

SUMMARIES

Electoral Systems and Party Systems: Causes and Consequences.

by Adriano Pappalardo

The article provides a systematic test of the consequences of the electoral system for the format of the party system and the frequency of single-party majority cabinets. The test is based on Lijphart's 1994 data set (extended from 1990 up to November 1st 2002), but excludes some of his cases, and introduces an additional indicator of the number of parties. Thanks to these changes in the research design, the variance explained by multivariate regression turns much higher than Lijphart's results, especially as long as the elective parties (i.e., the psychological effects of the electoral system) are concerned. At the same time, the post-1990 data show a decline of the predictive power of the main independent variable («effective» threshold). In order to explain this decline, the author argues that the growing deconstruction of western parties and party systems occurring since the early nineties should be taken into account. Indeed, entering into the regression an indicator of such a process (total net volatility) compensates for most of the threshold's lost explanatory power, thus suggesting that deconstruction is a far more significant variable than previously recognized by the relevant literature.

Between Sartori and Lijphart: a Typology of the Democratic Forms of Government

by Luca Addante

This article analyses (in terms of «normal science») the two typologies of democratic forms of government elaborated by Arend Lijphart in the last two decades. According to Lijphart, the different forms of government are fundamental variables to define different

types of democratic regime. Lijphart marks the difference between presidentialism and parliamentarism without including semipresidentialism in his typologies. On the contrary, as pointed out by Giovanni Sartori, the semipresidential form of government keeps a specific position, both in theoretical and empirical terms. Starting from Sartori's point of view, in the second part of the article, the author elaborates a new typology of democratic forms of government. Based on Lijphart's methodological criteria, the new typology includes, together with presidential and parliamentary, also semipresidential forms of government.

Electronic Government: Visions, Findings and a Research Agenda

by Mauro Calise and Rosanna De Rosa

E-government is commonly defined as a process of technological transformation of administrative organization and routines, with its main aim consisting in a more efficient and interactive provision of – and access to – public services. Thanks to the pervasive and globalizing impact of the ICT revolution and the Internet, e-government has rapidly become a key policy platform for bureaucratic reform. Yet, the growth of governmental intervention through electronic reengineering of the administrative branch also raises critical questions of democratic accountability. This article presents a state of the art assessment of the development of e-government by *a)* reviewing its main ideological manifestos originating from governmental, international and corporate actors, *b)* evaluating two major cross-national surveys of e-government recent achievements worldwide, *c)* defining a research agenda focusing on the (new) opportunities and (old) shortcomings of the electronic frontier.

Strong Premiership, Elective Premiership

by Giovanni Sartori

The only case of a Prime Minister directly elected by the voters can be found in the recent Israeli political experience. The system has not worked satisfactorily and after three elections has been abandoned. Even the most powerful of the Prime Ministers, that is, the British Prime Minister, derives his powers not from a direct popular election, but from his/her being the leader of the political party that has won an absolute majority of parliamentary seats. For this reason, he/she may be replaced by his/her parliamentary party, as has been

the case, in the post-war period, for Anthony Eden, Harold MacMillan, Alec Douglas-Home, Harold Wilson, and Margaret Thatcher. In this article, the author criticizes the recent Italian proposals for an elective Prime Minister as a solution to the problems of the weak and non-cohesive political coalitions and of the difficult relationship between government and Parliament. The major contention of this article is that most of the problems derive not from the lack of formal institutional powers in the hand of the Prime Minister, but from the imperfect electoral law that does not reduce the number of parties and gives much leverage to small parties.

Varieties of Models of Parliamentary Government

by Gianfranco Pasquino

This article offers a brief overview of the most important models of parliamentary government. The purpose is to explore whether according to the Constitution as well as in practice the Prime Minister has at his/her disposal the power to appoint and dismiss the Ministers and the power autonomously to dissolve parliament. Taking into consideration, among others, the cases of Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Sweden, it is found that, constitutionally available or not, those powers are actually exercised when the existing party coalitions and political and parliamentary majorities can afford to do so. Moreover, it is suggested that the power to dissolve Parliament if frequently implemented in order, for instance, to impose discipline on the parliamentarians or to prevent parliamentary turnovers, goes contrary to the institutional logic of parliamentary government. Though in some cases unscrupulously practiced, the possibility of creating different governmental coalitions in parliament provides for political and institutional flexibility and prevents too frequent and potentially very dangerous electoral consultations. The strengthening of any parliamentary government can be obtained through intelligent «manipulations» of the electoral system and hence a restructuring of the party system and of the coalitional game. Exactly what still remains to be done in the Italian political system and cannot be obtained just by strengthening the Prime Minister.

Referendum: Central-Eastern Europe and Italy

by PierVincenzo Uleri

The author reviews two books on the referendum phenomenon, one on the experience in Central and Eastern European countries,

and the other on the Italian experience. The first book, edited by Andreas Auer and Michael Bützer, is a large collection of essays written by scholars, constitutionalists and political scientists, and has its origins in the conclusions of an international study congress held in Budapest in February 2000. The book is the result of intense study and research promoted by the *Centre d'études et de documentation sur la démocratie directe* (c2d – <http://c2d.unige.ch>) set up in 1993 in the Department of Constitutional law of the University of Geneva. The first part contains twelve contributions on referendum as such as well as on experiences in twelve Central and Eastern European countries, from the Baltic to the Balkans. The second part features thirteen contributions commenting on a number of different institutional issues relating to normative theory and empirical analysis.

The second book by Alfonso Di Giovine, an Italian constitutionalist, is a collection of articles on the Italian referendum experience. The Central-Eastern European and Italian experiences are different in many aspects, but they have two significant points in common: the importance of the role played by political parties, and the requirement of a *quorum* for the vote to be valid. Auer holds that «threshold requirements are a childhood disease of direct democracy» whereas Di Giovine believes that threshold requirements and abstentionism must be given due consideration in order to counteract referendum abuse. The reviewer's opinion is that the *quorum* ought to be disposed of.