Four Visions of Democracy

Powell's *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*, And Beyond

Steffen Ganghof

Political Studies Review

Forthcoming

Abstract: The article critically reviews the conceptual ideas of G. Bingham Powell's *Elections as Instruments of Democracy* and explores ways to develop them further. Powell's conceptual alternative to the Westminster model – the "proportional" vision of democracy – comes in two variants, one focusing on proportional representation, the other on proportional legislative influence. If we focus on the former, we can systematically distinguish for visions of parliamentary democracy, based on the main stage at which majorities are formed. The four stages are (1) party, (2) alliance, (3) cabinet and (4) law formation. The corresponding normative visions can be placed on a conceptual continuum between "simple" and "complex" majoritarianism. The article discusses the goals and tradeoffs associated with them as well as their underlying institutional designs. It also re-emphasizes Powell's insight that the congruence between policymakers and the median voter in a uni-dimensional policy space is a more appropriate normative standard for some visions of democracy than for others.

Keywords: G. Bingham Powell, visions of democracy, ideological congruence, simple majoritarianism, complex majoritarianism

Acknowledgements: I thank Sebastian Eppner as well as the anonymous reviewers for helpful comments and suggestions and the German Research Foundation (DFG) for financial support (grant no. GA 1696/2-1).

1. Introduction

Powell's (2000) magnificent *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*, now almost 15 years old, has been highly influential in the comparative study of democracies (Achen et al., 2011).[1] The influence has perhaps been greatest with respect to the empirical study of democratic performance. Powell (pp. 159-229) has pioneered the statistical comparison of the ideological congruence between policymakers and the median voter in a one-dimensional issue space (for a recent overview, see Golder and Lloyd, 2014). Yet his *conceptual* ideas are of equal importance and differ in significant ways from those of Lijphart (2012). This essay critically reviews some of Powell's conceptual ideas and proposes ways to develop them further.

The critical focus is on his conceptualization of the polar alternative to the Westminster model (section 2). By "Westminster model" I mean in particular the idea of using a majoritarian electoral system in order to create a two-party system and powerful one-party majority cabinets. This idea is controversial because these one-party majority cabinets may only represent a minority of voters. Section 2 shows how Powell conceptualizes the polar alternative as a "proportional vision of democracy" and how he remains undecided between two versions of it: a weaker, more majoritarian version that goes back to John Stuart Mill (2008 [1861]), and a stronger, super-majoritarian one.

I propose to focus on the Millian version and to conceptualize the basic contrast of democratic visions as one between "simple" and "complex" majoritarianism (section 3). Simple majoritarianism aims at focusing the process

of majority formation on one conflict dimension and two parties; complex majoritarianism facilitates multiple parties with differentiated positions on multiple dimensions which form legislative majorities in an issue-specific manner. This contrast can be spelled out by distinguishing four visions of democracy in parliamentary systems based on the stage at which majorities are formed: (1) party, (2) alliance, (3) cabinet and (4) law formation.

Finally, I discuss the institutional designs on which different visions are based as well as a hypothesis about institutional change (section 4) and make suggestions for further research (section 5).

2. Powell's proportional vision(s) of democracy

Whilst Lijphart (2012) conceptualizes the ideal-typical alternative to the Westminster model in terms of "consensus", Powell uses the notion of proportionality:

> The most clearly articulated and defended alternative norm is that all the representative groups in the assembly should have *influence on policy making in proportion to their size*, which itself reflects the proportion of voters who supported them. Thus the *equal opportunities for influence* by each citizen would be carried right through the policy-making process. (p. 92, emphasis added)

As this passage makes clear, though, there are two different versions of the proportionality ideal, a weaker and a stronger one. The weaker version is to elect parties proportionally and thus give them *equal opportunity* for influence, but to let a legislative majority decide. It focuses on proportional *representation* through the electoral system. The stronger version goes beyond this by trying to find

institutional ways of guaranteeing that all representative groups, including those in the minority, have *proportional influence on legislation*. Supermajority rules or minority vetoes are discussed as prominent ways to do this (p. 92).

