business. A problem, though, is that constitutional powers can sometimes be a poor indicator of presidential power in practice. For example, Samuels and Shugart (2010 89) exclude Austria from their comparative study because of the "degree of de facto political deviation from the de jure constitutional form". Cheibub (2009) makes a similar point about Iceland. Another problem is that measures of constitutional power fail to capture within-country variation. For example, in Russia President Putin moved from the

presidency to the prime ministership without any significant decrease in his influence and without any constitutional change. What is more, as Tavits (2009) demonstrates, presidential power can vary over time even within countries where there is a dominant form of executive politics. So, even though the Irish president is almost always a mere figurehead and the prime minister has always been a more consequential political actor, there have been occasions when the presidency has been more active.

Why then does presidential power vary so much within some semi-presidential countries? The answer lies mainly in the variation that can occur in the relationship between the president and the legislature (Duverger (1980 182-86). For example, without the president's constitutional powers varying, the president may sometimes be the leader of a cohesive single-party legislative majority. This form of unified government is likely to make the president a powerful political actor. Indeed, Lijphart (2004 102) has argued that these conditions "make it possible for the president to be even more powerful than in most pure presidential systems". At other times, though, the president may be the representative of one of a more or less heterogeneous coalition of parties with a legislative majority. As a result, the president's party may be represented in the government, but the prime minister may be from a coalition party. This situation is known as divided government. Under these conditions, the president and prime minister will have to work together, but they may also be in competition, trying to maximize the influence of their respective party. Equally, sometimes the legislature may be extremely fragmented and there may be no majority. This is the situation that Skach (2005) dubs 'divided minority government'. Under these conditions, Skach argues that the president is disempowered. However, she warns that presidents are likely to react to it by trying to exercise authority unilaterally, forming technical governments, ruling by decree and so forth. These actions will bring them into direct competition with the legislature. Indeed, Skach (ibid.) calls divided minority government semi-presidentialism's "most conflict-prone sub-type". Alternatively, there may be a majority in the legislature but it may be actively opposed to the president. This situation generates what is known as 'cohabitation', where the prime minister is from an opposing party to the president and where the president's party is not represented in the



government. All else equal, presidents are likely to be weaker during periods of cohabitation than under unified government and the level of conflict between the president and the prime minister may increase.

Much of the work on semi-presidentialism has tried to account for the variation in executive politics. For example, Samuels and Shugart (2010) have shown that cohabitation almost never occurs under president-parliamentarism and that when it occurs under premier-presidentialism it leads to a “parliamentarization” of the system in a manner that is consistent with a diminution of presidential power. Schleiter and Morgan-Jones (2009a; 2009b; 2010) propose a principal-agent framework as a way of explaining variation in presidential power under semi-presidentialism. They argue (2009b 669-70) that variation in constitutional rules from one semi-presidential country to another creates differences in the bargaining framework between the president and the legislature. These differences mean that presidential power can vary across time within countries as the conditions of the bargaining framework change. Tavits (2009 35-40) provides an alternative political opportunity framework. She states that “constitutional powers are the most important aspect of the opportunity structure” (ibid., 52), but she argues that incentives for presidential activism will be greater when political consensus is low, notably during periods of cohabitation or divided government, and when other political institutions are weak, particularly during periods of coalition and minority government. All three approaches are instructive because they are all based on comparative studies that examine semi-presidential countries alongside parliamentary countries and, in the case of Samuels and Shugart alongside presidential countries as well. In other words, even if semi-presidentialism generates scenarios such as cohabitation that are not found in other types of systems, variation in presidential power is a general phenomenon that needs to be explained on the basis of a general approach rather than one that is limited solely to countries with semi-presidential constitutions.

While much of the work on semi-presidentialism has tried to explain the variation in executive politics, there is also now a considerable amount of work that focuses on the effect of such variation. By far the majority of this work has focused on the impact of semi-presidentialism on democratization. Indeed, this is

the only area where there has been an ongoing normative debate about the effects of semi-presidentialism. The early work in this area was dominated by Linz's (1994) argument that semi-presidentialism was a poor choice for new democracies and Sartori's (1997) counter-claim that semi-presidentialism had certain advantages. However, both studies were based on very thin empirical evidence. Thereafter, much of this work comprised single-country studies. For example, Fish (2001: 331) argued that "Mongolia's choice of semi-presidentialism has been a boon to democratization". By contrast, Freeman (2000: 277) argued that coalition building in Poland "was impeded by the 'dual executive' nature" of the system there. On balance, while semi-presidentialism has had its supporters (Pasquino 2007), more people have warned against the adoption of this system than have supported it (Lijphart 2004; Skach 2005).

