Labor Mobility and Semi-Presidentialism

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Abstract

Political scientists frequently argue that presidential and parliamentary democracies produce different policy outcomes but fail to fully consider semi-presidential democracies. To demonstrate the importance of considering semi-presidentialism, I reanalyze an existing argument that presidential democracies have more labor mobility than parliamentary democracies because presidential democracies empower special interests who support immigration. I replicate previous analyses and find little evidence that the type of democracy affects labor mobility. Political scientists need to consider semi-presidentialism or risk erroneous inferences. Further, theories of institutions and immigration policy, and institutional theories more generally, should focus on more specific institutions rather than rely on the blunt distinctions between types of democracies.

The debate between presidentialism and parliamentarism is among the most studied in political science. Scholars routinely argue that presidential democracies have worse policy outcomes than parliamentary democracies. But such studies routinely ignore semi-presidential democracies. They are often neglected theoretically and treated unsystematically empirically. To demonstrate the importance of semi-presidential democracy, I reanalyze Bearce and Hart's (2017) argument that presidential democracies have more labor motility than parliamentary democracies.[1] I incorporate semi-presidentialism and find that the type of democracy—whether presidential, parliamentary, or semi-presidential—does *not* affect labor mobility. The reanalysis of this one paper demonstrates that political scientists, both in international relations and comparative politics, need to consider semi-presidentialism or risk erroneous inferences.

Bearce and Hart ask why some advanced industrial democracies make immigration easier or harder than others. Public opinion cannot provide the answer. Voters across advanced industrial democracies uniformly oppose increasing immigration (Rosenblum and Cornelius 2012). Even the democratic publics that support immigration the most have far less than majority support (Facchini and Mayda 2009).[2] Instead, institutions are potential explanations. Political institutions shape the relative power of pro-immigration and anti-immigration groups (Abou-Chadi 2016; Breunig and Luedtke 2008). Institutions, by empowering different groups, can produce different immigration policies despite similar underlying public opinion.

Bearce and Hart argue that the type of democracy, whether parliamentary or presidential, is one institution that affects immigration policy. Their logic builds on Grossman and Helpman's (2001) model of special interest politics. The government is pressured by an electoral channel and a special-interest channel. If policy preferences are divided, the electoral channel favors the group with more members. The smaller group has fewer collective action problems and can more effectively use the special-interest channel (see also Olson 1965; 1982). In the context of immigration, voters, who oppose immigration, are stronger in the electoral channel. Businesses, which support immigration (Facchini, Mayda, and Mishra 2011; Freeman 1995;

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1. Hereafter, "Bearce and Hart" refers to Bearce and Hart (2017) unless stated otherwise.
2. Individual support for or opposition to immigration, of course, depends on myriad factors, including individuals' skills and education (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Hainmueller, Hiscox, and Margalit 2015; Pardos-Prado and Xena 2019; Scheve and Slaughter 2001), skills of potential immigrants (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Nuamann, Stoetzer, and Piertratuono 2018), and whether immigrants are already in the country (Margalit and Solodoch 2022). The general tendency is for the broader public to oppose immigration.

Freeman and Tendler 2012; Money 1997),[3] are stronger in the special-interest channel.

According to Bearce and Hart, presidentialism strengthens the special-interest channel and, therefore, the influence of pro-immigration groups. Under a presidential system, the executive and legislature are elected separately, and the legislature cannot remove the cabinet collectively through a confidence procedure (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010). Political scientists routinely argue—and find evidence—that presidential democracies are less representative than parliamentary ones and have deleterious policy effects (e.g., Gerring, Thacker, and Moreno 2009; Kitschelt 2000; Linz 1990, 1994; Samuels and Shugart 2010; Strøm 2000; cf. Cheibub 2006, 2007).

Bearce and Heart hypothesize that because parliamentarism is more representative, parliamentary democracies will have less external labor openness. When external labor openness is higher, more foreign workers can enter the economy. They test their hypothesis with a novel measurement of external labor openness across 36 countries from, at maximum, 1996 to 2012. They find, as predicted, that parliamentary democracy has a negative and statistically significant effect on external labor openness.

