RESEARCH NOTE

ELECTORAL MECHANISMS AND ELECTIONEERING INCENTIVES

Vote-getting Strategies of Japanese, French, British, German and Austrian Conservatives

Marcus Kreuzer

ABSTRACT

Why do politicians act in some countries as individual entrepreneurs, seeking a personal vote, and in others as team players soliciting a collective, party vote? This paper argues that different forms of electoral organization are determined by how electoral mechanisms, campaigning regulations and political finance laws structure the career prospects of politicians, as well as the logistical costs they face in communicating with voters.

KEY WORDS ■ electioneering ■ electoral systems ■ party finance ■ party organization

Elections are among the most regulated activities in politics and the writings on electoral voting procedures, campaigning regulations and political finance laws have investigated the different ways in which institutions and laws constrain electoral politics. This article integrates these three heretofore very separate research areas and analyzes how electoral mechanisms structure the vote-getting strategies of politicians. Using a rudimentary rational-choice approach, it argues that voting procedures, campaigning regulations and political financing constrain two basic activities of all politicians – career prospects and resource mobilization – and thereby determine the extent to which they will seek a personal vote or a more collective party vote.
The article illustrates the effects of voting procedures, campaigning regulations and political finance laws by comparing their impact on the vote-getting strategies of France's Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR), Britain's Conservative (Tory) Party, Austria's People's Party (ÖVP), Germany's Christian Democratic Party (CDU) and Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). It limits its analysis to the 1970s and 1980s and does not take into account more recent institutional changes, such as Japan's 1994 electoral reform or changes in the way British parties recruit candidates or select their leaders. This temporal delineation is dictated by the availability of detailed party monographs, which provide the central source of evidence.

Two Hypotheses

The article advances two hypotheses about how voting procedures, campaigning regulations and political finance laws structure the vote-getting strategies of politicians. The first hypothesis closely follows the common assumption that electioneering choices are directly shaped by the political institutionally structured career prospects (Cain et al., 1987; Canon, 1987; Aldrich, 1995; Carey and Shugart, 1996).

**Hypothesis 1:** The more electoral mechanisms provide parties with an opportunity to reduce the career uncertainty of candidates, the more readily candidates will seek party votes.

This hypothesis rests on the following assumptions. First, candidates are indifferent about whether they are elected personally or as members of a party. Their primary concern is to reduce their career uncertainty (Brown et al., 1997: 966; Wood and Young, 1997). An incumbent politician faces three sources of potential electoral uncertainty: deselection as an official candidate, demotion to a lower list position and deflection of voters. The paper assumes the probability of voter defection to be the same across five countries and only focuses on the first two, pre-electoral sources of career uncertainty. It analyzes the ability of parties to reduce these three sources of uncertainty by using coordination mechanisms such as seniority, loyalty, quotas and policy expertise to regularize the recruitment of candidates (Aldrich, 1995; Cox, 1997: 151–72; Kreuzer, 1998, 2001). Formal electoral mechanisms facilitate such coordination: the district magnitude, pooling mechanisms, ballot structure and party law. The analysis shows that these mechanisms increase a party's ability to regularize political careers, the more likely candidates will be to seek party nomination, and vice versa.

The second hypothesis deals with the impact resources have on electioneering practices. It focuses in particular on how electoral mechanisms affect the electioneering costs of campaigning and the costs of mobilizing resources.

**Hypothesis 2:** The more electoral mechanisms increase electioneering costs, the more likely candidates will seek a party vote.

This hypothesis, in turn, rests on the following assumption: any preferences candidates might have over how they are elected are overridden by their goal to minimize the costs of winning votes. Politicians will try to minimize these costs because they reduce their enjoyment of office benefits (i.e. prestige, income) or limit their ability to pursue policy preferences. These costs involve the time and resources required for polling, advertising, traveling, hiring personnel, raising funds, mobilizing volunteers or any other logistical means needed to solicit votes.

Parties can reduce electioneering costs in two ways. First, their collective reputations provide candidates with an immediately recognizable brandname, which will assure them the nearly automatic support of loyal partisan voters. Such partisan mobilization permits candidates with no personal reputation to be elected simply by affiliating themselves with a party (Downs, 1957: 96–113; Aldrich, 1995: 49, 55). Second, parties also permit significant economies of scale in mobilizing resources. They already have a nationally established logistical infrastructure, a cadre of volunteers and an extensive fundraising network (Gibson et al., 1983; Aldrich, 1995: 49; Scarro, 1995).

