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The impact of Cohabitation at Democracy sustainability in mixed electoral countries

Comparative study between Lithuania and Palestine

[Ramzi Odah, Aminurraasyid Yatiban, [Sivaperegasam Rajanthiran](#)]

Abstract—The authors have found a gap in studies regarding the relation between cohabitation and mixed electoral system in Lithuania and Palestine. Elgie & McMnamin (2011) has argued that cohabitation is less likely to occur when there are few or many parties in electoral system; against this statement, we argue that cohabitation is more likely to occur when electoral fractionalization is high. In the present study, by comparative method among three samples of mixed legislative elections, Lithuanian 1992, Lithuanian 1996 and Palestinian 2006, we find evidence about relation between electoral fractionalization and polarization toward big parties. That relation may explain the likelihood of cohabitations' electoral conditions.

Keywords—Sustained democracy, Cohabitation, Mixed electoral system, Duverger low, Palestinian and Lithuanian legislative elections

I. Introduction

Cohabitation is a rare phenomenon occurs just in semi-presidential system, when the executive authority is divided between the president and prime minister; both are from different parties. Under this situation, the deadlock threatens stability in the political system, because of competition and struggle between president and prime minister from opposite parties. ([Shugart & Carey, 1992](#)). For this perspective, Elgie and McMnamin (2011) have found just 44 periods of cohabitation in 18 semi-presidential countries, from 1989 until 2008.

The previous researches discuss in more details, the institutional factors and political situation, and how they affect democracy consolidation in semi-Presidential system. Samuels and Shugart (2010) have found cohabitation is more likely to occur in the cases of Primer-Presidential system type.

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Elgie & McMnamin (2011)has confirmed Shugart and Samuel's (2010) study results. Elgie argues several times,

Elgie (2007) finds that Primer–Presidential system is more dangerous on democracy sustainability than Presidential–Parliamentary type of semi-presidential system. He also insures that cohabitation is more likely to break down the nascent democracies than durability and settled democracies. Indeed, neither Shugart, nor Elgie, does not consider, in their research, the relationship between electoral system and cohabitation. As it is clear from Elgie & McMnamin (2011) study that they have found a relation between party fragmentation and cohabitation possibilities. They confirmed thier hypothesis as cohabitation is less likely to occur when there are few numbers of parties or much number of parties, but that result is not clear enough to explain why and how come that will be done, is there any relation between both factors?, has this relation been affected by electoral system?. Our research tries to answer these questions, it focuses on the situation and condition of the effect of party fragmentation on occurring cohabitation status in mixed electoral system.

II. Literature Review

Scholars discuss many threats which can breakdown democracy, some of these threats and risks elements are economic growth as Lipset has argued (1959). Limongi and his colleagues (1996) confirm these pre-requisite social-economic conditions of democracy consolidation. Enterline & Greig (2010) argue that ethnic divided society and development economic system affect foreign imposed democracy countries. Mathweson (2013) identify that foreign imposed democracy change can be succeed if occupier distribute economical values, and protect the target state from foreign threaten. Reynolds (1996) agreed with that. Linz (1990) finds that Presidential system is less likely to increase democracy level in countries. Lijphart (1999) in his study for 36 political system agrees with that; he argues that institutional factors play important rule in sustainable democracy, such as the nature of political system, and electoral system. He finds that Parliamentary system is more likely to achieve democracy sustainability. [Limongi \(1996\)](#) re-insures that finding, identify that the average age of semi-presidential systems is less than the parliamentary systems. Shugrat & Carey (1992) explains that political system type is not enough to determine the likelihood of democracy consolidation; it needs to analyses the presidential institutional power, their study shows that the higher of presidential power increases, the higher of likelihood of democracy breakdown.

The perils of Semi-presidential System

Sartori (1997) has identified criteria of semi-presidentialism as system has president, who is elected for a fixed term by popular, shares with a prime minister the executive power. The president is independent from parliament, but he needs to govern through his government (cabinet), and finally, prime minister and his cabinet need to get support from parliamentary majority in order to have confidence.

Scholars emphasize that semi-presidential system has negative impacts on democracy sustainability. Linz (1990) has indicated that semi-presidential system will threat democracy, particularly, when the cohabitation is occurred. In this case, president will be more attentive to use un-institutional tools to finish the deadlock in regime, like using his influence on military forces to threat the opposition, or to seize power illegally. Lijphart (1999) have considered semi-presidential system as transition point from presidential system toward parliamentary; he deals with this system as party system fragmentation and indicates the un-stability of the nature of this system. Lijphart (1999) has argued that semi-presidential systems increase the possibilities of president's highest power than pure semi-presidential system. On other hand, the perils of semi-presidential system will be considered, when it will produce divided minority government, as Skach (2005). She defined this situation as the case where "neither the president nor the prime minister, nor any party or coalition, enjoys a substantive majority in the legislature" (Skach, 2005, p17). In contrast, Elgie (2007) has somewhat moderated his opinion between this theoretical puzzle, he indicates that, "The direct election of the president may encourage the personalization of the political process, and it may encourage the president to disregard the rule of law because s/he feels above the normal political process." Elgie (2007, p. 56). In his conclusion, Elgie (2007) has found that there are many perils of semi-presidential system, but he defines that the primer-presidential system should be adopted than presidential-parliamentary type in order to sustain democracy in semi-presidential democracies.