There is, however, a third major form of democracy: Semi-presidentialism. Semi-presidentialism combines core features of presidential and parliamentary democracy. Semi-presidential democracies have a directly-elected president, but the cabinet, headed by a prime minister, is subject to legislative confidence (Duverger 1980; Elgie 2011; Shugart and Carey 1992). Bearce and Hart focus on the difference between presidential and parliamentary and mostly ignore semi-presidentialism. Semi-presidentialism is completely absent from the empirical analysis. They categorize countries with the Database of Political Institutions (DPI; Beck et al. 2001; Cruz, Keefer, and Scartascini 2021), which does not include a semi-presidential category. All countries are either presidential or parliamentary.[4]

In this paper, I reassess the relationship between the type of democracy and external la-

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3. Like voters and opposition to immigration, not all businesses support, or actively lobby for, immigration (Peters 2014; 2015). Businesses should support more immigration on average.

4. The DPI includes a third, intermediate category called "assembly-elected presidential": "Systems are assembly-elected presidential if the president cannot be removed and if the president fulfills the criteria for presidential systems in places with both prime ministers and directly elected presidents" (Cruz, Keefer, and Scartascini 2021, codebook, 4). None of the countries in the sample are coded as assembly-elected presidential, and the definition is distinct from semi-presidentialism.

bor openness accounting for semi-presidentialism. Failing to account for semi-presidentialism creates substantial measurement error. Semi-presidential democracies account for nearly one-third (28.66%) of the sample and outnumber presidential democracies. Accounting for semi-presidential creates a new conclusion. There is little evidence that the type of democracy affects external labor openness. The immediate implication is that the type of democracy provides a poor explanation for the variation in labor policy. More broadly, studies on presidential versus parliamentary democracy abound. Semi-presidential democracies are frequently neglected or not treated as their own category. Testing the effects of democratic regimes requires classifying semi-presidential countries correctly and having theoretical justifications for their treatment.[5] A more fruitful path, however, could theorize about institutions more specifically rather than rely on the blunt distinctions between democratic regimes.

In the next section, I operationalize the classification of democracies into parliamentary, president, and semi-presidential. Neglecting semi-presidentialism causes severe measurement error, misidentifying nearly a third of the sample. Next, I describe the research design where I retain most of Bearce and Hart's empirical strategy to maximize comparison. After describing the research design, I present the results and find little evidence that the type of democracy affects external labor openness. I conclude by discussing implications and future research for immigration policy and the effects of democratic regimes more broadly.

Classifying Semi-Presidentialism

In their original analysis, Bearce and Hart use the DPI to classify countries. The DPI only sorts countries into presidential and parliamentary, excluding semi-presidentialism. A country is presidential if the executive is not elected or if there is no prime minister. Otherwise, a country is presidential if the president can veto legislation and the legislature needs a supermajority to override vetoes; *or*, the president can appoint and dismiss the prime minister and other cabinet ministers, *and* the president can dissolve parliament and call for new elections; *or*, sources

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5. Cheibub (2007), for example, treats parliamentary and semi-presidential democracies as equivalent but theoretically justifies his decision. Because he focuses on the effects of democratic regimes on democratic stability, he argues that "In both cases [parliamentarism and semi-presidentialism], the government lacks a fixed mandate and hence the rigidity that is characteristic of presidential systems is not present" (44).

mention the president more than the prime minister *if* there is no or only ambiguous information on the veto power, the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers, and the dissolving of parliament.
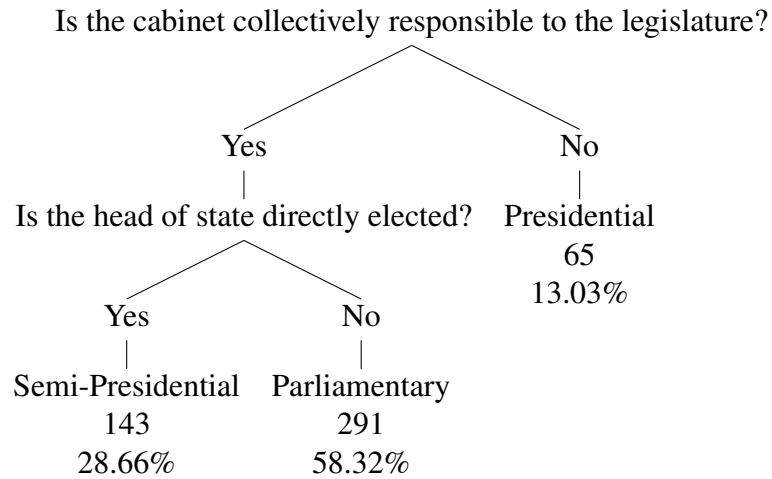
The criteria exclude semi-presidentialism and code semi-presidential democracies inconsistently. A semi-presidential democracy can be coded as either presidential or parliamentary. France and Poland, for instance, are regarded as prototypical semi-presidential systems. When the president's party controls parliament, the president dominates. If the opposition takes control of parliament, power shifts to a prime minister from the opposition party (Wu 2011). Yet the DPI codes France as parliamentary and Poland as presidential. Even if semi-presidential democracies were to be treated as either parliamentary or president, the DPI criteria cannot categorize them into one group.