A core feature of Powell's book is that he does not select one of the two versions of the proportionality vision, even though he seems to do so in certain passages. On the one hand, Powell distances himself from the weaker version. This version was proposed by John Stuart Mill (2008 [1861], p. 86), who favored proportional representation but believed that "in any equal democracy … the majority of the people, through their representatives, will outvote and prevail over the minority and their representatives". Many contemporary normative theorists agree with Mill and deny that the idea of proportional representation is inherently connected to a norm of proportional legislative influence (see especially Christiano, 1996; McGann, 2006). Powell, however, suggests that Mill's view is outdated:

> In the nineteenth-century context having a voice in the legislature may have seemed sufficient. But the emergence of extremely cohesive legislative parties and the dominance of many parliaments by their executives imply to those concerned about them the desirability of giving minorities some greater weight in policy making than merely the opportunity to be heard in (largely irrelevant) legislative debates. (p. 91)

Moreover, he states that the proportional vision is associated with "a decision rule larger than a simple majority" (p. 92).

On the other hand, it would be wrong to conclude that Powell selects the stronger version of the proportionality ideal, as he raises serious concerns about this version, too. He has egalitarian worries about the veto power of minorities (p.

92) and he notes a deep tension between the ideal of proportional legislative influence and the "critical normative criterion" (p. 164) his study champions: the extent to which policies are congruent with the position of the median voter. He makes clear that

> the normatively privileged position of the median voter depends on that position defeating any other in a majority vote…. Arguments for proportional or, especially, consensual decision rules sometimes rest on protecting minorities by allowing them to block change. We might then privilege the status quo … rather than the median position. The dominating normative status of the median voter in the proportional vision depends on our accepting the principle that in the final decision majorities should have more influence than minorities, although the latter should have full opportunity to participate. (p. 165)

Clearly, then, only the weaker, more majoritarian version of the proportionality vision is compatible with the median voter criterion.

Powell seems torn between the two versions and thus avoids a choice between them. He rather argues that they may exist to different degrees in different countries (p. 92). This helps to understand the way in which he classifies the twenty democracies in his sample. Given his claim that decision rules in the proportional vision are "larger than a simple majority" (p. 92), one might have expected him to base his classification on constitutional veto players such as strong second chambers. Yet while he discusses them (pp. 37-9) and takes them into account in his empirical analyses (e.g. p. 83), he neglects them in his classification of democracies. Instead, he focuses on the degree of government control of legislative committees (pp. 39-41). One interpretation of this somewhat puzzling move is that strong committees might be seen to speak to both versions

of the proportionality vision. One might hope that they foster proportional influence of minorities without establishing minority vetoes.

Understanding Powell's measurement decision in this way helps us to interpret his results cautiously. He finds a clear positive correlation between the strength of committees and the disproportionality of electoral rules. This is an important finding, but we have to remember that the formal decision rule in committees is usually simply majority, and floor majorities are usually sufficient to change the formal rules of committee decision-making. The idea that powerful committees facilitate the proportional influence of minorities may thus be too optimistic; and it is assumed in his study rather than empirically tested. Moreover, had Powell measured "decision rules" with constitutional veto points, he would have found no strong correlation with electoral rules (cf. McGann 2006). Hence whatever the correlation between proportionality and committee strength shows, it does not validate the stronger version of the proportionality vision.

To avoid misunderstanding: I do not wish to criticize Powell's measurement or the fact that his proportionality vision comes in two versions. I do believe, however, that it can be useful to focus on one version at a time. In what follows, I focus on the weaker, "Millian" one. A pragmatic reason is that this seems to be what most of the subsequent research literature seems to have done. Moreover, I remain unconvinced that a more demanding proportional *influence* norm has generally played an important role in Powell's sample of advanced democracies. Powell (p. 91) provides no evidence for this view but merely refers to an article by Steiner (1971) which focuses on Switzerland and other "segmented" societies.

One may doubt, however, that the proportional decision-making norms of consociational democracies have ever extended to the larger sample. To the contrary, they have lost much of their force even in the cases that had once been consociational. Even decision-making in Switzerland can be given a more majoritarian interpretation, as I shall argue in section 4.

3. Sub-dividing the proportionality vision

When we focus on the "Millian" version of the proportionality vision, we have to note that it is spelled out quite differently by different authors (Shugart, 2001; McGann, 2006; Ward and Weale, 2010). The question thus is whether we can differentiate PR-based visions of majority formation in a more fine-grained manner. This section suggests that we can and that Powell's work provides us with important ideas from which to start.