Mixed electoral system

Electoral system is divided into 3 main categories (Blais & Massicotte, 1996)

- 1- Plurality/Majority system. Plurality known as *first-past-the-post* (FPTP) as in Britten parliamentary election, especially is preferred in single-member districts. In this system a candidate who gets more votes, simply he wins. Majority system puts more conditions in this rule, and it requires candidate gets more than 50% of the vote to win.
- 2- Proportional System (PR). PR can be used only in multimember districts or national level; each party gets number of seats under accounts of its vote shares.
- 3- Mixed electoral system, as Germany, Japan. Usually has two tiers; one of them is Majority/Plurality election, and the other is proportional system.

In general perspective, until now there is no concrete theory for mixed electoral system; many scholars have different definitions of that type, as Blais & Massicotte (1996) have argued. For long time, scholars consider mixed electoral system as a minor system, which doesn't help improvement of a concrete theory for that particular system (Strauch & Pogoreli, 2011). Lijphart (1999) argues that proportional electoral system will increase democracy stability more than majority/plurality system. Rogowski (as cited in Boix,1999) argues that proportional system (PR) encourages democracy sustainability because PR system is more capable to face rent-seeking groups in state. [Cheibub & Chernykh \(2009\)](#) have identified that semi-presidential system has more tendency to use specific electoral system, which increases party fragmentation in Parliament more than majority electoral system, therefore, in these political systems, there is more tendency to form collation government than it has been occurred in majority electoral system.

Duverger law

The electoral system literature is based on three principals of Duverger conditions; PR systems tend to produce multi-party systems; two-ballot majoritarian systems promote multiple parties aligned with two camps; and plurality systems promote bipartism (Duverger, 1984). Indeed, Duverger does not provide formal definitions of his famous mechanical and psychological factors (Duverger law), he considers them as the 'phenomena of polarization and under-representation ([Blais & Carty, 1991](#))

Blais & Massicotte (1996) confirm Duverger law in their study. Cox (1997) criticizes Duverger law. He argues that this law has limited explanation of voter strategy voting. In district level, strategic voting requires certain and particular conditions regarding actors' motivations and intensives, preferences, time horizons, and availability with clarity of accurate information. Plurality SMD elections may not work as Duverger law does. Voters may not to reduce their votes to small parties toward the biggest; in one of these cases has been occurred: voters who are not short-term instrumentally rational may have a lack of public information about voter preferences and vote intentions.

Research Design

Samples Chosen

In this article we use comparative method to compare between three cases of cohabitation occurred in mixed electoral system, two of them occurred in Lithuania, the third occurred in Palestine. The first Lithuania sample of cohabitation occurred in 1992, when President Vytautas Landsbergis formed LPS party. In this period there was a little period of cohabitation (less than 1 one month) in Jan 1991 when prime-minister Albertas Simenas formed LKDP party, and then when Mr. Brazauskas formed LDDP party, he was elected President of the Republic from 1992 until 1998. The second cohabitation was in 1997 when Mr. Gediminas Vagnorius was appointed as a prime minister. ("Lithuania Parliamentary elections "). In another part, Palestine is an occupied country. Since Oslo agreement

1993, Palestinian Authority (PNA) was established. In 2006, the second legislative election was held with most of the opposing parties' participation. Hamas, the Islamic party won, and got 74 seats from 132 seats. This unexpected situation created cohabitation period from February 2006 until mid of 2007. Within this period, conflict had increased between the president Abbas and Prime Minister Hania from Hamas movement. President eventually resolved the government, that, led the country to civil war, finished in split between West Bank under Fatah ruling, and Gaza under Hamas ruling (Cavatorta & Elgie, 2009; Lopes, n.d) .

Methodology

We argue that cohabitation will be less likely when electoral fractionalization in legislative council increases; that is why, in this situation, it will be more difficult for any single party to get 50% of total seats in parliament or above. In another world, more parties in parliament reduce the likelihood of gaining much seats in parliament for each party. Electoral fractionalization is indicated as effective number of parties (Eff Nv) (Blais & Carty, 1991). We will use formula of effective number of parties (Eff Nv) as provides by Laakso and Taagepera (1979) Formula which equals

$$1 / \sum Vi^2 \quad (1)$$

when Vi is the share of the vote obtained by the ith party. We measure party system fractionalization by counting parties weighted by their national shares of votes or seats. We rely on study calculation of this figure as calculated in dataset of election indices (Gallagher, 2013).