To include semi-presidentialism, I use the classification from the Democracy-Dictatorship (DD) dataset. The DD criteria classify democracies based primarily on how the government survives. If the cabinet is *not* collectively responsible to the legislature, the country is presidential. If the cabinet is collectively responsible to the legislature and the head of state is *not* directly elected to fixed terms, the country is parliamentary. If the cabinet is collectively responsible to the legislature and the head of state is directly elected to fixed terms, the country is semi-presidential (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010).

Most categorizations come directly from the DD dataset. I code countries myself in two cases. First, Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010) do not code democratic regimes for countries that they code as dictatorships. In the sample, Mexico before 2000 and Russia are dictatorships. Mexico's constitution did not change after democratization. I code Mexico as presidential before 2000, following Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland's post-2000 coding. Applying the DD criteria, I code Russia as semi-presidential. The Russian constitution allows the legislature to remove the prime minister and cabinet in a single vote (White 1999).

Second, the DD data stop in 2008. To extend the data to 2012, I start by assuming that the type of democracy is the same as in 2012. I check for changes in constitutions using the Comparative Constitutions Project (Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton 2014) and Constitute (Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton, n.d.). I did not identify any constitutional amendments in the sample

Figure 1. Classification of Democratic Regimes

Is the cabinet collectively responsible to the legislature?

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                    Yes                          No
                     |                            |
   Is the head of state directly elected?    Presidential
                                                  65
                                               13.03%
         Yes              No
          |                |
   Semi-Presidential   Parliamentary
        143                291
      28.66%             58.32%
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Notes: The first number is the number of country-year observations in each categorization. The second is the proportion of country-year observations in each category. The percentages do not add exactly to 100% due to rounding.

countries that changed the form of government from 2009 to 2012.[6] As an additional check, I cross-reference all my codings—those not available from the DD data—with Elgie (2018). My codings are all the same as Elgie's.

Figure 1 summarizes the DD classification scheme along with the number and proportion of country-year observations in each category. Table 1 shows each country in the sample with their classifications according to the DPI and DD. Neglecting semi-presidentialism creates severe measurement error. Nearly a third of the sample (32.26%) of the sample is re-coded, and more observations are semi-presidential than pure presidential. Overwhelmingly, the re-coded cases change from parliamentary or presidential to semi-presidential. A total of 119 (73.91% of the re-coded cases) move from parliamentary to semi-presidential: Austria, Bulgaria (2002–11), Finland, France, Ireland, Portugal,[7] and Slovakia (1999–2011). An additional 24 (14.91%) presidential countries are re-coded as semi-presidential: Bulgaria (1996–2001), Poland, Romania, and Russia.

Estonia and Switzerland account for the remaining cases. Estonia changes from presidential to parliamentary. The DPI codes Estonia as presidential because the balance of power is ambiguous and the consulted sources mention the president more than the prime minister (Cruz,

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6. In 2007, Turkey adopted constitutional reforms introducing direct election of the president. Direct election would change Turkey from parliamentary to semi-presidential, but the first direct election did not occur until 2014.

7. In the most recent version of the DPI, Portugal is coded as presidential, not parliamentary. Portugal's coding as presidential does *not* change Bearce and Hart's original results or the results presented in this paper.