The ability of parties to economize on electioneering costs is contingent on four electoral mechanisms: the physical district size, the ballot format, campaigning regulations and public finance laws. The more these mechanisms permit parties to economize on the costs of winning votes, the more likely candidates will be to collectivize their electioneering practices, and vice versa.

**Electoral Mechanisms and Career Uncertainty**

The uncertainty politicians face over their careers results from three hurdles they encounter during their recruitment: the nomination after an initial screening of candidates; the selection from these nominees of an official candidate(s) and, in the case of PR list systems, their ranking. The level of uncertainty created by these three hurdles is influenced by electoral mechanisms and their effect on the capacity of parties to regularize electoral entry and re-entry of candidates.

Four electoral mechanisms affect how readily parties can coordinate the recruitment of candidates:

1. **District magnitude** (i.e. the average number of seats that are allocated in each district) (Rae, 1967: 20);
2. **Vote pooling mechanisms** (e.g. apparentment, national adjustment seats) (Carey and Shugart, 1996; Cox, 1997);
3. **Ballot structure** (e.g. open lists, closed lists, vote transferability, run-offs) (Rae, 1967; Katz, 1986);
4. **Party laws** (Tsatsos et al., 1990).
Table 1. Electoral mechanisms and career uncertainty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral mechanism</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Austria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District magnitude</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25 (MMD)</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pooling mechanisms</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>National adjustment seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot structure</td>
<td>Non-transferable votes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Run-off</td>
<td>Weakly open</td>
<td>Quasi-closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party law</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Weak (since 1988)</td>
<td>Strong (since 1965)</td>
<td>Weak (since 1975)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*MMD = multi-member districts; SMD = single-member districts.

As Table 1 demonstrates, these four electoral mechanisms vary considerably across the five countries and account for the decline in career uncertainty and personal vote-seeking as we move from the left (Japan) to the right (Austria).

Austria’s large district magnitude facilitates the ÖVP’s coordination of candidate recruitment by reducing the number of recruitment sites to 10 and thereby centralizing the recruitment process. It also creates longer electoral lists with more safe list positions, which permit party leaders to reduce the electoral uncertainty of candidates. The effects of district magnitude are reinforced by three further electoral mechanisms. Austria’s national adjustment seats are centrally allocated and virtually guarantee their holders a mandate. The closed ballot structure, in turn, prevents voters from rearranging the list ranking of candidates and hence overturning their party’s internally secured list positions. Finally, Austria’s weak party law does not require the involvement of party members in the recruitment of candidates and consequently leaves the nomination, selection and ranking of candidates to the ÖVP’s regional and national party executives (Schader, 1983: 222, 242-3; Stirnemann, 1988: 610-11). In short, the low career uncertainty explains why ÖVP candidates act as loyal teamplayers and concentrate on increasing their party’s collective reputation (Gerlich and Ucakar, 1981: 177). It permits the ÖVP to use a quota system for selecting candidates from the Farmers’ League, Business League and Workers’ and Employees’ League, which have long provided the party’s organizational backbone (Pelinka, 1971: 288; Stirnemann, 1988: 621-2).

In Germany, the career uncertainty resulting from large districts is offset by the 248 single-member districts (SMD) and an effective party law. Comparable to open lists but on a much smaller scale, Germany’s dual ballot allows voters to differentiate their choices by splitting tickets, which marginally increases career uncertainty. The uncertainty created by the SMD is much more pronounced for CDU candidates unable to secure a simultaneous nomination on one of the safe party lists. Such candidates consequently seek a personal vote and pork-barrel projects at a higher rate than their list colleagues (Lancaster and Patterson, 1990: 467-9). The most significant source of career uncertainty is Germany’s party law. It requires that all candidates are nominated, selected and ranked by grassroots members who meet in democratically constituted congresses. CDU incumbents are consequently frequently challenged and try to build a personal reputation to improve their re-selection prospects (Roberts, 1988: 94-117; Haugs, 1990: 167-74).

