

1

The road not taken

This book argues that, in a democracy, a constitutional separation of powers between the executive and the assembly may be a good thing, but the constitutional concentration of executive power in a single human being—what I call executive personalism—is not.

This thesis may seem plausible, perhaps too plausible to be interesting. Yet almost the entire democratic world is dominated by only three types of constitutions, all of which fail to disentangle the separation of powers from executive personalism: On the one hand, parliamentary constitutions reject both, while, on the other hand, their presidential and semi-presidential counterparts embrace both. And even though these three types of constitutions are fairly old (the youngest was invented in 1919), there has been surprisingly little academic thinking about strategies to decouple the separation of powers from executive personalism. I argue that this decoupling is desirable and explore one widely neglected strategy, which I call, for want of a better term, semi-parliamentary government (Ganghof 2018a). Semi-parliamentarism achieves powers separation without executive personalism.

Executive personalism and the locus of powers separation

I use “executive personalism” to describe the extent to which constitutional rules (a) vest executive power in a single human being; who (b) is democratically authorized directly by the voters; and (c) who cannot be dismissed for political reasons by any collective and representative entity, such as an assembly or a political party. To the extent that these conditions hold, executive power is personalized by the constitution. Executive personalism thus understood is, in an important sense, a historical overhang from monarchy (Colomer 2013; Nelson 2014; Scheuerman 2005). Or, as Prakash (2020: 24) suggests for the United States of America, it is itself a form of “limited monarchy”; we just do not recognize this “because we have been fooled by the myths about the Founding and misled by our stereotypes of what makes a king.”

The concept of executive personalism says nothing about how much power the chief executive has. In principle, this power may be heavily constrained by the constitutional checks and balances of a separation-of-powers system, as well as informally by political parties and public opinion. Executive personalism must, nevertheless, be conceptually distinguished from the separation of powers. The latter does not require the former. Moreover, executive personalism seems to have a causal tendency, under a broad range of background conditions, to strengthen presidential power and undermine and erode formal and informal constraints on the executive (e.g. Ginsberg 2016: 38–52; Posner 2016; Prakash 2020; Samuels and Shugart 2010).

Whether or not the separation of powers becomes connected to executive personalism depends on its precise location between the two branches. Under parliamentary government, the executive is selected by the assembly and can also be dismissed by it for purely political reasons—there is a fusion of powers between the executive and the assembly majority. In a single chain of delegation, voters elect one collective agent, the assembly, which then selects a prime minister and cabinet as agents of the assembly (Strøm 2000). Under presidentialism and semi-presidentialism, voters also popularly elect, for a fixed term, a second agent: the president. The separation of powers thus becomes entangled with executive personalism. The difference between presidentialism and semi-presidentialism is the location of powers separation. Under presidentialism, the president essentially *is* the executive, so that power is separated between the executive and the legislature. Under semi-presidentialism, there is also a prime minister and cabinet responsible to the assembly, so that the locus of powers separation is shifted into the executive: One part (the president) is separated from the assembly, while the other part (the prime minister and cabinet) is fused with it.

The semi-parliamentary separation of powers

Semi-parliamentarism decouples powers separation from executive personalism by shifting its locus *into the assembly*. Imagine an assembly that is divided into two parts. This can be two separate chambers or a committee embedded within a single chamber. The important point is that both parts are directly elected, so that voters have two agents with robust democratic legitimacy. Let us imagine that these two agents are given two partly different tasks. One of them has the task of selecting and dismissing the prime minister and cabinet, as under parliamentarism. It is a chamber or committee of confidence, whose majority is fused with the government. The other has the tasks of representing

voters in the deliberative and legislative process and controlling the government. It is a chamber of legislation and control, which does not participate in the selection and dismissal of the cabinet.¹ Since one part of the assembly is separated from the executive, there is a separation of powers; and since the other is also a collective entity, rather than a fixed-term president, there can be no executive personalism. I contend that this constitutional structure is not only a distinct form of bicameralism (or quasi-bicameralism) but also a distinct form of government (Ganghof 2014). It can achieve the potential benefits of powers separation, while avoiding the perils of executive personalism.

Does semi-parliamentary government already exist? Only to some extent. A few democratic constitutions with bicameral assemblies approximate semi-parliamentarism, but they have not been purposefully designed with a semi-parliamentary blueprint in mind. Their development has been path-dependent, perhaps even “accidental” (Smith 2018a). Moreover, semi-parliamentarism could be implemented in a variety of ways, many of which have never been tried in the real world.