Table 1. List of Countries in the Sample and Regime Types

Country	Years	DPI	DD
Australia	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Austria[*]	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Semi-Presidential
Belgium	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Bulgaria[*]	1996–2001	Presidential	Semi-Presidential
Bulgaria[*]	2002–2011	Parliamentary	Semi-Presidential
Canada	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Chile	2011	Presidential	Presidential
Czech Republic	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Denmark	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Estonia[*]	2010–2011	Presidential	Parliamentary
Finland[*]	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Semi-Presidential
France[*]	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Semi-Presidential
Germany	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Greece	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Hungary	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Ireland[*]	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Semi-Presidential
Israel	2009–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Italy	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Japan	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Luxembourg	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Mexico	1996–2011	Presidential	Presidential
The Netherlands	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
New Zealand	2000–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Norway	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Poland[*]	1996–2011	Presidential	Semi-Presidential
Portugal[*]	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Semi-Presidential
Romania[*]	1996–2011	Presidential	Semi-Presidential
Russia[*]	2010–2011	Presidential	Semi-Presidential
Slovakia	1996–1998	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Slovakia[*]	1999–2011	Parliamentary	Semi-Presidential
Slovenia	2009–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Spain	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
South Korea	1996–2011	Presidential	Presidential
Sweden	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
Switzerland[*]	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Presidential
Turkey	2000–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
United Kingdom	1996–2011	Parliamentary	Parliamentary
United States of America	1996–2011	Presidential	Presidential

[*] Indicates different regime coding between the DPI and DD.

Keefer, and Scartascini 2021, codebook, 4). In Estonia, the president is chosen either by the legislature or an indirectly-elected electoral college. The legislature has the power to remove the entire cabinet collectively. Under the DD criteria, Estonia is parliamentary.

Switzerland switches from parliamentary to presidential. Switzerland is unique among modern democracies; both Ganghof (2021) and Lijphart (2012) code Switzerland in its own category. Switzerland has a seven-personal collegial executive called the Federal Council. The presidency rotates annually among councillors. The president has no additional powers except to break ties (Church 2004; Metcalf 2000). The legislature elects the Federal Council to fixed terms and *cannot* remove the council before the term ends. Switzerland even lacks an impeachment or related process to remove individual councilors. The absence of legislative confidence qualifies Switzerland as presidential even though the chief executive is chosen indirectly.

Research Design

To evaluate whether the type of democracy affects external labor openness accounting for semi-presidentialism, I replicate Bearce and Heart's empirical analysis. I retain as much of their empirical strategy as possible to increase confidence that any different results come from the introduction of semi-presidentialism. I estimate the empirical model

$$\text{Labor}_{c,t} = \beta\text{Parliament}_{c,t-1} + \delta\text{Labor}_{c,t-1} + \tau'\textbf{Controls}_{c,t-1} + \theta_c + \varepsilon_{c,t}. \tag{1}$$

Labor is the external labor openness index, Parliament is a dummy variable for parliamentary democracies, and **Controls** is a vector of controls. c indexes countries and t years. δ represents country fixed effects, and ε is the error term. I use robust standard errors clustered by country in all models. According to Bearce and Hart's argument, $\beta < 0$. Because the specification includes country fixed effects, β is the effect of a country changing from either presidentialism or semi-presidentialism to a parliamentarism (Mummolo and Peterson 2018).[8]

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8. Equation (1) suffers from Nickell (1981) bias because it combines fixed effects with a lagged dependent variable. Nickell bias could attenuate the coefficient estimates as Bearce and Hart argue. But Nickell bias, here, also inflates the test statistics because the number of countries exceeds the number of years (Alvarez and Arellano 2003; Gaibulloev, Sandler, and Sul 2014). Whether Nickell bias increases the probability of type I or type II errors is not clear in this case.

Table 2. Countries by United Nations Geoscheme Region

Region	Countries	Country-Years	Proportion	
Australia & New Zealand	2	28	5.61%	Australia, New Zealand
Central America	1	16	3.21%	Mexico
Eastern Asia	2	32	6.41%	Japan, South Korea
Eastern Europe	7	98	19.64%	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia
Northern America	2	32	6.41%	Canada, United States of America
Northern Europe	7	98	19.64%	Denmark, Estonia Finland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom
South America	1	1	0.2%	Chile
Southern Europe	5	67	13.43%	Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain
Western Asia	2	15	3.006%	Israel, Turkey
Western Europe	7	112	22.44%	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Switzerland

Next, I need to separate presidential and semi-presidential democracies. I use one argument to develop a hypothesis for semi-presidentialism, but the expectation is clearest between parliamentary and presidential democracies. The simplest solution is adding a dummy variable for semi-presidential democracies to equation (1). Such a model cannot be estimated due to perfect multicollinearity. All the within-country variation is between parliamentarism and semi-presidentialism. No presidential country changes the type of democracy in the sample, so the model cannot be estimated.