Let us begin by specifying in more detail the polar alternative to the Westminster model. My proposal takes its cues from a footnote in Powell:

> A third argument in favor of proportionalism is that policymakers should choose the policy desired by the citizen majority *on each issue*. Because many issues will be considered by the national government between every election and different sets of citizens will form the majority on different issues, it is important that the policy-making coalition not be locked into place by the immediate election outcome. … Although this is potentially an important argument for proportional approaches, it is not one that I am able to see how to explore empirically with available data. (p. 256, n. 9)

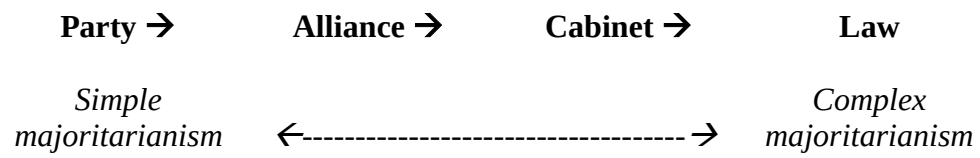
This is an important argument, indeed, but consistent only with the Millian version of the proportionality ideal. It has more recently been elaborated by Ward and Weale (2010), who argue that issue-specific majority formation uniquely

expresses democratic values. Technically speaking, the underlying ideal can be seen as a generalization of Powell's idea of median voter congruence to a multidimensional space: the idea is to let the *median voter win on each separable policy dimension or issue*.

This vision of issue-specific majority formation in a PR-based majority-rule democracy can usefully be conceptualized as the polar alternative to the Westminster model. We can think about the underlying conceptual contrast as one between "simple" and "complex" majoritarianism (see Ganghof et al. Forthcoming). The Westminster model aims at simplifying the process of majority formation (in the eyes of the public) by focusing the process of majority formation on one conflict dimension and two parties. The polar alternative allows for more publicly visible complexity by facilitating multiple parties with differentiated positions on multiple dimensions which form legislative majorities in an issue-specific manner.

To move from this basic conceptual contrast to a more fine-grained typology of different models or visions of majority formation, I take up another of Powell's ideas. He focuses strongly on the *stages* of majority formation, distinguishing mainly between the pre-electoral and post-electoral stages. If we deductively distinguish the four possible stages of majority formation, we can reconstruct four distinct visions of democracy: two polar ones approaching the ideals of simple and complex majoritarianism, and two intermediate ones.

FIGURE 1: Four stages of majority formation



The four main stages of majority formation are shown in Figure 1. Before the election, majorities can already be formed in the process of *party formation*: if only two parties are formed, one of them is guaranteed to have a majority. Alternatively, several parties can form but group themselves into two pre-electoral alliances competing for government; the crucial stage of is thus *alliance formation*. After the election, majorities can be formed at the stage of *cabinet formation*. This is the case when a majority government forms or when a minority government makes a binding agreement with at least one opposition party to jointly decide all issues in the multidimensional issue space. Majority formation can also be postponed until the final stage of *law formation*. This is the case when the executive does not control a stable legislative majority in the legislature but forms issue- or dimension-specific majorities. It might even happen that all or some of the cabinet parties are excluded from the legislative majority on some issues.

To show that each of these stages can be associated with a distinct vision of majority formation, at least in pure parliamentary systems, I follow Powell in another way. He highlights the normative tradeoffs between different visions of democracy. In what follows, I construct a verbal model of the main tradeoffs

involved and argue that each of the four models of majority formation can achieve a unique combination of normative attributes, which are highlighted by the models' proponents. The relevant goals are derived from the two polar ideals of simple and complex majoritarianism as discussed in the work of Powell and others.

Let us begin with the three core goals of simple majoritarianism. The first is the pre-electoral *identifiability* of two competing cabinet options (pp. 71-6). The idea is that voters should be able to directly choose a government. The second goal is retrospective *clarity of responsibility* for legislative outcomes (pp. 50-67). The third is *cabinet stability*. It is of general practical importance in parliamentary systems but also an auxiliary goal to achieve potential benefits of identifiability and clear responsibility. If an identifiable majority coalition is voted into office but soon replaced by some other coalition without new elections, the potential gain of identifiability is likely to be lost. Similarly, even if new cabinets are empowered by new elections, frequently changing cabinets make it more difficult for voters to see who is responsible for policy outputs (p. 61).