In France, Britain and Japan, the small district magnitudes reduce career uncertainty by multiplying the number of recruitment sites and eliminating any safe list positions. As a result, parties are limited in their ability to coordinate the recruitment process, which in turn becomes self-selecting, competitive and highly uncertain. The LDP’s central Election Steering Committee, for example, has no formal power to recruit candidates. It merely serves as an arena in which factions bargain over the number of candidates each gets to sponsor (Shiratori, 1988: 172-5). The RPR’s national executive mostly plays a consultative role vis-à-vis local districts in recruiting candidates. Interestingly enough, it was able to increase its influence under the 1986 PR system (Thiébault, 1988: 72-8). Prospective LDP and RPR candidates respond to this absence of a central coordinating agent by building a personal reputation among local and national notables in anticipation that they will help them secure a candidacy. Incumbents, in turn, build personal reputations to enhance their independence within the party and deter potential challengers (Curtis, 1971: 1-32; Schonfeld, 1985: 82-3; Thiébault, 1988: 72-8). LDP candidates, for example, spend up to 80 percent of their personal time on constituency-related work (Flanagan, 1991b: 161). For RPR candidates, in turn, the importance of constituency work may be inferred from the fact that French candidates have an 80 percent recall rate among voters compared to 50 percent for parties (Converse and Pierce, 1986: 265-7).

Like the LDP and RPR, the British Tory leadership plays a limited role in the recruitment process by limiting itself to conducting general background checks on prospective candidates (Ranney, 1968: 149; Denyer, 1988: 50-7). Prospective Tory candidates also seek a personal vote but, unlike their French and Japanese counterparts, they focus not just on local notables but also on activists. Activists matter in the Conservative Party because they select the official party candidate from a shortlist of nominees presented to them by the local party executive (Ranney, 1968: 143-53; Denyer, 1988: 50-7).

In Japan and France, additional electoral mechanisms affect career uncertainty. These mechanisms differ from the other electoral procedures because they affect career prospects after candidates have been recruited but before they are elected. They nevertheless warrant attention because they explain
how internal party decisions rather than voter choices affect career uncertainty. In France, the double ballot permits parties to reduce career uncertainty by coordinating the withdrawals of candidates after the first ballot. Parties form electoral pacts in which they commit themselves to withdraw their lower-placed candidates after the first ballot and pool their support by endorsing the higher-placed candidates on the second ballot. Converse and Pierce (1986: 411) estimate that active endorsements increase the probability of vote transfer from withdrawn to endorsed candidates by 25 percent.

In Japan, the combination of multiple candidacies and the non-transferability of votes significantly increased career uncertainty of LDP candidates before 1994. Japanese voters cast a single vote for one candidate even though the 130 electoral districts allocated between two and six seats. The seats were awarded to candidates in order of the highest portion of votes they received (Hrebenar, 1992: 32-42; Sartori, 1994: 23). This incongruence between number of votes and available number of choices exposed LDP candidates to the dual uncertainty of having to compete against other LDP candidates as well as candidates from other parties. This uncertainty was further enhanced because votes could not be transferred within a party from a candidate receiving more votes than required to lower-scoring colleagues. As a result, the intra-party competition was just as fierce as inter-party competition (McCubbins and McCall Rosenbluth, 1995: 38-45). The career uncertainty created by Japan’s single-non-transferable-vote (SNTV) manifested itself in the marginal role collective resources played in LDP campaigning. The LDP lacked a centralized party bureaucracy as well as an active membership. It did not even offer formal party membership (Shiratori, 1988: 183; Flanagan, 1991b: 159-61). LDP candidates, in turn, relied heavily on personal votes to reduce their career uncertainty. They were reported to spend 80 percent of their time on constituency services and, in turn, 47 percent of voters declared they had been personally contacted by them (Flanagan, 1991a: 105-6; 1991b: 160-1). Candidates provided extensive pork-barrel projects to their constituencies and built extensive social networks in their communities. They were known to attend weddings, drop in on funerals, organize outings for senior citizens and dispense gifts; they were even called on to settle private disputes. LDP candidates sought to establish not just a personal vote, but also a socially integrated group of voters into a closely organized personal constituency known as koenkai (Curtis, 1971; Shiratori, 1988: 183; Flanagan, 1991b: 159-61). The personal ties of such koenkai were so strong that, in 1983, 38.4 percent of all LDP seats were passed from father to son (Shiratori, 1988: 182).