I follow Gerring, Thacker, and Moreno (2009) and use regional fixed effects instead. I classify countries using the United Nations geoscheme, summarized in table 2. The empirical models with regional fixed effects are

$$\text{Labor}_{c,t} = \beta \text{Parliament}_{c,t-1} + \delta \text{Labor}_{c,t-1} + \tau' \textbf{Controls}_{c,t-1} + \theta_c + \varepsilon_{c,t}, \tag{2}$$

$$\text{Labor}_{c,t} = \beta \text{Parliament}_{c,t-1} + \alpha \text{Semi}_{c,t-1} + \delta \text{Labor}_{c,t-1} + \tau' \textbf{Controls}_{c,t-1} + \gamma_r + \varepsilon_{c,t}. \tag{3}$$

Semi is a dummy variable for semi-presidential democracies, r indexes regions, and γ represents region fixed effects.

In all the models, I calculate the long-run multiplier (LRM) for the parliamentary variable. All the independent variables have effects that can persist across multiple periods because the models include a lagged dependent variable. The LRM, calculated $\frac{\beta}{1-\delta}$, represents the total effect of parliamentary democracy on external labor openness over time (De Boef and Keele 2008). I calculate the significance of the LRM with the delta method.[9] Including the LRMs helps ensure that the effect is not being underestimated, particularly if I find null results for the

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9. More advanced methods have been developed for calculating long-run effects (e.g., Philips 2018; Webb, Linn, and Lebo 2020). But current methods are designed for single time series.

Table 3. External Labor Openness Is Not Significantly Different Including Semi-Presidentialism

DPI		DD	
Parliamentary	0.94	Parliamentary	1.021
Presidential	1.85	Presidential	1.37
F	12.94***	Semi-Presidential	1.07
		F	0.056

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$.

original analyses

The main independent variable is the type of democracy. I use the three-part categorization discussed in the previous section. I compare the classifications from DD to the DPI, which Bearce and Hart use. The dependent variable is Bearce and Hart's index of external labor openness. The index is a discrete measurement coding whether *de jure* immigration policies increase or decrease the difficulty of employing foreign workers. For example, quota systems reduce external labor openness while electronic application systems increase external labor openness. A permissive policy adds 1 to the index, and a restrictive policy subtracts 1. The index, in this sample, ranges from -3 to 7 where higher values indicate fewer restrictions or more openness.

In a simple bivariate comparison, incorporating semi-presidentialism already weakens the evidence for Bearce and Hart's argument. There is a significant difference on external labor openness between parliamentary and presidential democracies using the DPI. With the DD classification, external labor openness does not differ between parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential democracies. There is also no difference comparing parliamentary and presidential democracies directly ($F = 1.43$).

I use the same set of controls as Bearce and Hart. The control variables are mean district magnitude,[10] and whether the executive is left wing or right wing from the DPI;[11] population and logged GDP per capita from the World Bank's World Development Indicators;[12] Polity score from Polity IV (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2014); and proportion of votes received by

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10. If there are multiple chambers in the legislature, the mean district magnitude for the lower house is used.
11. Centrist governments are the reference category.
12. I present population in millions to clarify the coefficient estimates. My scaling is different from Bearce and Hart. The coefficents give the same effect but at different scales.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max
External Labor Openness	499	1.08	2.04	-3	0	1	2	7
Parliamentary (DPI)	499	0.85	0.36	0	1	1	1	1
Parliamentary (DD)	499	0.58	0.49	0	0	1	1	1
Semi-Presidential (DD)	499	0.29	0.45	0	0	0	1	1
Mean District Magnitude	499	16.33	39.11	0.9	2.1	8.6	13.63	450
Population (in Millions)	499	38.29	56.62	0.41	7.48	10.99	56.88	311.59
Polity Score	499	9.54	0.95	4	10	10	10	10
Logged GDP per Capita	499	9.95	0.87	6.97	9.45	10.15	10.56	11.65
Left-Wing Executive	499	0.4	0.49	0	0	0	1	1
Right-Wing Executive	499	0.36	0.48	0	0	0	1	1
Far-Right Vote Share	499	4.65	7.78	0	0	0	8	40.9

far-right parties.[13] For each combination of institutional variables and fixed effects, I estimate two specifications. I estimate a baseline specification that only includes the institutional variables, the lagged dependent variable, and fixed effects, and a full specification with all controls. Table 4 shows descriptive statistics for all the variables.

