

*Routledge Research in Comparative Politics*

# **COLLEGIAL DEMOCRACY VERSUS PERSONAL DEMOCRACY**

**'WE' THE PEOPLE OR 'I' THE PEOPLE?**

Edited by  
Chen Friedberg and Gideon Rahat



# Collegial Democracy versus Personal Democracy

This book examines two patterns of democracy – collegial and personal – through a comprehensive comparison of political institutions.

It develops a conceptual, theoretical, and methodological basis for differentiating collegial and personal democracies. Central institutions in democracy are classified according to their levels of personalism and collegialism, including political parties, candidate selection methods and electoral systems, legislature, and cabinets and governments. The book presents preliminary findings concerning the causes for this variance between the two democratic regime types.

The book will be of key interest to students and scholars of democratic institutions, personalism and personalization, political parties and, more broadly, democracy.

**Chen Friedberg** is a senior lecturer in the Middle Eastern Studies and Political Science Department at Ariel University and a research fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute.

**Gideon Rahat** heads the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, where he holds the Gersten Family Chair in Political Science. He is also a senior fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute.

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# Contents

<i>List of figures, tables and appendixes</i>	vii
<i>List of contributors</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<b>1 Introduction: collegial versus personal democratic institutional order</b>	1
CHEN FRIEDBERG AND GIDEON RAHAT	
<b>2 Collegial versus personal political parties</b>	16
GIDEON RAHAT	
<b>3 Candidate selection methods and electoral systems: between collegialism and personalism</b>	41
OR TUTTNAUER	
<b>4 Collegial versus personal parliaments</b>	60
AVITAL FRIEDMAN AND SHAHAF ZAMIR	
<b>5 Collegial versus personal cabinets and governments</b>	87
EYAL BEN SHIMOL, REUVEN Y. HAZAN AND GIDEON RAHAT	
<b>6 Collegial democracy versus personal democracy</b>	105
GIDEON RAHAT AND CHEN FRIEDBERG	
<i>Index</i>	117



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# Figures, tables and appendixes

## Figures

2.1	Formal Weighted Parties personalism in 37 democracies	21
2.2	Estimated Weighted Parties personalism in 56 democracies	26
2.3	Ruling Party Personalism in 50 democracies	27
2.4	The values of the three indices for younger and older democracies	32
3.1	Average District Magnitude (DM) and number of districts	48
3.2	Electoral decentralized and centralized personalism	49
3.3	Types of intraparty personalism	51
3.4	Correlations between electoral and intraparty personalism	53
4.1	Personal versus collegial mechanisms in 30 parliaments in democracies (range, quartiles, and median)	69
4.2	Personal versus collegial levels of the oversight variable, including and excluding the vote of confidence/no confidence (range, quartiles, and median)	73
4.3	Institutional personalism of parliaments by country and dimension	76
4.4	Effects of the governmental system and the division of power on personalism in legislation	77
4.5	Effects of the governmental system and the division of power on personalism on committee seat allocations	78
5.1	The Cabinet-Government Model	93
5.2	Narrow Perspective Index (cabinets)	98
5.3	Wide Perspective Index (governments)	100
6.1	Rank of 24 democracies in terms of collegialism and democracy (Freedom House)	112
6.2	Rank of 24 democracies in terms of collegialism and liberal democracy (V-Dem)	113

## Tables

1.1	Collective versus individual agents	6
1.2	Personal and collegial regime types	7
2.1	Questions used for the Index of Formal Weighted Parties Personalism	19
2.2	Formal Weighted Parties Personalism in 37 democracies	20