Complex majoritarianism, in contrast, is associated with the following goals. The first is, of course, electoral *proportionality.* The second is what I call *unconstrained multidimensionality*. Whilst proportionality facilitates the differentiation of party positions along and across multiple issue dimensions, electoral systems may also contain elements that have a reductive effect on the multidimensionality of party positions. In particular, features that facilitate the formation of pre-electoral coalitions may also reduce dimensionality (author

citation). The ideal of complex majoritarianism implies that multidimensionality should not be restrained in this way. Finally, legislative decision-making must be as issue-specific as possible (Ward and Weale, 2010). I call this *unconstrained issue-specificity*. It means that there is no strong institutional imperative to link unrelated issues in large package deals. Parties can of course choose to bundle specific issues in larger logrolls, but they should be as free as possible to also decide separable issues separately.

Based on these six goals we can characterize the four stage-centered visions of majority formation (on the following, compare Table 1).

TABLE 1: Normative Tradeoffs and Visions of Democracy

Visions of Majoritarianism	**Simple**	←	→	**Complex**
	Party-centered	Alliance-centered	Cabinet-centered	Legislature-Centered
Identifiability	+	+	-	-
Clear Responsibility	+	+	+	-
Cabinet Stability	+	+	+	-
Proportionality	-	+	+	+
Multidimensionality	-	-	+	+
Issue-Specificity	-	-	-	+
Empirical examples	**Britain**	**Germany**	**Finland**	**Denmark**

Source: Own composition.
Notes: + (-) means that the specified goal has a high (low) chance of being achieved in the respective model of majority formation.

Party-centered majority formation. Powell and others show that pure two-party systems can achieve the three goals of simple majoritarianism very well. A standard example is the United Kingdom before the recent emergence of coalition government (cf. Lijphart 2012). To the extent that a two party-equilibrium can be sustained at all, though, and it usually requires as a highly disproportional electoral system and a fairly one-dimensional structure of party competition. The goals of complex majoritarianism are thus unlikely to be achieved.

Alliance-centered majority formation. The formation of pre-electoral coalitions is, of course, a common response to disproportional electoral systems and need not be seen as a change of the underlying vision of democracy (pp. 71-2). However, if highly proportional electoral systems can induce parties to form two comprehensive pre-electoral blocs, a distinct vision of majority formation emerges (Shugart 2001). Voter can use the electoral system to fairly influence the seat shares and hence bargaining power of individual parties, and they can *at the same time* choose between clearly identifiable cabinet alternatives (cf. Tillman, 2013). If the winning pre-electoral alliance governs together as veto players for the entire legislative period, there is also high clarity of responsibility (pp. 52-3).[2] Ideally, it is thus possible to combine all three goals of simple majoritarianism with one core goal of complex majoritarianism.

The other two goals of complex majoritarianism are likely to be sacrificed, though. First, forming two comprehensive pre-electoral coalitions out of multiple, proportionally elected parties probably requires a rather one-dimensional structure of partisan preferences (for empirical evidence, see Ganghof et al. Forthcoming).

Hence the multidimensionality of partisan preferences is likely to be constrained. Second, the members of pre-electoral coalitions generally commit to govern the entire policy space together as veto players, if they win a majority. Issue-specific majority formation is thus ruled out. Germany in much of the 1980s and 1990s serves as an example.

Cabinet-centered majority formation. When multiple, proportionally elected parties eschew the formation of pre-electoral coalitions, the goal of *identifiability* is sacrificed, but the multidimensional differentiation of partisan preferences is facilitated (Ganghof et al. Forthcoming). However, if parties form majority cabinets – or minority cabinets with pre-negotiated oppositional support – after the election, these cabinets can still be very stable and *jointly* responsible for legislative outcomes. On Powell's ranking of the clarity of responsibility achieved by different cabinet types, such cabinets are ranked third out of five (p. 53). This vision of majority formation can thus combine two goals of complex majoritarianism with two goals of simple majoritarianism. In addition to identifiability, however, issue-specificity has to be sacrificed. Finland since the 1980s exemplifies this vision.