The problem with this debate is that it has relied almost exclusively on a Duvergerian interpretation of semi-presidentialism. As a result, policy recommendations have been based on the experience of a relatively small number of countries that have exhibited a balance of presidential and prime ministerial powers. By contrast, the post-Duvergerian interpretation of semi-presidentialism has shown that countries with a semi-presidential constitution can operate in much more varied ways. This way of thinking about semi-presidentialism has yet to be integrated fully into the normative debate. For example, Slovenia operates like a parliamentary system, even though it has a directly elected president. Thus, it would tend to be excluded from a set of semi-presidential countries on the basis of a Duvergerian interpretation of the concept. However, by excluding cases such as Slovenia from the universe of semi-presidentialism, the number of countries with a directly elected president that have successfully transitioned to democracy is underestimated. As a result, the standard wisdom that parliamentarism is a better constitutional choice than semi-presidentialism may be subject to a problem of selection bias. In short, while the standard wisdom may be valid, it would be risky to place too much store by it.

In the context of a post-Duvergerian interpretation of semi-presidentialism, the most reliable conclusion that can now be drawn is that president-parliamentarism is more dangerous for democracy than premier-

presidentialism. Shugart and Carey (1992) were the first to present this argument. However, whereas they provided only anecdotal empirical support for their argument, recent work (Elgie 2011; Elgie and Schleiter 2011) has subjected the argument about the relative perils of president-parliamentarism to rigorous testing. The results show that, all else equal, democracy is more likely to collapse in president-parliamentary regimes than in premier-presidential systems and that even if democracy survives the quality of democracy is likely to be worse in the former relative to the latter. Obviously, the argument is not deterministic. Democracy in president-parliamentary Taiwan has survived and flourished. Moreover, the empirical work has largely been confined to the relative effect of the two types of semi-presidentialism rather than the performance of semi-presidentialism relative to presidentialism and parliamentarism. Nonetheless, if a country is thinking about choosing semi-presidentialism, then the recent work has generated a very clear policy recommendation – choose premier-presidentialism above president-parliamentarism. Again, though, the limitations of any such normative recommendation need to be born in mind.

More recently, the research agenda has shifted somewhat. There is now work that follows the effect of variation under semi-presidentialism through the whole executive cycle, from government formation, through behavior in office, to government termination. This work has not yet generated a genuine normative debate, even if it has the potential to do so. In terms of the government formation, Protsyk (2005a 742) demonstrates that cabinet formation in premier-presidential regimes is “much more predictable” than under president-parliamentarism. Under premier-presidentialism, the choice of prime minister “more consistently reflect[s] the preferences of the parliamentary majority”(ibid.). This finding is particularly interesting because it is consistent with the work on the effects of the two types of semi-presidentialism and democratization (Elgie 2011; Elgie and Schleiter 2011). Building on work by Strøm and Amorim Neto (2006), Schleiter and Morgan-Jones (2010) demonstrate that variation in the president’s constitutional power affects the outcomes of the cabinet formation process. The greater the president’s power, the more control the president has over cabinet composition. Equally, the greater the fragmentation of party groups in parliament, the greater the president’s control

over formation outcomes. However, if the cabinet formation process immediately follows a parliamentary election, then the president's influence is reduced. Schleiter and Morgan-Jones (2009b) also compare the outcome of cabinet formation under semi-presidentialism with parliamentarism. They find that the level of non-partisan ministers is higher under the former relative to the latter. They account for the variation in ministerial non-partisanship by reference to differences in the powers of presidents under semi-presidentialism and to the more complex nature of the government formation process under semi-presidentialism due to the president's involvement under this type of regime.