This book therefore takes a two-pronged approach to exploring semi-parliamentarism. On the one hand, it comparatively analyzes the cases that most closely approximate an ideal-type of semi-parliamentary government. These cases are the Australian Commonwealth and Japan, but especially the Australian states of New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia (Ganghof 2018a). These democratic systems can be classified as semi-parliamentary because they have bicameral parliaments in which both chambers (a) are directly elected and (b) possess robust veto power over ordinary legislation, but (c) where only one of them selects and dismisses the prime minister and cabinet.² Using data from 1975 to 2018, I compare patterns of party systems, cabinet formation, legislative coalition-building, and constitutional reform in these cases to those in 21 parliamentary and semi-presidential democracies, as well as Switzerland’s assembly-independent system.

On the other hand, my interest does not lie in the intricacies of Australian and Japanese politics. Rather than getting drawn too deeply into the specifics of the cases, the book also explores optimized and new semi-parliamentary

¹ Obviously, the vote of no confidence cannot be an instrument of control for this chamber, but the confidence relationship between executive and assembly often tends to strengthen the former; it tends to create executive dominance. This point is further discussed in Chapter 3.

² Chapter 3 elaborates on the operational and ideal-typical definitions of semi-parliamentarism, on their relation to the concept of “symmetrical” bicameralism, and on the notion of robust veto power.

designs, some of which do not require fully fledged bicameralism. Understanding these constitutional options is important to gauge semi-parliamentarism's potential as an alternative to the presidential version of the separation of powers.

In comparing semi-parliamentarism to other forms of government, especially to parliamentarism and presidentialism, the book develops four main themes:

1. Semi-parliamentarism is superior to presidentialism. It can balance different visions of democracy, while avoiding executive personalism.
2. To compare semi-parliamentarism to pure parliamentarism, we have to revise our understanding of what the competing visions of democracy are.
3. Semi-parliamentary bicameralism achieves an effective and stable form of horizontal political control and accountability that is not necessarily supermajoritarian.
4. There is no meaningful way in which presidentialism or parliamentarism is inherently more democratic than semi-parliamentarism.

Why semi-parliamentarism is superior to presidentialism

For a long time, the political science debate about forms of government was organized around Juan Linz's (1990a, 1990b, 1994) famous critique of presidentialism. He argued that the presidential constitution has inherent flaws, which help to explain the instability of democracies, especially in Latin America. Linz's arguments did not systematically distinguish between the flaws associated with the separation of powers (e.g. the problem of inter-branch deadlock) and those due to executive personalism (e.g. the problem of holding presidents accountable). However, when scholars defended presidentialism by highlighting its potential advantages, these concerned the separation of powers, not executive personalism (Cheibub 2006, 2007; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997; Shugart and Carey 1992). Even when authors seem to argue for executive personalism directly (Calabresi 2001), many of their arguments merely justify the separation of powers (Chapter 9).

The central advantage of presidentialism lies in its potential for balancing different visions of democracy. A perennial debate surrounding parliamentary systems is whether electoral systems ought to give voters a clear choice between two political forces (as in the so-called Westminster model) or whether

they should focus on representing voters fairly in the legislative deliberation and decision process (Lijphart 1984; Powell 2000; Rosenbluth and Shapiro 2018). Under the presidential separation of powers, both goals are attainable at the same time: “Majoritarian” presidential elections can provide a clear choice, while “proportional” legislative elections can achieve fair representation. Moreover, powers separation can also liberate the assembly from the task of keeping the government in office. As a result, the assembly can potentially achieve greater independence in deliberating and deciding on individual pieces of legislation and in controlling the government. One implication of this independence is that majority coalitions can form in a flexible, issue-specific manner—which some theorists see as more egalitarian and, thus, inherently more democratic than the formation of a fixed veto player coalition (Ganghof 2015a, b; Ward and Weale 2010).

I contend that semi-parliamentary government can achieve these potential advantages of presidentialism just as well if not better. What enables citizens to vote for a clear political direction under presidentialism is not executive personalism but a majoritarian electoral system that narrows the competition down to a few—ideally two—alternatives. This can also be achieved by a majoritarian electoral system for the chamber or committee of confidence.³ And just as the entire assembly is more independent from the executive under presidentialism, so is the chamber of legislation and control under semi-parliamentarism. This is sufficient to reap the benefits of a more independent legislature.