Electoral Mechanisms and Electioneering Costs

Resources are an important ingredient for political success, as evidenced by politicians’ continuous complaints about the time required for fundraising; constituency activities and networking. Resources influence electoral strategies just as much as career opportunities and voter preferences. Electoral mechanisms, in turn, affect resources by determining the costs of winning votes. Four such mechanisms are important: the physical district size, the ballot format, campaigning regulations and campaign finance laws. The last mechanism deals directly with the mobilization of resources while the other three do so by creating distinct logistical requirements. In either case, electoral mechanisms very directly influence the costs of winning votes and thereby create different electioneering incentives.

District Size and Ballot Format

The size of electoral districts is measured in terms of the average number of registered voters per district. As Table 2 demonstrates, size significantly varies across the five countries.

The large physical sizes of Austrian and German multi-member districts require capital-intensive campaigns, which increase electioneering costs (Black, 1972: 147-8; Katz, 1980: 30-1). By nationalizing electoral contests, they limit the effectiveness of labor resources or personal reputations. They require instead more capital-intensive forms of mass communication (i.e. television, print, polling, bill-posting, phone banks) and a more professionalized campaign staff (i.e. party functionaries or political consultants). Ultimately, these high electioneering costs induce ÖVP and CDU candidates to economize by relying for their vote-getting on collective, programmatic reputations, as well as on a centralized, highly professionalized and large bureaucracy.

The ÖVP’s large, national bureaucracy plans a single, programmatic campaign, prints the campaign material and provides salaried functionaries for its execution (Müller and Plasser, 1992: 29). The ÖVP also relies on the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Austria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District size</td>
<td>620,000</td>
<td>68,412</td>
<td>64,000</td>
<td>170,000 (SMD)</td>
<td>575,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot format</td>
<td>Non-partisan</td>
<td>Partisan</td>
<td>Non-partisan</td>
<td>Partisan (until 1970)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Calculations based on figures for period 1970-90

b Excludes figures for 1986 when a PR system was employed. Number of districts is average of 473 districts used between 1970 and 1981 and 555 districts used since 1988.

c Number of districts is average of 630 districts used in 1970, 635 between 1974 and 1979 and 650 since 1983.

d SMD = single-member districts; MDD = multi-member districts. Figures for pre-1989 electoral system.

Sources: Mackie and Rose (1991) and Schindler (1983/88)
logical infrastructure of the Farmers' League, Business League and Workers' and Employees' League. These three leagues make their staff and resources available to the ÖVP during election campaigns and automatically enroll their members as members of the ÖVP. This indirect enrollment explains the ÖVP's extremely high membership:voter ratio of 0.4 and significantly reduces its costs for mobilizing supporters (Pelinka, 1971: 288; Müller, 1994: 63–4).

Like the ÖVP, the CDU maintains a sizable national bureaucracy, which designs and carries out single, nationwide election campaigns (Haug, 1990: 257; Poguntke, 1994: 193–4). It relies on its sizable membership (member:voter ratio of 0.05) to collect money, stuff envelopes, organize billboards and set up events (Poguntke and Boll, 1992; Scarrow, 1995: 96–7). The smaller size of Germany's 248 single-member districts permits CDU candidates to solicit a more personal vote. Their effect, however, is very modest since their votes do not count for the allocation of a party's overall seat share (Beyme, 1986: 166–7).

The small physical district sizes in Britain and France, on the other hand, preserve the effectiveness of personal reputations and labor resources and thereby reduce the need for capital-intensive, professional bureaucracies (Black, 1972: 147–8; Katz, 1980: 30–1). They permit Gaullist and Tory candidates to seek a personal vote independently of their parties' national programmatic appeals. The RPR maintains a small, national bureaucracy for soliciting a party vote and has a small, highly volatile membership (member:voter ratio of 0.02), which is mostly concentrated in Paris (Knapp and Le Galès, 1993: 208–10, 260–5). The national bureaucracy is tightly controlled by party leaders and senior party officials who, together with hired consultants, decide the national campaign strategy and distribute campaign material to local candidates. This party vote is important mostly during presidential elections; in legislative elections it complements rather than supersedes the personal vote (Sawicki, 1992: 14–15; Knapp, 1993: 293). As a result, RPR candidates maintain an extensive and informal network of personal contacts to help them win votes. They extend their networks to the national level through accumulating local, regional and national elected offices. Such multiple office-holding allows RPR candidates to serve as brokers between local and national levels of government. In return for their brokerage services, they can expect endorsements and in-kind services from regional and local government officials (Portier, 1984: 119; Knapp, 1991: 18–38; Knapp and Le Galès, 1993: 286–7).

