

Democratic Competition and Political Representation

CPDD

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Linkages between parties and voters

- programmatic
- clientelistic
- charismatic

Programmatic Linkage

- Normatively a precondition of a well-functioning democratic regime
- Such linkage is conditional and performance-dependent (how well do parties keep their manifesto pledges?)
- Scrutinized throughout the electoral cycle: party manifesto → elections → performance in government → elections → etc.

Programmatic Linkage

- Linkage between party/candidate and voters is never fully programmatic, always a mixture of motivations :
- **Leaders:** policy and office
- **Party activists:** collective and selective incentives
- **Voters:** rational and affective components of party choice

Programmatic Linkage

- Formally can be analysed as a chain of delegation: *Principal-agent relationship*
- voter—parliamentarian—government—minister—(civil servant)
- Parties have a say in all the “pairs”, even though legitimacy of their interference varies
- **agency drift**: what are the possible solutions?

Clientelistic Linkage

- A form of personalised bilateral exchange, asymmetric relationship, a sense of duty
- “Old” clientelism: a hierarchical relationship between patron and client in traditional communities
- Patron offers basic resources to his clients, who in turn repay by providing services or economic goods (rent, labour, etc.)

Clientelistic Linkage

- A strong sense of **responsibility** (patron) and duty (client)
- This traditional interaction can take up modern forms:
- Patron (or their associates) run in elections
- Clients supply votes, patron supplies or promises goods)

Clientelistic Linkage

- “New” clientelism: less personalised, a key role played by networks and brokers:
- A pyramid: patron is on top (politician, party), clients-voters are at the bottom
- They are connected through a network of local officials, local entrepreneurs, party organizational structures etc.
- It remains a bilateral relationship (important broker, important broker—less important broker, less important broker—client/voter)

Why is clientelism a problem?

- Voters disregard a broader context of their party choice
- Politicians do not have a mandate (motivation) to pursue public interests
- Clientelistic linkage is rigid, in conflict with the role of elections as a feedback-providing mechanism

Why is clientelism a problem?

- It is not voters who control politicians//Rather, politicians control voters
- Transactions typically do not take place simultaneously, **trust** is needed for the system to work (a growing number of exchanges tends to strengthen the linkage)

Clientelism: explained by political culture?

- Putnam (1993): differentiated performance of Italy's regions explained by existence in the north of deep-seated patterns of behaviour:
- Representative institutions (guilds etc.) of the medieval era → self-organizing behaviour → understanding for public/collective interest → policies in search of common good
- Absence of such patterns in the south: low trust in parties—problems with collective action—rent-seeking = clientelism, nepotism

Clientelism: explained by strategic interactions?

- Shefter (1994): timing of democratisation and state-building
- If parties and party competition emerged BEFORE autonomous state apparatus was established = public resources are exploited for distribution of private benefits
- Autonomous state bureaucracy BEFORE party-based mobilisation = a strong barrier preventing widespread clientelistic exchange

Charismatic linkage

- Considered a pre-modern form of political authority in political theory (M. Weber)
- “Charisma” traditionally studied by social psychology
- Pappas (2009): charisma is primarily a political phenomenon, a specific type of political leadership

Charismatic personalism (Pappas)

- 1. nearly absolute and centralised control by the leader over “his” party
- (division of powers and labour depend on leader’s decisions, formal rules are not observed)
- 2. a strong and unmediated emotional link between the leader and followers

Charismatic personalism (Pappas)

- 3. delegative and missionary relationship between the leader and his followers
- (delegation in the sense of missing horizontal accountability)
- It may exist in democratic regimes
- A plan of radical (but not necessarily authoritarian) transformation of institutional architecture of the state

What shapes party systems

- 1. a political sociology approach: politics mirrors society (Lipset and Rokkan)
- 2. strategic choices of political elites (what themes to politicize)
- 3. formal institutions, especially the electoral system and executive-legislative relations

How do electoral rules shape party systems?

- **Duverger law:** the simple majority single-ballot system favors the two-party system
- Example: United Kingdom
- **Duverger's hypothesis:** simple majority system with second ballot, and proportional representation favor multipartism
- Examples: France, Spain etc.
- However, in structuring party systems, electoral systems are “supplemented” by the structure of societies (cleavages)

A decline in importance of political parties

- An ongoing social and political modernisation = a decline in importance of parties
- Rise of educational levels → no need to rely on parties to provide a link to the state (institutions)
- Independent mass media
- Alternative channels of political mobilisation (social movements, organized interests)

The Consequences of dealignment

- A drop in voter turnout (voters who identified with parties had traditionally voted more often than those without party identification)
- On average, some 10 percentage points drop over the last 50 years
- Increased volatility levels: entry of new parties and the rise of the number of relevant parties
- Individual level: split ticket voting and divided government

The Consequences of dealignment

- Timing of decisions about who to vote for in elections
- An increased trend of identification with a politician (and not with their party)
- Decrease in active participation at election campaigns
- Less voters with „party predispositions“

What is a party system?