It is important to see that cabinet-centered majority formation constitutes a distinct normative vision, well described by theorists like Christiano (1996) and McGann (2006; 2013). Both develop arguments for why the multidimensional differentiation of partisan programs is much more valuable than the pre-electoral identifiability of cabinet alternatives. Christiano (1996) argues that the multidimensionality of preferences educates voters about their choices and that

nothing of normative importance is lost, when voters cannot directly choose cabinets. Similarly, McGann (2006, 2013) emphasizes various positive features of multidimensionality and argues that low entry barriers for new parties is more important for accountability than identifiability. Yet neither Christiano (1996, p. 233) nor McGann (2006, p. 66) believe that issue-specific majority formation is particularly desirable (see Ganghof Forthcoming).

Legislature-centered majority formation. Multiple, proportionally elected parties can postpone the formation of legislative majorities until the final, law-making stage of the democratic process. In pure parliamentary systems, this requires the formation of (centrist) minority cabinets that build issue- or dimension-specific majorities in parliament. Sometimes it even becomes possible that the minority cabinet is outvoted on some issues and must implement the policies chosen by an oppositional majority. Postponing majority-formation in this way may facilitate the empowerment of the issue-specific median voter. Hence, legislature-centered majority formation is probably the closest approximation of the underlying ideal of complex majoritarianism – at least in pure parliamentary systems (see section 4 below). The price to be paid is that cabinets tend to become less stable and that clarity of responsibility is greatly reduced (p. 53). A good example is Denmark, especially in the 1980s.

4. Institutional designs and their change

We have so far only described the four visions in terms of the likely tradeoffs between normative goals. One task of this section is therefore to clarify how the four visions relate to particular institutional designs (pp. 31-42). Another task is to think about institutional change and stability – a topic that has not received much attention in Powell's book (pp. 42-3).

As to institutional designs, Powell advances the important idea that different institutions can mutually stabilize one another in a form of equilibrium (Achen et al., 2011). As noted (and criticized) in section 2, he focuses on the relationship between electoral proportionality and committee power. I believe that the idea of institutional equilibria is important, but that we may need to consider more variables. At the electoral level, for instance, incentives for alliance formation in otherwise proportional systems are important. At the post-electoral level, we are not only interested in committee systems, but all the rules that govern legislative decision-making and executive-legislative relations (in parliamentary systems): investiture rules, vote of confidence and non-confidence procedures, parliamentary dissolution procedures, amendment rules, legislative veto points and budgetary rules. It is the combination of these factors, which is likely to affect how well and how stably a real-world democracy approximates one of the four (behaviorally defined) visions.

A follow-up question is whether some visions, and the underlying institutional designs, are more likely to emerge or to remain stable. I want to sketch a hypothesis in this regard: *in pure parliamentary systems, the two polar visions of*

majority formation – centered on the stages of party and law formation – may be more vulnerable to change than the two intermediate visions. This hypothesis is based on two ideas. One is that institutional and behavioral changes are likely to be triggered when the process of majority formation leads to politically salient forms of coordination failure (cf. Cox, 1997). Colomer (2005) spells out a specific version of this idea with respect to electoral systems. He argues that majoritarian electoral systems are more likely to lead to coordination failure – in the form of wasted votes, etc. – which creates pressure towards proportionality-increasing reforms. Hence he argues that there is a long-term trend away from party-centered majority coordination.

I believe that a similar argument might be developed for legislature-based majority formation as well. Issue-specific coalition-building can easily lead to politically salient forms of coordination failure, e.g. cabinet instability or incoherent and unbalanced budgets. This coordination failure may then create pressure towards more fixed and stable majority coalitions. Anecdotal evidence seems to support this reasoning. For example, Denmark, Norway and Sweden all reformed their budgetary procedures to achieve more rational budgets (i.e. reduce coordination failure), and these reforms pushed all three countries away from minority cabinets with shifting coalitions and towards more stable majority coalitions as well as pre-electoral alliances (Juul Christiansen and Damgaard, 2008). The passing of the budget became more akin to a vote on the government's general program, so that issue-specific majority formation became more difficult to stabilize.[3]

The focus on politically salient coordination failures may be complemented by a second idea, advanced by Shugart (2001). He argues that "normatively balanced" electoral systems may be subject to weaker reform pressures than "extreme" ones (see also Ganghof et al. Forthcoming). If we apply this idea to the visions of democracy sketched above (Table 1), the stated hypothesis may be reinforced. The party- and legislature-based visions of majority formation are less balanced in that they cannot achieve any of the goals of the polar alternative (complex and simple majoritarianism, respectively). Institutional reform pressures may thus be more likely.