My argument even goes further. Executive personalism is not only unnecessary to achieve the benefits of the separation of powers, but it also has negative consequences. Direct effects include the weakening of political parties’ programmatic and representational capacities (Samuels and Shugart 2010) and the potentially increased risk of an authoritarian takeover by the incumbent president (Linz 1994; Svobik 2015). Indirect effects result from the efforts to contain the dangers of executive personalism through constitutional features such as the impossibility of presidential re-election (Baturio and Elgie 2019) and assembly dissolution. These features undermine some of the alleged advantages of the separation of powers (e.g. electoral accountability) and exacerbate some of its dangers (e.g. unresolvable legislative deadlock). An adequate understanding of how semi-parliamentarism achieves the benefits of

³ Using electoral plurality or majority rule in *single-seat districts* does not guarantee two-party systems. However, Chapter 8 shows how the chamber or committee of confidence could be elected in a single, jurisdiction-wide district and how local and regional representation could be shifted into the more separated chamber of legislation and control.

powers separation without the perils of executive personalism undermines any instrumentalist case for presidentialism.

Rethinking the visions of democracy

Whether the semi-parliamentary separation of powers is superior to pure parliamentarism, is less clear. To compare these two systems, I explore empirically how they can balance competing models or visions of democracy—what I call normative balancing.

I also propose a new way of thinking about these visions. In political science, it is common to contrast a “majoritarian” model of democracy with a “consensual” or “proportional” one (Lijphart 2012; Powell 2000). Since democracy is fundamentally built on the idea of majority rule, I do not find this approach plausible. Instead, I conceptualize the competing visions as being equally majoritarian. They agree that majorities ought to rule, but differ in how these majorities ought to be formed.⁴ Their core disagreement is about how much the process of majority formation needs to be simplified, which is why I call them *simple and complex majoritarianism* (Ganghof 2015a). Proponents of simple majoritarianism are skeptical about voters’ cognitive abilities and parties’ coordinative capabilities and therefore want to greatly simplify the democratic process (Rosenbluth and Shapiro 2018; see also Carey and Hix 2011; Cunow et al. 2021). Proponents of complex majoritarianism, by contrast, are principally concerned with expanding voters’ options. Proportional electoral systems are not preferred because they lead to proportional or consensual government (they do not) but because they offer more choice to voters along multiple dimensions of disagreement and conflict (McGann 2013; Przeworski 2003; Rodden 2020).

From this perspective, it is natural to extend the vision of complex majoritarianism to the idea that legislative proposals should be deliberated and voted on in a flexible, issue-specific manner. Since many issues will be considered by the government between every election and different sets of parties and citizens will form the majority on different issues, Powell (2000: 256, n. 9) considers it “important that the policy-making coalition not be locked into place by the immediate election outcome.” In the idealized world of social choice theory, the normative standard of complex majoritarianism might be the issue-specific

⁴ Of course, there is also an important debate on the limits of majority rule and whether institutions such as federalism derogate from democracy (see, e.g. Abizadeh 2021). This is not a debate I am concerned with in this book. I discuss bicameralism as a way to institutionalize a particular form of majority rule rather than to limit it.

median, rather than some global median in a one-dimensional conflict space (Ward and Weale 2010).

When we understand the two competing visions of democracy in this way, we can see that they are inherently difficult to reconcile in a pure parliamentary system. Voters elect only one agent, the assembly, whose two main tasks are partially in tension: selecting a government and keeping it in office, on the one hand; passing individual pieces of legislation, on the other. This tension leads to unavoidable trade-offs between competing goals—in the design of the assembly’s electoral system and of the confidence relationship between executive and legislature.

Semi-parliamentary government gives us additional options for normative balancing. Since the government originates from one part of the assembly but not the other, voters can elect two different agents under different electoral rules. And because the government survives separately from one part of the assembly, this part is free to form legislative majorities in a flexible, issue-specific manner.