- A stable, valued and recurring pattern of interactions between its components (parties)
- “Systemness” - Interactions among parties that go beyond their individual characteristics

Party „systemness“

- Results from competition among parties:
- Number of parties (how to count them?)
- Relative size and strength (how to assess it?)
- Dimensions of party competition
- Distance between parties (polarization)
- Propensity to govern together

Number of parties

- Nearly all classifications take into account the number of parties
- All that compete in elections?
- All that gain parliamentary seats
- All that have a say in who governs

The 2005 UK Elections

- Candidates of 14 parties competed in the parliamentary elections
- Candidates of 14 parties gained seats in the Parliament
- Three parties gained an overwhelming majority of seats (Lab 35,2%=356, Con 32,3=197, LibDem 22%=62 mandates)
- Other parties tend to gain votes in specific regions

Duverger (1954)

- Number of parties alone shapes the dynamics among them
- One party system, two party system, multipartism
- Bipartism is natural and normatively superior, multipartism leads to instability

Relative size of parties

- Blondel (1968): an empirical classification of democratic party systems
- 1945-1966: UK, USA, NZE, AUS, AUT (two parties combined >89%)
- CAN, GER, IRE: (two parties combined gain 75-80%, a third relevant party exists, important for government formation)

Dimensions of party competition

Sartori (1976)

- We only need to take into account the relevant parties (i.e. parties with a coalition potential or with a blackmail potential)
- The more relevant parties in the system, the greater the ideological distance among them
- Polarised pluralism: anti-system parties at both ends of the ideological spectrum
- However, very few cases of polarised multipartism after 1989

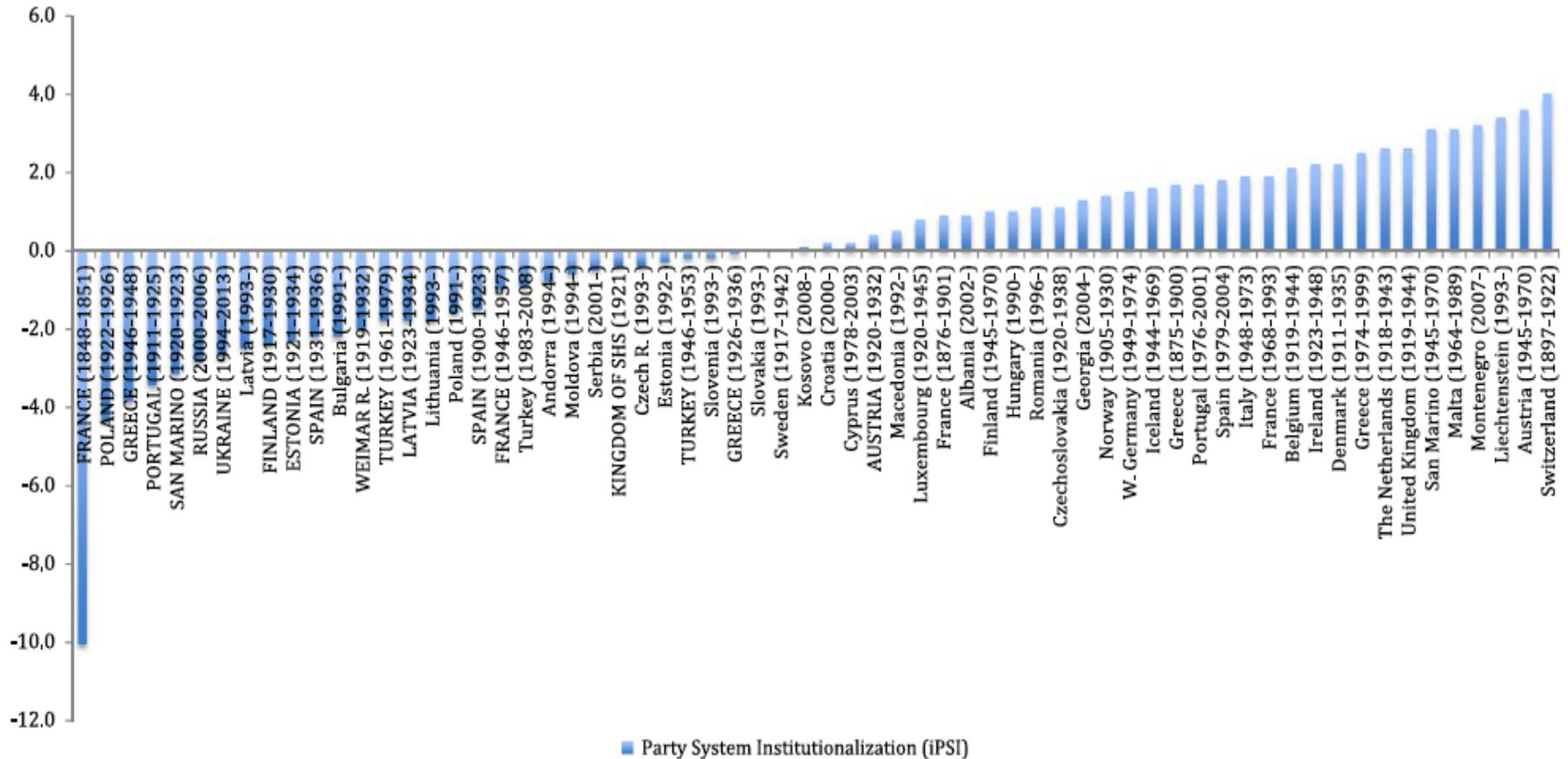
Tendency of parties to govern together

- Governing is at the core of contemporary parties
- Structures of competition can be seen to be either closed (and predictable) or open (and unpredictable) depending on:
 - the patterns of alternation in government,
 - the degree of innovation or persistence in processes of government formation, and
 - the range of parties gaining access to government

Party system institutionalization (PSI)

- Conceptually different from party institutionalisation (PI)
- Crucial for democratic consolidation and survival
- Casal-Bertoa: PSI as sufficient (not necessary) condition of democratic survival
- No link between PI and democratic breakdown

PSI and democratic collapse (FCB, 2016)



PI and democratic collapse (FCB, 2016)

