

Gianluca Passarelli (Ed.), *The presidentialisation of political parties. Organisations, institutions and leaders*

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Political leaders are becoming the key actor in democratic systems, by concentrating power in their hands at the top of political parties and government. Consequently, a relevant strand of political science literature has been devoting to understand how democratic politics is changing under the impact of the process of personalisation of politics, one of the more relevant trends in the recent years. A new and sometimes contested category, “presidentialisation”, has been also forged in order to indicate that many political systems are starting to act in a more similar way to presidential regimes. Moreover, several scholars are accepting the challenge to apply comparative methods on a large set of countries to catch why, when and where presidentialisation occurs.

Inserted in this theoretical framework, the book edited by Gianluca Passarelli adds new knowledge to our understanding of presidentialisation of political parties, by observing 11 democracies belonging to the three traditional regime types: presidential, semi-presidential and parliamentary. The work moves from two starting hypotheses (a) that presidentialisation is a phenomenon that may arise necessarily in presidential systems, or sometimes in semi-presidential ones under some circumstances; and (b) that the genetic characteristic of political parties acts as an intervening variable capable of accentuating the process of presidentialisation. Yet, although the volume offers a relevant reflection on the institutional change in contemporary democracies, it doesn't often confirm such statements.

Starting from the first hypothesis, the volume borrows the scheme of analysis provided by Samuels and Shugart (2010) according to which regime's institutional foundations shape political behaviour because of their inescapable institutional traits. Quite obviously, presidentialised parties are typical of presidential countries:

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Chile is considered a case for presidentialisation as the strongest example of presidentialism in the world influenced by the legacy of the authoritarian regime of Pinochet. Yet presidentialised parties are not limited to presidential regimes. For instance, Italy as a parliamentary country has shown a clear trend towards verticalisation of political parties: the rise of personal leaders (see F. Musella and P. Webb, *The Personal Leaders in Contemporary Party Politics*, special issue in *Italian Political Science Review*, 3, 2015) has been occurring in both new parties—Berlusconi's Forza Italia represents one of the most radical example of patrimonial party on the international scenario—as in reformed party such as the Democratic Party. In the Passarelli's volume, Oreste Massari also confirms the novelty of the rise of the PD leader Matteo Renzi, in saying that « given the impressive communication skills of the new secretary and the broad comprehensive consensus he presently enjoys, another story just might be beginning » (p. 232). This ascendancy is also similar to that of Tony Blair in the UK, the most famous example of a parliamentary democracy in the world. Although Labour party has been traditionally characterised as a “bottom-up plural democracy” (p. 147), Hayton and Heppel show that the “Blair era” was one of the considerable leadership autonomies to the extent that it is often cited as confirming the presidentialisation thesis. This is one of the reasons why the two authors identify « a clear trend toward the personalisation and presidentialisation of parties in the UK, even within the institutional confines of the parliamentary Westminster system » (p. 158). This process has been shaped accordingly with organisational aspects of single political parties, which in fact have shown a variable degree of leadership autonomy.

This opens to the second Passarelli's hypothesis. Party's genetic features are presented as the missing link in the study on presidentialisation, so that while the constitutional asset represents the most important factor through which a party might be presidentialised, the history of a party may strengthen or weaken such process. This is the more fruitful part of the volume, as it permits to understand the “presidentialisation concept” as a dynamic one, and not entirely derived by constitutional prescriptions. Germany, considered as an outlier within the distribution of parliamentary systems, is not a useful case to demonstrate to what extent the genetic features of political parties intervene, as this variable has not played a crucial distinctive role given that there is not a great variance among categories (p. 252). Yet the contrary case is represented by France, where, as far as genetic models are concerned, scholars underline « the basic contrast between the socialist organisation on the one hand, based on pluralism with fractions fuelled by ideological debate and motivated by the allocation of posts and the promotion of subleaders, and, on the other hand, the post-Gaullist organisation working under the authority of a leader who leaves no room for the public expression of subgroups and subleaders » (Bachelot and Haegel, p. 97). In the same way, although Poland is a difficult test for the genetic approach due to its recent democratic achievements, the fact that Polish parties were born in a post-modern era, skipping the mass democratic politics, has constituted an important premise for the development of personalised parties (Bucur and McMnamin, p. 123).

An important and additional suggestion comes from the chapter authored by Fabbrini and Bressanelli, which deals with the evolution of American political

system. The two Italian scholars consider that, as clearly shown in most US political science literature, the ascent of the American presidency occurred between 1890 and World War II, and that also recent trends of personalisation of politics in the last few decades may be noticed. However, they suggest analysing separately the presidential party supporting the President and the congressional party, as consistent with a regime of separated, and often divided, government developed in the US. This brings us to analyse a more assertive role played by the Speaker in Congress, and especially in the House of Representatives, in a context in which the Democratic Party and the Republican Party have become internally more homogenous and more distinct from each other. While America has appeared as « separated government without parties » from the 1970s to 1990s, a counter-trend has occurred in more recent times with the strengthening, and progressive distinction, between a presidential leader who creates his personal party made up of professionals and supporters, and the party in parliamentary assembly more and more concentrated around the power of party leaders. Thus, Fabbrini and Bressanelli's analysis takes into account two apparently divergent tendencies, both originated in the process of presidentialisation.

Passarelli's book is an interesting and a stimulating work also for those more convinced that the process of presidentialisation has been shared by a good number of both parliamentary and presidential regimes—and this position has indeed been confirmed in many of the book chapters. The volume has been strongly constructed on the idea that institutions do matter. Moreover, the element of parties' genetic features put a new element into the debate on the process of presidentialisation of politics. It remains a valuable invite to combine theoretical models with history, by looking at the organisational imprinting of political parties—a call for empirical analysis in a context of institutional complexity. All of this without forgetting that, as a master of Political Science such Panebianco has taught, party organisational characteristics depend strongly on how the organisation originated and how it consolidated.

Erratum

Erratum to: Partisan and professional control: Predictors of bureaucratic tenure in Germany

Julia Fleischer

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The article Partisan and professional control: Predictors of bureaucratic tenure in Germany, written by Julia Fleischer, was originally published electronically on the publisher's internet portal (currently www.SpringerLink) on 10/08/2016 without open access.

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We regret that incorrect figures were introduced to Table 3 (Predictors of bureaucratic tenure: Cox proportional hazard regressions) during the typesetting of the article. The publisher apologises for the errors.

The correct figures in Table 3 are as follows:

- 0.316 in column Model 1 should read 0.316
- 0,122 in column Model 1 should read 0.122
- 0.001 in column Model 1 should read 0.001

The online version of the original article can be found under doi:10.1057/s41269-016-0006-0.