The reconceptualization of the two visions of democracy also implies a different interpretation of cases like Switzerland, which does not have a pure parliamentary system either. The Swiss cabinet is elected by the assembly but serves a fixed term; it cannot be voted out of office. I argue that because this feature is underemphasized in prominent studies, Swiss politics often appears as more “consensual” than it actually is (Lijphart 2012). While Switzerland is technically governed by “oversized” cabinets, these are not like their counterparts under parliamentarism (Ganghof 2010). In a parliamentary system, the parties in an oversized cabinet are veto players: If they are outvoted against their will, the government ends (Tsebelis 2002). By contrast, Swiss cabinet parties can each be outvoted on any particular issue, and they often form *minimal-winning* coalitions on controversial issues. Switzerland is, in many ways, a good example of complex majoritarianism, and the separation of powers between the executive and the assembly is a crucial reason for that.

Since it is assembly-based, semi-parliamentarism could also balance competing visions of majority formation at more fundamental levels. First, it can balance party-based and individualist visions of democratic representation. This is the case in the Australian state of Tasmania, where one chamber is dominated by parties and the other by independents (Sharman 2013). Second, it could balance elections and sortition as competing methods of democratic legitimation (Abizadeh 2020). Finally, it could balance “democratic” and

“epistocratic” forms of representation (Brennan 2016).⁵ While I do not explore these possibilities in much detail, Chapter 3 highlights semi-parliamentarism’s more general potential for normative balancing.

Stable, effective, and majoritarian bicameralism

Semi-parliamentarism is a form of “symmetrical” or “strong” bicameralism (Lijphart 1984), which raises two worries: (a) that it is in practice incompatible with the principles of a parliamentary system; and (b) that it is inevitably supermajoritarian or “conservative” in the sense of protecting the status quo. I argue that both worries are largely unfounded.

Presidentialism and bicameralism have historically been justified as defensive shields against the rise of tyranny (Hamilton et al. 1987; Montesquieu 1977). They separate constitutional powers so as to provide horizontal accountability and control. The problem with presidentialism, though, is that its separation of powers comes packaged with executive personalism. As a result, there has been an important debate about “new” forms of powers separation which centers on two closely connected questions. One is whether bicameralism can be an effective and stable alternative to presidentialism (Ackerman 2000). The other is the extent to which it is desirable to shift the function of review and control from more narrowly political institutions to the judiciary (Bellamy 2007; Waldron 1999, 2006). This is a debate about the relative merits of different types of veto points in a democracy (Watkins and Lemieux 2015). My analysis speaks to this debate by pinpointing the conditions under which the combination of bicameralism and parliamentarism (in the first chamber) can provide effective and stable forms of review, control, and accountability.

Ackerman (2000) worries about presidentialism’s executive personalism, but is also skeptical about bicameralism as an effective and stable mechanism of political control and accountability. He therefore embraces a “juricentric separation of powers” (Albert 2010: 22), which he calls constrained parliamentarism. It is a parliamentary system in which the judiciary plays a central role in monitoring the actions of the fused executive and legislative departments. These actions are constrained by a written constitution, an enshrined bill of rights, and an independent judiciary endowed with the power of constitutional review.

⁵ The distinction between democracy and epistocracy, the rule of the knowledgeable (Estlund 2008), can be understood as a continuum, rather than as a dichotomy, and *representative* democracy can be seen as a sort of compromise on this continuum (Landa and Pevnick 2020b).

Ackerman's skepticism about bicameralism is shared by much of the literature in political science, which has long been puzzled about the workability and stability of "strong" forms of bicameralism (Lijphart 1984) in otherwise parliamentary systems of government. Many authors have postulated a basic incompatibility between parliamentarism and strong bicameralism. According to Lijphart (1984: 101–104), this incompatibility could only be overcome if politicians build cabinets that control majorities in both chambers. Yet, if this leads to the formation of "oversized" and/or ideologically heterogeneous cabinets, it may not only re-establish executive dominance but also be "unworkable" in practice (Sartori 1997: 186). Ackerman (2000: 673–80) contends that strong bicameralism *requires* a presidential system, rather than being an alternative to it (see also Calabresi 2001: 87).

Other authors, by contrast, are more sanguine about the potential of bicameralism and more concerned about the political power of courts (e.g. Waldron 2006, 2012). Gardbaum (2014) concurs with Ackerman by suggesting that the growth of strong judicial review has partly been caused by a lost faith in "political accountability as an effective and sufficient check on government action" (Gardbaum 2014: 618). He highlights the Australian experience as an important exception and speculates that strong and effective bicameralism helps to explain why the country has resisted the constitutionalization and judicialization of rights.