Whilst the sketched hypothesis is preliminary, it leads me to discuss my third and final point. For if the hypothesis is along the right lines, it suggests that a core goal of complex majoritarianism – issue-specific majority formation – is very difficult to achieve in a pure parliamentary system. Hence in reconstructing the institutional designs underlying different visions of democracy, we have to go further and take executive formats into account. To show this, I focus on two of Powell's cases: Switzerland and Australia.

As noted above, Powell refers to work on Switzerland to argue for the empirical relevance of a stronger, super-majoritarian proportionality norm (proportional *legislative influence*). This interpretation seems supported by the fact that the four main Swiss parties, representing nearly 80 percent of the voters, have continuously shared cabinet seats since 1959 (p. 99). However, for the interpretation of this fact, it matters crucially that Switzerland does not have a parliamentary system. The Swiss cabinet is elected by the bicameral parliament

but *serves a fixed term*. As a result, the problem of cabinet instability does not exist and both party discipline and, more importantly, cabinet discipline are significantly lower than in pure parliamentary systems. Powell is of course aware of this and notes that "the alignment of deputies and parties may well shift from issue to issue" (ibid.). Empirical studies have confirmed that legislative coalition-building is indeed very issue-specific: on controversial issues the cabinet parties often exclude one of them and form minimal-winning coalitions around the median party (e.g. Schwarz et al., 2011). Switzerland thus captures important elements of complex majoritarianism – and the institutional departure from pure parliamentarism (fixed terms for the executive) seems crucial in stabilizing the pattern of issue-specific majority formation.

Now consider Australia. Since Powell bases his classification of countries only on the committee system (of first chambers), he classifies this case as "predominantly majoritarian" (p. 41). The problem is that Australia has the "strongest" second chamber of any parliamentary system (cf. Lijphart 2012, p. 199). The important point is not only that the second chamber has an absolute veto on all legislation, but also that it is directly elected, just like the first chamber. Hence in analyzing Australia's "vision of democracy", we must not focus only on elections to the first chamber. Yet if we consider both chambers equally, we must also recognize that the second chamber *cannot dismiss the cabinet* – just like neither chamber can in Switzerland. Indeed, the Australian system can be understood as a hybrid between the Swiss form of government and a pure parliamentary system (Ganghof 2014, Forthcoming). This is important

because the electoral systems in the two chambers differ. The first chamber has a majoritarian electoral system (alternative vote) and thus achieves high identifiability of cabinet alternatives and stable cabinets (p. 74). In contrast, the electoral system for the second chamber is more proportional (single transferable vote) and thus leads to more parties and greater multidimensionality. Moreover, since cabinet survival does not depend on second chamber confidence, majority formation in this chamber can be more issue-specific. In sum, therefore, Australian democracy can be understood as an institutional strategy for balancing elements of simple and complex majoritarianism – just like the two intermediate visions in pure parliamentary systems. The bicameral system creates two democratic chains of delegation, thereby making it possible to achieve, to some degree, all three goals of complex majoritarianism as well as the most ambitious goal of simple majoritarianism: identifiability. We have seen above that this reconciliation of goals is very difficult to achieve in a pure parliamentary system (Table 1).

The point of these brief sketches of the cases of Switzerland and Australia is not that Powell misclassifies them empirically. It is rather to show how the conceptual arguments I have made complement one another. Only if we understand the proportional vision of democracy in a weaker, Millian sense (section 2), distinguish between different sub-types of this vision along an underlying continuum between simple and complex majoritarianism (section 3), and realize the difficulty of stabilizing issue-specific majority formation in a pure parliamentary system (this section), can we adequately appreciate the two cases.[4]

5. Conclusion

Let me end with two suggestions for further research. One is to reconstruct in more detail the institutional designs that are most conducive to the four visions of majority formation and especially the three PR-based visions. Another is to map more systematically the tradeoffs between the visions and to explore additional ways of comparing their performance. The highly important empirical work on median voter congruence stimulated by Powell assumes a uni-dimensional space. This is understandable, given the difficulty of gathering adequate multidimensional data. However, we should remember Powell's (p. 165) caveat that the assumption of uni-dimensionality fits the vision(s) of democracy based on post-electoral majority formation less well. As he states: "a full evaluation from the proportional perspective would require additional consideration of the full distribution of policymaker positions and its correspondence to the citizen distribution." It seems desirable, therefore, to systematically compare the dimensionality of voter and elite preferences in democracies as well as to explore ways in which we can also measure the issue-specificity of decision-making and the issue-specific congruence between voters and policymakers.