The Conservative Party also maintains a small but effective national bureaucracy for organizing national campaigns and preparing political platforms (Finer, 1980: 110; Scarrow, 1995: 102–3). Yet, just as in France, individual candidates continue to play an important electoral role within the confines of this national campaign. Tory candidates are less reliant on personal networks than Gaullists and depend more on the efforts of local activists. The Conservatives' voter:member ratio of 0.05 is slightly higher than that of the RPR. Tory members assist with administrative tasks, distributing campaign material and canvassing voters about their voting intentions. Such information is then used on election day to contact likely voters and assist those requiring help to get to the voting station (Finer, 1980: 106; Scarrow, 1995: 105).

Japan's large district size (pre-1994) inflated electioneering costs but intra-party competition created by the SNTV prevented LDP candidates from adapting the economizing strategies of the CDU and ÖVP. The indivisibility of collective reputations and national party organizations meant that LDP candidates competing against each other had little choice but to seek personal votes. Candidates had some latitude to collectize their fundraising since money is more divisible than a collective reputation. As a result, they joined factions, which provided certain economies of scale in mobilizing resources. National faction leaders raised large sums of money from economic interest groups and funneled them to their members.

The format of ballots can be either partisan or non-partisan, depending on the information they contain. Partisan ballots are called such because they display party labels in addition to the names of candidates. Non-partisan ballots, on the other hand, are blank, or contain only a candidate's name. The different levels of information contained on ballots affects the voter's cost of acquiring information and the candidate's cost of disseminating it. The explanatory power of ballot format is quite modest since all countries except Japan (and Britain until 1970) use partisan ballots. Partisan ballots help reduce electioneering costs for the CDU, RPR, ÖVP and Tories because they establish a direct link between voter preferences and national party platforms (Müller, 1984: 86; Doublet, 1990: 59). The semi-blank ballot that Britain used before 1970 moderately increased the Tories' electioneering costs because it required candidates to rely on labor-intensive canvassing to link a candidate's name to a party (Epstein, 1967: 215–16). Japan's non-partisan ballots, in turn, imposed tremendous informational costs on LDP candidates (Stockwin, 1983: 211). Candidates had to communicate to voters their party affiliation as well as their names. Moreover, they had to devise a strategy to ensure that voters would not just passively recall a candidate's name but also actively remember it and spell it correctly. To address this challenge, personal vote-seeking proved once again the most relevant strategy.

Finance and Campaigning Regulation

Since the 1970s, governments have increasingly regulated three aspects of electoral politics: campaigning, public party funding and private campaign contributions. These regulations indicate the growing realization that electoral systems are not just about the translation of votes into seats but also about the translation of money into political influence. These regulations implicitly recognize the need to moderate electioneering costs to limit the distorting effect money has on political representation.
Table 3. Campaigning regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaigning strategy</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Austria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid TV advertising</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(since 1990)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(since 1990)</td>
<td>possibilities</td>
<td>since late</td>
<td>since 1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed advertising</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(since 1990)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electioneering</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>Limits bill posting and phone solicitations</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Campaign spending Unrestricted Restricted Restricted at Unrestricted local level


As Table 3 illustrates, the five countries have quite different campaigning regulations. These are meant to control electioneering costs by imposing ceilings on election spending and/or restricting costly forms of electioneering. Depending on the effectiveness of their enforcement mechanisms, these regulations constrain the demand for costly vote-getting strategies.

Except for Germany since the late 1980s, all five countries prohibit paid political advertising on television; in return they provide parties with free, usually late-night, air-time. France’s new 1988-90 electoral law incorporates existing but informal restrictions on print and media advertising. These restrictions on television advertising helped to contain the growing capital intensity and nationalization of electoral contests. In imposing spending limits, France and Britain directly cap electioneering costs. The British spending limits apply only to local districts. Their restrictiveness inhibits capital-intensive local media campaigns and preserves the effectiveness of constituency services. National parties face no formal spending limits but until the late 1970s felt bound by the local spending limits (Scarrow, 1995: 105). This informal constraint weakened during the 1980s and led Conservative Central Office to increasingly rely on capital-intensive, national media campaigns (Webb, 1994: 112). The strict French spending limits and limitations on print advertising also moderate electioneering costs. Japan’s strict campaign regulations restrict the distribution of campaign material, billposting and door-to-door canvassing (Stockwin, 1983: 211). They limit modern media-based campaigns as well as old-fashioned retail politics. Ultimately, they require candidates to sidestep restrictions by maintaining costly social networks whose personalized political relations are one of the few, unregulated (and hence legal) forms of vote-getting.