This important debate falls short in one crucial way. Both sides fail to pinpoint the conditions under which bicameralism can be an effective and stable tool of horizontal political control and accountability. I show that, to understand these conditions, we have to go beyond the prominent concepts of "symmetrical" or "strong" bicameralism (Lijphart 1984: 96–101). These concepts were developed within a particular theory and deliberately neglected how second chambers relate to the executive. For a second chamber to be classified as "symmetrical" or "strong," it does not matter whether it has the right to a no-confidence vote against the cabinet, whether it participates in the cabinet's investiture, whether it can veto the budget, or whether it can be dissolved under certain circumstances. I argue that once these and other design features are systematically considered in comparative perspective, we can understand why well-designed, semi-parliamentary bicameralism can be effective and stable. Its design reduces second chambers' effect on cabinet formation—most notably by denying them participation in the vote of confidence procedures—while allowing for the flexible, issue-specific formation of legislative majorities.

The last point is also important for understanding why bicameralism is not necessarily supermajoritarian, despite what much of the political science literature suggests (McGann 2006: 184; Przeworski 2010: 143–144, n. 10; Tsebelis and Money 1997: 216–217). This literature has long recognized the possibility that the second chamber is “absorbed” by the first; for example, because its partisan composition is identical (Tsebelis 2002). Yet, the reverse may also be true: If the first chamber is dominated by a single majority party that is located in the center of the policy space and builds issue-specific coalitions in the second, it is effectively absorbed by these coalitions. Moreover, given the democratic legitimacy of the second chamber under semi-parliamentarism, it becomes plausible to weaken the veto power of the *first chamber* (Chapter 8). Semi-parliamentary bicameralism does not necessarily imply a rejection of majority rule, but it can institutionalize a particular form of it.

Why semi-parliamentarism is not less democratic

All the arguments advanced so far concern the causal consequences of political institutions. Yet many normative theorists insist that political institutions may also have some kind of “procedural” value which is entirely independent of causal consequences and which can render one set of institutions inherently more democratic than another. Strikingly, while the normative literature has advanced this type of argument for many aspects of institutional design (electoral systems, decision-making rules, judicial review, and so on), it has been virtually silent about forms of government. In the political science and public law literatures, however, we can find two proceduralist conjectures that need to be addressed. Based on a discussion of how proceduralist arguments can be meaningful, I find both of them wanting.

The first conjecture is that presidentialism is inherently more democratic than parliamentarism—and semi-parliamentarism for that matter—in virtue of the direct election of the chief executive (Arato 2000; Calabresi 2001: 67; Lijphart 1992b: 13; von Mettenheim 1997). This conjecture neglects that, in a representative democracy, procedural equality has two dimensions: horizontal and vertical (Dworkin 2000). While the direct election of a president can reasonably be seen as reducing vertical inequality, the indirect selection and deselection of a prime minister by a fairly elected assembly can reasonably be seen as reducing horizontal inequality (McGann 2006). Hence, a purely proceduralist comparison of presidentialism and parliamentarism remains inconclusive. As part of this discussion, I also highlight the lack of interest that proceduralist arguments for presidentialism have shown in the direct recall

of presidents (but see Pérez-Liñán 2020). This is striking because the power to revoke an agent's authority is arguably the most fundamental power of any principal.

The second conjecture is that parliamentarism is inherently more egalitarian than semi-parliamentarism in virtue of giving all assembly members equal formal power over the cabinet (Meinel 2019: 212; see also Meinel 2021: Chapter 7). I reject this idea because our concern must be with the equal treatment, not of assembly members, but of citizens. When this point is accepted, there is actually an important sense in which semi-parliamentarism is procedurally superior to parliamentarism, everything else being equal. Most parliamentary systems establish legal or implicit thresholds of *representation* such that the voters of below-threshold parties are purposefully denied any representation. By contrast, semi-parliamentarism establishes a legal or implicit threshold of *confidence authority* such that parties whose vote share is below the threshold are denied participation in the no-confidence procedure. Therefore, when we compare the two forms of government while holding the respective thresholds constant, semi-parliamentarism treats voters *more* equally. If, say, Germany replaced its 5% threshold of representation with a 5% threshold of confidence authority, the voters of below-threshold parties would be denied fewer participation rights. They would be equally represented in parliamentary deliberation, legislative voting, and controlling the government. Their unequal treatment by the democratic procedures would become more visible but less severe.