Results

Table 5 shows the model estimates with country fixed effects. Models (1) and (2) use the DPI classification.[14] Parliamentary democracy, as Bearce and Hart found, has a negative effect on external labor openness. If a presidential or semi-presidential democracy changes to a parliamentary democracy, the country is expected to introduce one-fifth to two-fifths of an additional restrictive policy. The effect is also significant long term. A change to parliamentarism is associated with approximately an additional 1.5 restrictive policies over time.

Models (3) and (4) use the DD categorization. The baseline results are almost identical with the results with the DPI categories. The effects and significance are the same, if not stronger. Including controls immediately changes the conclusion. The effect sizes decrease, and neither the coefficient nor the LRM is significant. Including semi-presidentialism weakens the evidence that the type of democracy affects external labor openness. But the results are far

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13. Bearce and Hart calculate the vote share of parties identified as radical right by Norris (2005).
14. Model (2) is an exact replication of Bearce and Hart's model 5.4 (84).

Table 5. Accounting for Semi-Presidentialism Weakens the Evidence for Parliamentary Democracy and Labor Openness

	DPI		DD	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Parliamentary$_{t-1}$	−0.226***	−0.374**	−0.278***	−0.142
	(0.060)	(0.156)	(0.017)	(0.110)
External Labor Openness$_{t-1}$	0.846***	0.788***	0.844***	0.787***
	(0.021)	(0.030)	(0.020)	(0.030)
Mean District Magnitude$_{t-1}$		−0.009***		−0.010***
		(0.003)		(0.003)
Population (in Millions)$_{t-1}$		−0.008*		−0.007
		(0.005)		(0.004)
Polity Score$_{t-1}$		−0.020		−0.040
		(0.036)		(0.039)
Logged GDP per Capita$_{t-1}$		0.387***		0.366***
		(0.095)		(0.101)
Left-Wing Executive$_{t-1}$		0.138		0.160
		(0.151)		(0.149)
Right-Wing Executive$_{t-1}$		0.166		0.196
		(0.164)		(0.156)
Far-Right Vote Share$_{t-1}$		−0.001		−0.002
		(0.010)		(0.010)
LRM	-1.474**	-1.767*	-1.783***	-0.664
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	499	499	499	499
Countries	36	36	36	36
Within R^2	0.792	0.803	0.792	0.802
Adjusted Within R^2	0.791	0.799	0.791	0.798

***$p < 0.01$; **$p < 0.05$; *$p < 0.1$. Robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses. LRM is the long-run multiplier for the parliamentary variable.

from definitive.

Table 6 replaces the country fixed effects with regional fixed effects. Using regional fixed effects allows for separating semi-presidential democracies into their own category. Models (1) and (2) replicate the results with the DPI categories. Both coefficient estimates are statistically significant and of similar magnitude. The LRMs are both significant and substantively larger than with country fixed effects. Over time, parliamentarism is associated with 3.5 to four additional restrictive policies, two more policies than the country fixed effects models. Changing to regional fixed effects provides a valid comparison. The results with the DPI are the same and perhaps even stronger.

Table 6. With Regional Fixed Effects and Accounting for Semi-Presidentialism, There Is No Evidence That Parliamentarism Affects External Labor Openness

	DPI		DD			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Parliamentary$_{t-1}$	−0.212***	−0.263***	−0.045	−0.107	0.056	−0.059
	(0.070)	(0.046)	(0.062)	(0.071)	(0.085)	(0.086)
Semi-Presidentialism$_{t-1}$					0.136	0.060
					(0.107)	(0.102)
External Labor Openness$_{t-1}$	0.941***	0.934***	0.947***	0.939***	0.945***	0.938***
	(0.018)	(0.023)	(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.016)	(0.020)
Mean District Magnitude$_{t-1}$		−0.001		−0.001		−0.001
		(0.001)		(0.001)		(0.001)
Population (in Millions)$_{t-1}$		−0.001**		−0.001		−0.001
		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.000)
Polity Score$_{t-1}$		−0.042		−0.061		−0.063
		(0.034)		(0.037)		(0.040)
Logged GDP per Capita$_{t-1}$		0.034		0.038		0.041
		(0.085)		(0.095)		(0.095)
Left-Wing Executive$_{t-1}$		0.163		0.193*		0.184
		(0.099)		(0.107)		(0.110)
Right-Wing Executive$_{t-1}$		0.168*		0.200*		0.190*
		(0.096)		(0.104)		(0.108)
Far-Right Vote Share$_{t-1}$		−0.002		−0.003		−0.002
		(0.004)		(0.005)		(0.005)
LRM	-3.575**	-3.995***	-0.849	-1.747*	1.005	-0.938
Region Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	499	499	499	499	499	499
Regions	10	10	10	10	10	10
Within R^2	0.891	0.893	0.89	0.892	0.89	0.892
Adjusted Within R^2	0.89	0.891	0.889	0.89	0.89	0.89
Parl. = Semi.					1.17	2.11