Table 4. Public finance regulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Austria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-kind subsidies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating expenses</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign re-inbursements</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Very limited</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As % of party income</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0 (pre-1990)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public funds per party voter</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>$0 (pre-1990)</td>
<td>$1.6</td>
<td>$2.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Britain’s opposition parties receive a very small sum of public money for their parliamentary work.

b Based on the average of three non-election years and one election year. Sum of public contributions to operating expenses and campaign re-inbursements as percentage of head office income (not of total party income).

c Sum of operating expenses and campaign re-inbursements divided number of votes a party received.


The regulation of private and public financing of politics can inflate electioneering costs by making money less readily available and vice versa. Table 4 summarizes the availability of public funding for political activities. All parties benefit from in-kind subsidies such as free or reduced rates for television advertising, billposting, mailings or printing. Otherwise, the five countries differ noticeably in how readily and what sort of public resources they make available for political activities. The illicit use of public funds (i.e. corruption) cannot be analyzed since little relevant information is available.

The ÖVP and CDU receive the most generous public funding, averaging $1.6 per voter for the CDU and $2.9 per voter for the ÖVP in the late 1980s. These funds consist of substantial campaign re-inbursements and annual block grants for operating expenses. They account for 45 percent of ÖVP and 69 percent of CDU income (Müller, 1992b: 111; Poguntke, 1992: 379). This ready supply of public money inflates electioneering costs because the CDU and ÖVP can more readily finance large bureaucracies, hire consultants and pay for advertising. It consequently limits personal vote-seeking and requires individual candidates to economize by soliciting a party vote. Moreover, public funding limits recruitment prospects because it constrains CDU and ÖVP candidates from raising their own funds. Austrian and German public funds are directly dispersed to the central party leadership, leaving individual candidates financially dependent on their parties.

France’s new public funding restricts the independence of candidates far less than the Austrian and German systems. It accounts for only 37 percent
of the RPR's income, large parts of it are appropriated for presidential contests and the campaign reimbursements go directly to candidates (Knapp, 1994: 268). Public funding thus gives RPR leaders little leverage over candidates. The absence of public financing in Japan and Britain (and France before 1988) prevents the inflation of electioneering costs and protects the effectiveness of a personal vote. It deprives parties of easily accessible funding for large, professional bureaucracies and makes them more dependent on the labor resources of candidates and members.

Electoral law also affects the availability of private finance by capping contributions and requiring disclosure. As Table 5 illustrates, the supply of private money varies strikingly across the five countries. Japan, Austria and Britain weakly regulate private contributions and hence register the highest donations per voter. The limits for Japanese candidates are regularly ignored and parties do not have to disclose their donors. Similarly, Austria has made very half-hearted efforts since the mid-1970s to restrict private contributions and have them disclosed. These lax regulations place no constraints on the supply of private money and thereby help inflate electioneering costs. They also help explain the ease with which the ÖVP and LDP mobilize private capital resources and why both parties maintain more formalized relations with economic interest groups than any other party.

The CDU and the Tories are moderately restricted in their ability to raise private funds. British electoral law imposes no statutory limits on private financial contributions to national parties, nor did it until recently require parties to disclose their origins. Until the late 1970s, the tight local spending limits indirectly constrained the mobilization of capital resources by Conservative Central Office. Disclosure occurs indirectly and as a result somewhat incompletely because British tax law requires corporations to list political contributions (Webb, 1992: 868). Like Britain, Germany constrains private fundraising weakly. Its electoral law imposes fairly high ceilings (2 percent of corporate cash flow, 5 percent of personal income) and requires disclosure of contributions above 60,000 DM (Landfried, 1994: 134–7). Despite the fairly non-restrictive nature of these regulations, the CDU raises a surprisingly small amount of its income (9.3 percent) from private sources.