Given the emphasis on the potentially conflictual relations between the president and prime minister under semi-presidentialism, it is perhaps surprising that this aspect of executive politics remains relatively understudied. The early work by Linz (1994 48-59) outlined various theoretical reasons why intra-executive relations were likely to be problematic under semi-presidentialism. Reiterating many of these points, Linz and Stepan (1996 279) warned against semi-presidentialism because of the potential for cohabitation, which leads to the "possibility for deadlock and constitutional conflict" between the president and the prime minister. For the most part, subsequent scholarship has tended to focus on country-specific narratives of presidential/prime ministerial relations rather than more general comparative studies (Millard 2008; Morgan-Jones and Schleiter 2004). One of the reasons why such studies are somewhat rare is the difficulty in measuring conflict in a way that is susceptible to rigorous inquiry. Whereas presidential activism is increasingly being modeled by way of the percentage of non-partisan ministers in government (Strøm and Amorim Neto 2006; Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2010; Tavits 2009), the frequency and intensity of intra-executive conflict is much more difficult to capture systematically. Protsyk's work provides an exception to this rule. Focusing on semi-presidential governments in Eastern Europe, Protsyk (2005b; 2006) relies on the examples of intra-executive conflict that were recorded in *East European Constitutional Review*. On that basis, he finds that presidents were more likely to initiate conflict than prime ministers. He also finds that they were particularly quick to do so when the prime minister headed a minority government, suggesting that the presidents sensed potential prime ministerial weakness and

moved to try to capitalize on the situation. By contrast, when there were technocratic cabinets the level of presidential/prime ministerial conflict declined.

In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that attention is also starting to be paid to the issue of government termination under semi-presidentialism. Like cabinet formation, this aspect of the political process is easy to observe and, therefore, to model. Sedelius and Ekman (2010) use a mixture of secondary reports and an expert survey to determine whether there is a link between intra-executive conflict in Eastern Europe and cabinet instability. They find that there is an association and that intra-executive conflict is particularly destabilizing in president-parliamentary countries relative to premier-presidential countries. By contrast, in a comparative study of parliamentary and semi-presidential regimes in Europe Schleiter and Morgan-Jones (2009c) find no relationship between the type of semi-presidential regime and government survival. However, they do find that if the president has the power to dissolve the legislature then there is a greater likelihood of governments being replaced between elections. By contrast, in their study of semi-presidential and parliamentary countries, Cheibub and Chernykh (2009) show that variation in government stability is more affected by the electoral system than by whether or not the president is directly elected or by the powers of the president. These somewhat contradictory results suggest that the scholarship is only beginning in this domain.

Overall, the main conclusion to be drawn from the empirical studies of semi-presidentialism is that there is no single model of semi-presidential politics. By distinguishing between different types of semi-presidentialism, such as premier-presidentialism and president-parliamentarism, we can compare the effect of each type relative to the other. We can also compare the effect of each type relative to other forms of government. However, recent scholarship has shown that the variation within semi-presidentialism can be operationalized in a more fine-grained way in relation both to specific presidential powers, such as the power to dissolve the legislature, and to relations with the legislature, for example whether there is majority or minority government. Doing so has helped to push back the boundaries of the research agenda.

### **3 WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

There are three main aspects to the contemporary research agenda on semi-presidentialism. Firstly, and quite simply, more study of semi-presidential countries is needed. Tavits (2009) has criticized those who focus solely on semi-presidentialism. This criticism is unjustified. While, as will be argued, more general comparisons are necessary, there are plenty of studies that focus only on parliamentarism or on presidentialism. Indeed, there is a vibrant literature that confines itself to the study of Latin America presidentialism alone. In this context, focusing solely on semi-presidentialism is no less legitimate. More than that, the extreme variety of political practice within semi-presidentialism raises questions that are not as relevant to other regimes types. Why do countries with the same basic constitutional features operate in such different ways? What is the effect on policy and political outcomes of cohabitation relative to the other types of situations that can occur under semi-presidentialism? Is Skach right to claim that divided minority government is semi-presidentialism's most conflict-prone sub-type? These are questions that can legitimately be asked solely within the confines of a study of semi-presidential countries. To answer them, finer ways of capturing the variation within semi-presidentialism are needed and better ways of understanding the potential effects of such variation are required. Moreover, even though single-country studies can be a vital source of second-hand information for outside observers, to gain better purchase on the explanatory variables more medium-n regional and large-n comparative studies are needed. Ideally, a rich mix of such studies will help to answer at least some of the questions that are now being asked about semi-presidentialism.