2.3	Estimated Weighted Parties Personalism in 56 democracies	24
2.4	The three personalism indices	28
2.5	Government system type and party centralized personalism	30
2.6	Older and younger democracies	33
2.7	Pearson correlations ( $r$ ): party personalism and democracy	33
3.1	Electoral Decentralized Personalism Index	47
3.2	Electoral and intraparty personalism in 35 countries	52
3.3	Cross-tabulation of centralized and decentralized personalism incentives	55
4.1	Descriptive statistics of personal vs. collegial levels of all examined parliaments	70
4.2	Spearman correlation matrix of the personal-collegial variables	72
5.1	Research population: parliamentary, semi-presidential, and presidential democracies	94
5.2	Operationalization of the Cabinet-Government Model	95
6.1	Collegialism and personalism of institutions in 24 democracies	108
6.2	Pearson correlations between measurements of institutional personalism	110
6.3	Pearson correlations between measurements of institutional personalism and democracy measurements	114

## **Appendixes**

2.1	Independent and dependent variables by country	34
4.1	Questionnaire and scales	80
4.2	Summary of the questionnaire by topics	80
4.3	Respondents' information by country	80
4.4	Ordinary least squares regressions on personalism vs. collegialism in parliament variables	82

# Contributors

**Eyal Ben Shimol** is a Ph.D. student and a research assistant in the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research focuses on collegial and personal cabinets and governments.

**Chen Friedberg** is a senior lecturer in the Middle Eastern Studies and Political Science Department at Ariel University and a research fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute. She studies parliaments in general, the Israeli parliament in particular, parliamentary committees, women's representation, and Israeli politics.

**Avital Friedman** is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute. Her fields of research include comparative politics, legislative studies, and personal politics.

**Reuven Y. Hazan** is a professor and Chair in Israeli Democracy and Politics in the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research interests include legislative studies, parties and party systems, elections, and electoral politics.

**Gideon Rahat** heads the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he holds the Gersten Family Chair in Political Science. He is also a senior fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute. He studies comparative politics and Israeli politics, focusing on the politics of reform, democratic institutions, political parties, candidate and leadership selection, and political personalism and personalization.

**Or Tuttnauer** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at The Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES), University of Mannheim. He studies comparative institutions, especially parliamentary opposition, political parties, and electoral behavior.

**Shahaf Zamir** recently received his Ph.D. from the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He specializes in online politics, comparative politics, political parties, and Israeli politics. He is a researcher at the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility at Reichman University (IDC Herzliya).



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Chen Friedberg  
Gideon Rahat



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# 1 Introduction

## Collegial versus personal democratic institutional order

*Chen Friedberg and Gideon Rahat*

Lijphart (2012: 1) opens his seminal work, *Patterns of Democracy*, with the claim:

There are many ways in which, in principle, a democracy can be organized and run; in practice, too, modern democracies exhibit a variety of formal governmental institutions, like legislatures and courts, as well as political party and interest group systems.

That is our starting point in this volume as well. Lijphart then refers to “clear patterns and regularities” that appear when “institutions are examined from the perspective of how majoritarian or how consensual their rules and practices are.” Paraphrasing him, our approach focuses on clear patterns and regularities that appear when state institutions are examined from the perspective of collegial or personal rules and practices.

Rahat and Sheafer (2007: 66) define institutional personalization as “the adoption of rules, mechanisms, and institutions that put more emphasis on the individual politician and less on political groups and parties.” Here we do not look at the *process* of institutional personalization, but rather at institutional personalism as a *given state of things*. We thus adapt institutional personalization to fit this static meaning: a personal institutional order is one whose rules, mechanisms, and institutions put greater emphasis on the individual politician and less on political groups and parties. In contrast, a collegial institutional order is one whose rules, mechanisms, and institutions put greater emphasis on political groups and parties and less on the individual politician(s).<sup>1</sup>

If the distinction between majoritarian and consensus democracies was very useful in the 20th century – the era of mass collective actors – the distinction between collegial and personal democracies equally well fits the early 21st century, which could be called “the age of personalization” (Musella and Webb, 2015: 226). Indeed, a study of 26 democracies found that, in most cases, the party-society linkage has declined since the 1960s. In parallel, political personalization has increased and spread in various realms, including the personalization of executives, electoral systems, and political parties (Rahat and Kenig, 2018). This development raises the interesting conjecture that, especially today, in view of these two processes of party