Reflecting France's long-standing distrust of parties, its electoral law forbade any private contributions and limited the money that could be raised from members until 1988. The new 1988–90 law also restricts private contributions to 20 percent of campaign expenditure (Drysch, 1993: 163). However, the new and old regulations only constrained but never prevented the mobilization of private capital resources as RPR politicians resorted to various illicit forms of political financing (Mény, 1995: 159–72). Yet the regulations were still restrictive enough to limit the supply of money, moderate electioneering costs and lessen the need of RPR candidates to economize by seeking a party vote.

### Table 5. Private finance regulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Austria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (since 1988)</td>
<td>Indirect and incomplete</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling</td>
<td>Yes but no enforcement</td>
<td>Yes and before 1988 no contributions allowed</td>
<td>Indirect for local district branches</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As % of party incomea</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions per party vote</td>
<td>$42 (1986)</td>
<td>$2.9</td>
<td>$0.76</td>
<td>$0.17</td>
<td>$1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*a* Includes only revenues of national party organization and not regional and local ones. Based on average of three non-election years and one election year. Figures for Tories, RPR, ÖVP and CDU based on party or governmental sources. Expenditure for LDP based on estimates.

*b* Combines expenditure for presidential and legislative elections. No other figures available.


### Conclusion

The comparison of these five center-right parties underscores how institutional factors play a central role in the way politicians solicit votes and ultimately aggregate voter preferences into policy outcomes. Cross-national variance in voting procedures, campaigning regulations and political finance laws have been shown to correlate with levels of personal vote-seeking. The three sets of electoral institutions induce candidates to behave as individual entrepreneurs to the extent that they increase career uncertainty and contain electioneering costs. They turn candidates into team-players soliciting a collective party vote to the extent that they make candidate recruitment secure and electoral campaigns more capital intensive. Moreover, the effects of these three sets of electoral institutions are highly cumulative. In France and Britain, for example, voting procedures create significant incentives for personal vote-seeking, while campaigning regulations and political finance laws reinforce this effect mostly by containing electioneering costs. The reverse holds true for Austria and Germany, and the cumulative effects are weakest in Japan, where the personal vote-seeking effects of voting procedures are not as strongly replicated by campaigning regulations and political finance laws.

The sort of theoretical synthesis attempted here also reveals certain methodological difficulties in pursuing this line of inquiry further. One obvious next step would be to move from demonstrating the causal relevance of institutional factors to evaluating their impact on personal vote-seeking...
relative to each other. For example, how much variance in personal vote-seeking could an open ballot account for relative to restrictive political finance regulations. Increasing the number of cases and using a quantitative research design provides one possible solution. Such an approach, however, faces certain problems. It would be difficult to establish reliable, quantitative measures of personal vote-seeking across a large number of countries. Currently, I am aware of the availability of such measures only for the USA, the UK and Canada. Furthermore, increasing the number of cases will invariably increase the number of independent variables. Often, it is the more minor electoral mechanisms such as ballot structures, transferability of votes or ballot formats that affect vote-getting strategies most directly. And since these mechanisms vary especially widely across countries, it is easily conceivable that there will be insufficient cases for many electoral mechanisms, campaigning regulations or financing laws to make valid inferences about their impact. Finally, the effects of political finance regulations will be particularly difficult to assess, since compliance with the letter and the spirit of the laws varies so tremendously. While some of these methodological obstacles are more intractable than others, they should not stand in the way of theoretically integrating literatures that devote themselves to the different legal and procedural constraints of electoral politics.

Notes

1 The European distinction between nomination and selection differs from the American labeling (Ranney, 1968: 141–2).

2 The literature uses party law in two ways. In most instances, it refers to specific statutes that regulate party organization. In other instances, it refers to clauses in electoral or party-financing laws that pertain to the organization of parties. In both instances, however, parties are treated as public bodies that are regulated by statutes distinct from those regulating voluntary associations. I use the term 'party law' to designate this statutory differentiation of parties from voluntary associations.

3 Austria's ballot structure technically permits preference voting. But the preference voting is so restrictive that between 1971 and 1983 only 0.95% of all votes were preference votes. These votes contributed to the election of a single candidate (Müller, 1984: 95) Each voter can cast one preference vote and a candidate needs at least 25,000 preference votes to be directly elected (i.e. regardless of his or her list ranking). The 25,000-vote threshold is sufficiently high to dissuade ÖVP candidates from seeking a personal vote to improve their list ranking. This preference-voting formula replaced an earlier one in 1970 (Müller, 1984: 85–9; Ucakar, 1985: 497)

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