Secondly, while studies that focus on semi-presidentialism alone can be methodologically legitimate, more studies that compare semi-presidential, presidential and parliamentary countries are required. For example, even though there is very robust evidence that president-parliamentarism is more dangerous for democracy than premier-presidentialism, there is no large-n systematic study of the effects of these two sub-types of semi-presidentialism relative to their presidential and parliamentary counterparts. Recently, there have been studies that have focused on the variation within semi-presidentialism relative to parliamentarism (Cheibub and Chernykh 2008; Schleiter and Morgan-Jones

2009b; 2009c; 2010). Whereas Cheibub and Chernykh have concluded there is no difference in terms of outcomes between the two, Schleiter and Morgan-Jones have found that it is best not to lump semi-presidentialism in with parliamentarism. These contradictory interpretations suggest that more studies are required. We need to be sure that the results are not dependent upon different case selection, definitions of democracy, years included in the study and so forth. For their part, Samuels and Shugart (2010) have shown that semi-presidentialism, particularly its president-parliamentary form, is closer to presidentialism than parliamentarism in much of its effects. In so doing, these studies have started to answer a question that has been asked since the concept of semi-presidentialism was first identified. Can this form of government be subsumed into one of the two more established categories of regimes, or is it a stand-alone system? The extreme variation within semi-presidentialism means that it should not be treated as a discrete third type of system except taxonomically. However, it is entirely plausible to think that, for example, outcomes under premier-presidentialism may more resemble those under parliamentarism, while outcomes under president-parliamentarism may resemble those under presidentialism. Samuels and Shugart's work on political parties suggest that this way of approaching the different types of regime may be useful. As things stand, though, much more comparative work needs to be done before any general conclusions can be drawn about the relative effects of the different types of semi-presidentialism, presidentialism and parliamentarism.

Finally, whether the analysis focuses purely on semi-presidential countries or comparisons of semi-presidential, presidential and parliamentary countries, there is a need to deepen and broaden the scope of scholarship. In terms of depth, more data are needed. Previously, it was demonstrated that the study of intra-executive conflict (or cooperation), which is often said to be central to semi-presidentialism, has been hampered by the absence of reliable data about the level and the intensity of such conflict. There is only so much to be learnt from country-specific narratives. To understand the reasons why the level of intra-executive conflict varies across countries and across time, reliable indicators of such conflict need to be identified and mapped on a cross-national basis. A similar point applies to other aspects of political behavior. For example, even

though the rules concerning presidential vetoes differ from one country to the next, there is the potential, all else equal, to identify the level of presidential intervention by reference to the frequency with which vetoes are used. However, such information is often difficult for country experts to gather and is certainly unavailable for comparativists. If basic questions about political life are to be answered, then more data about some of its most basic aspects are needed. In terms of breadth, it must be remembered that scholars of semi-presidentialism are studying topics that scholars elsewhere are also studying but in very different contexts and different ways. For example, the study of semi-presidentialism often focuses on presidential and/or prime ministerial leadership. There is already a vast literature on this topic broadly understood and from a variety of different epistemological and methodological perspectives. Unsurprisingly, the literature on semi-presidentialism often relies on some basic institutionalist assumptions. This approach may be perfectly valid. However, it is not the only way in which political leaders and/or leadership can be studied. The study of semi-presidentialism would benefit from the application of a broader set of approaches than have been applied up to this point.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

Relative to the study of presidentialism and parliamentarism, the study of semi-presidentialism is still in its infancy. However, like all infants, the rate of learning is very quick. In the last 20 years particularly, we have learnt a lot about this constitutional arrangement; how to identify it, why there is so much variation within it, and what effects such variation has on certain political outcomes. There is, though, still much more to learn. The study of semi-presidential countries is likely to remain a focus of academic attention in itself. However, in the future there are likely to be more comparative studies with semi-presidential cases being analyzed alongside presidential and parliamentary cases. In this sense, whereas just 20 years ago the study of semi-presidentialism was confined to just a small number of scholars looking at an even smaller number of countries, in 20 years time the chances are the study of semi-presidentialism will be part of the scholarly mainstream. Such a development would be welcomed not just for its



essential academic interest, but also because semi-presidentialism is likely to remain a tempting choice for constitution-makers. The more that is known about this type of constitutional arrangement, the better the advice that can be provided to them as to the pros and cons of this form of government and its almost infinite variety.

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