Chapter overview

To develop in detail the four themes summarized, Chapter 2 begins by elaborating on the distinction between the separation of powers and executive personalism. Prevalent typologies in political science tend to conflate these two dimensions because they limit themselves to dichotomies or trichotomies. The chapter distinguishes six basic forms of government and shows how each represents a specific combination of powers separation and executive personalism. It also shows that semi-parliamentary government is unique in achieving powers separation without any executive personalism.

Chapter 3 specifies the concept of semi-parliamentary government. It provides ideal-typical and operational definitions and gives an overview of the semi-parliamentary cases analyzed in this book. I also highlight the blind spots of existing typologies to explain why the new concept is needed. Finally, the chapter distinguishes different types of normative balancing that semi-parliamentarism may help to achieve.

Chapter 4 explains the normative approach of this book and clarifies the distinction between instrumentalist and proceduralist evaluations of political institutions. It defends a minimalist form of proceduralism, which highlights the comparative evaluation of institutional schemes, as well as the potential conflict between horizontal and vertical equality. Based on these conceptual clarifications, I reject the alleged procedural superiority of presidentialism over parliamentarism and of parliamentarism over semi-parliamentarism.

Chapter 5 elaborates on the distinction between simple and complex majoritarianism and explores how and to what extent parliamentary systems can balance these two visions of democracy. I operationalize each vision in terms of three specific goals and use the resulting empirical measures to create a two-dimensional map of democratic patterns in 22 democracies in the period 1993–2018. The results reveal the conflict between the two visions and show that their most demanding goals cannot be reconciled under pure parliamentarism. Voters cannot make a clear choice between competing cabinet alternatives (“identifiability”), while also being fairly represented in issue-specific legislative decision-making (“legislative flexibility”).

Chapter 6 applies the framework developed in Chapter 5 to the semi-parliamentary cases. It explains how semi-parliamentarism can balance simple and complex majoritarianism, compares the institutional designs of the seven cases, and positions them on the two-dimensional map of democratic patterns. The analysis shows how the separation of powers can help to balance the two visions in ways that are unavailable under pure parliamentarism. In particular, semi-parliamentarism can help to reconcile identifiability and legislative flexibility. I complement the two-dimensional mapping of democracies with comparative analyses of legislative coalition-building in Australia, as well as legislative success rates under different forms of government. The chapter also discusses challenges to my argument and sketches the broader implications for the performance of democracies. Finally, it explains how semi-parliamentarism may complement other institutional designs, such as compulsory voting and weaker forms of judicial review.

Chapter 7 discusses the conditions under which semi-parliamentary government can be stable. It responds to two conjectures about “strong” bicameralism: (a) that it requires a presidential system; and (b) that if strong bicameralism is combined with “parliamentarism” in the first chamber, the cabinets formed after the election need to control majorities in the second chamber. The chapter argues that both conjectures are unfounded because they neglect the more detailed design of bicameral systems. Second chambers can be designed to be permissive with respect to cabinet formation. The lack

of a no-confidence vote is one important aspect of such a design. The chapter corroborates this argument with conditional logit analyses of cabinet formation in 28 democratic systems in the period 1975–2018.⁶ It also uses brief case discussions to show that the more detailed design of second chambers helps us to explain the reform or stability of bicameral systems.

Chapter 8 discusses new and improved ways to design semi-parliamentary government. This constitutional format provides a flexible framework that can be adapted to different contexts and fine-tuned as an alternative to presidentialism. While the tension between simple and complex majoritarianism inevitably resurfaces in the design of inter-branch relations, I argue that semi-parliamentarism allows for ways of resolving legislative deadlock that would be more problematic under presidentialism or other forms of bicameralism. Because the executive is not personalized, it becomes less risky to allow this branch to dissolve the assembly or to initiate a popular referendum on a deadlocked bill. And because the second chamber has at least equal democratic legitimacy to the first chamber, deadlock can be avoided by weakening the veto power of the *first chamber*.

Finally, Chapter 9 uses the book's insights about semi-parliamentarism to articulate a systematic instrumentalist case against presidentialism. Even if one accepts the potential benefits of the separation of powers, presidential government is not a justifiable way to achieve them. These benefits can be achieved by semi-parliamentary government just as well or better, while executive personalism undermines or weighs against them. Justifications of executive personalism are neither well developed nor supported by systematic empirical evidence. Democrats have no principled reason to choose or maintain presidential government.

⁶ Switzerland is excluded in this analysis because neither chamber of parliament can dismiss the cabinet in a no-confidence vote.