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses. Parl. = Semi. is the χ^2 value for the joint significance of the parliamentary and semi-presidential coefficients

Models (3) to (6) use the DD categorization. Now, the contrast is stark. Models (3) and (4) continue to compare parliamentary democracies to both presidential and semi-presidential democracies. The coefficients are cut in half and are insignificant. The LRM is significant in model (4) with all the controls although the coefficient is not.

Models (5) and (6) include semi-presidential democracies as a separate variable. Both the coefficients have small magnitudes, and the coefficients and LRMs are insignificant. In model (5), the baseline model, parliamentary democracy has a *positive* coefficient and LRM, contradicting the expected effect although the effect is insignificant. I use a Wald test to evaluate whether the difference is significant. The difference is insignificant in both models, so there

type of democracy does not appear to have an effect in any direction.

The results suggest a clear conclusion. The evidence that parliamentary democracies have less external openness is, at best, minimal accounting for semi-presidentialism. Of the six models that account for semi-presidentialism, only one has a negative and significant coefficient. I also include LRMs to ensure that I do not underestimate the effects. Only two of the six models had negative and significant LRMs. The three major types of democracy—parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential—do not appear to affect external labor openness.

Conclusion

Advanced industrial democracies have varied immigration policies even though public opinion is similar across countries. Voters in advanced industrial democracies oppose increasing immigration. Institutions provide a potential explanation for variation in immigration policy. Institutions shape the power of groups that support and oppose immigration. Institutional structures that favor voters will empower opposition to immigration. If institutions give greater power to special interests, pro-immigration forces have increased influence.

Bearce and Hart argue that the difference between presidential and parliamentary democracy causes variation in immigration policy. A long line of research in political science argues that presidential democracies are less representative. If they are less representative, the electoral channel is weaker. Special interests have more power to influence immigration policy. They hypothesize that parliamentary democracies will have less external labor openness. They find support for their argument using a novel measurement of external labor openness.

Semi-presidential democracies need to be considered. In Bearce and Hart's analysis, semi-presidential democracies are mixed across parliamentary and presidential democracies. I replicate their results accounting for semi-presidentialism. I find little evidence that the type of democracy affects external labor openness. The original results are partially driven by the misclassification of semi-presidential systems.

For studies of immigration policy, the immediate implication is that the type of democracy does not affect labor mobiltiy. Institutions could still affect immigration policy, of course.

But scholars should focus on more specific institutions. The same conclusion applies to the broader work comparing presidential and parliamentary democracies—research abundant in international relations and comparative politics. Despite the abundance of arguments contrasting democratic systems (see Gerring, Thacker, and Moreno 2009), the main variable of analysis remains whether a country is parliamentary or presidential.

Parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential democracies, however, are blunt distinctions. They tell us about how governments survive and, except in rare cases, how they are elected. Otherwise, their information is limited The type of democracy has little correlation with other institutional features of democracy like executive vetoes and decree powers or legislative oversight of the cabinet (Cheibub, Elkins, and Ginsburg 2014). Further, the distinction between democratic types focus on the executive and legislative branches. Yet the judiciary is a critical source of immigration policy in the United States (Law 2010) and across Europe (Spirig 2023).

A more fruitful path forward could move beyond blunt distinctions. Researchers could consider what specific institutions affect immigration policy, including constitutional sources like executive powers and courts but also institutions like party systems. Considering more specific institutions is both theoretically richer and empirically valuable. The type of democracy has very little variation within countries over time. Specific institutions can vary even as the type of democracy stays constant. Institutions should affect immigration policy in democracies, but we need to be more specific than the type of democracy.

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