References

Achen, C. H., Dalton, R. J., Huber, J., Kedar, O., Shively, W. P. and Strøm, K. (2011) 'Context, Behavior, Outcomes, and Tradeoffs: The Intellectual Contributions of G. Bingham Powell, Jr. to the Study of Comparative Democratic Processes', *PS: Political Science & Politics,* 44(04), 857-64.

Christiano, T. (1996) *The Rule of the Many. Fundamental Issues in Democratic Theory*, Boulder, CO, Westview Press.

Colomer, J. M. (2005) 'It's Parties That Choose Electoral Systems (or, Duverger's Laws Upside Down)', *Political Studies,* 53, 1-21.

Cox, G. W. (1997) *Making Votes Count. Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Ganghof, S. (2014) 'Bicameralism as a Form of Government (Or: Why Australia and Japan do not Have a Parliamentary System)', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 67 (3), 617-46.

Ganghof, S. (Forthcoming), ' Is the ‘Constitution of Equality’ Parliamentary, Presidential or Hybrid?', *Political Studies*, DOI: 10.1111/1467-9248.12124

Ganghof, S. and Eppner, S. and Heeß, K. (Forthcoming) ' Normative Balance and Electoral Reform: A Finnish Puzzle and a Comparative Analysis', *West European Politics*, DOI: 10.1080/01402382.2014.929342

Golder, M. and Lloyd, G. (2014) 'Re-evaluating the relationship between electoral rules and ideological congruence', *European Journal of Political Research*, 53(1), 200-12.

Juul Christiansen, F. and Damgaard, E. (2008) 'Parliamentary Opposition under Minority Parliamentarism: Scandinavia', *Journal of Legislative Studies,* 14(1-2), 46-76.

Lijphart, A. (2012) *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries,* Second Edition. New Haven, Yale University Press.

McGann, A. J. (2006) *The Logic of Democracy. Reconciling Equality, Deliberation, and Minority Protection*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.

McGann, A. J. (2013) Fairness and Bias in Electoral Systems. in J. H. Nagel and R. M. Smith (eds.) *Representation: Elections and Beyond.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 90-113.

Mill, J. S. (2008 [1861]) *Considerations on Representative Government,* Rockville, MD, Serenity Publishers.

Powell, G. B. (2000) *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions,* New Haven, Yale University Press.

Schwarz, D., Bächtiger, A. and Lutz, G. (2011) Switzerland: Agenda-Setting Power of the Government in a Separation-of-Powers Framework. in B. E. Rasch and G. Tsebelis (eds.) *The Role of Governments in Legislative Agenda Setting.* Routledge.

Shugart, M. S. (2001) 'Electoral "Efficiency" and the Move to Mixed-Member Systems', *Electoral Studies,* 20(2), 173-93.

Steiner, J. (1971) 'The Principles of Majority and Proportionality', *British Journal of Political Science,* 1(1), 63-70.

Tillman, E. R. (2013) 'Pre-electoral coalitions and voter turnout', *Party Politics*.

Ward, H. and Weale, A. (2010) 'Is Rule by Majorities Special?', *Political Studies,* 58(1), 26-46.

Endnotes

[1] When no other sources are specified, page numbers parentheses refer to Powell (2000).

[2] Powell (p. 65) argues that government majority status and cohesion of government parties have the strongest effects on "clarity of responsibility". Since the focus is here on pure parliamentary systems, I assume party cohesion. For government majority status, Powell (pp. 52-3) presents a ranking that is in line with the reasoning here.

[3] Of course, different forms of coordination failure in majority formation are also likely to exist in alliance- and cabinet-centered majority formation, but they are likely to be politically less salient. Due to space constraints I cannot elaborate on this point here.

[4] For reasons of space, I have said nothing about pure presidential systems or other hybrids between parliamentarism and presidentialism. Elsewhere I do so and also elaborate on the cases of Australia and Switzerland (Ganghof 2014, Forthcoming).