In order to capture all of indicators of electoral fractionalization, we will use another important independent variable. Number of political parties attend to compete in election in both tiers, SMD and PR. We suppose psychological effect also affects parties as Duverger law. The idea here is that the small parties will not spend more effort, money and time in competing in SMD, because they have small chances to win a seat within plurality electoral system. Therefore, they will concentrate in PR list, which gives them more chances to win a seat comparing with their votes. We calculate this variable as total number of political parties' candidate in PR list minus total number of political parties' candidate in SMD election; result of this simple formula must have high deviation between the both numbers. If it is huge, that means there are fewer parties attend SMD than PR; which indicates that there will be more polarization toward the two big parties (low fractionalized). If result has small deviation, that means there, is less polarization toward both big parties (more fractionalized). To calculate these deviation we rely on the information listed

in(http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/election_types/parliamentary_elections.html, which provides very strong information about all of Europe election. We count all of parties that have any percentage of vote in list election, and then we have done the same thing in single election first round. By this way, we can know the exact number of parties participation in both tiers. In Palestine case, we count on Central election commission –Palestine, which provides information about each parties, <https://www.elections.ps/>

By this view, our first hypothesis is:

H1 – Electoral Fractionalization is less likely to increase in mixed electoral system, when the vote sharing for independents candidates is high.

Shugart, M.F (1985) said that big party should take vote share in SMD more than in PR list because of Duverger law. Therefore, we will calculate the deviation between the both shares in two tiers in order to examine Duverger law. We use the deviation of share of the vote for the first party between the two tiers (D1), and the deviation of share of the vote for the second party between the two tiers (D2), calculated as vote share for party in List tier minus vote share for this part in SMD tier. If this deviation is positive, that means there is less polarization (the votes more fractionalized), and if it is negative, that means there are more polarization (the votes less fractionalized). That is why more votes go to independent candidates. By this view, our sub-hypothesis are:

H1-1- Polarization to big parties is less likely to increase in mixed electoral system, when the vote sharing for independents candidates is high

H1-2- Effective number of electoral parties is less likely to increase in mixed electoral system, when the vote share for independents candidates is high.

We take the information of numbers and vote share of independent candidate in Lithuania elections from this website

<http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/indexElections.asp>.

In Palestine case, we use the election data published in Central election commission website

<https://www.elections.ps/ar/tabid/587/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Disproportionality of SMD tiers is the most important aspect of proportionality in mixed systems. That is why list tier (PR) has low level of disproportionality. When disproportionality increases, it means more wasting votes and more polarization toward big parties. Plurality electoral system makes more disproportionality than PR and majority system as Lijphart (1999), therefore, there are high effective number of parties in PR system than plurality system. We can measure disproportionality (Lsq) by distributions of votes / seats; this total is divided by 2; and then the square root of this value is taken. We also rely on study calculation of this figure as calculated in dataset of election indices (Gallagher, 2013). Finally, we will use the same figures of D1, D2 to determine polarization, therefore, our second hypotheses are:

H2-Polarization to big parties is more likely to increase in mixed electoral system, when the disproportionality is high.

H3-Effective number of electoral parties is less likely to increase in mixed electoral system, when the Disproportionality is high.

III. Results

The results indicate that there is less polarization towards both big parties, which means that the voters have attended to change their behavior of voting in SMD to other small parties, which happened in Lithuania legislative elections in 1992 and 1996, or give their votes to independent candidates, like Palestinian case. It appears clearly that Duverger law cannot be implemented in our three samples with one exception the second big party in Lithuania election in 1996, LKDP, which gains 2.7 % plus vote in List election tier, but all of other cases indicate that the big parties have taken in List tier votes share more than in district level.

In correlation regression, Model (1), we can see strong positive relation between DV2 and vote share, the strength of relation is about 85%, which means that by increasing vote sharing for independent candidates, the deviation between second party's vote-share between two tier (DV2) will increase, that means, polarization to the second party will be reduced. In contrast to DV1, we can notice also in Model (1), that there is nearly medium negative relation between DV1 and vote sharing. The strength of relation is about -41% , which means that by increasing vote share for independent candidates, the deviation between first party's vote-share between two tier (DV1) will decrease, so polarization to the first party increases, but in few lower than reducing polarization to second party. The finding for both dependent variables is that, while vote share for independent candidates is increased, polarization to second party is reduced strongly, but polarization to the first big party goes positively. This finding prove our hypothesis H1-1/H1-2, indicates that the party get more votes will get less punishment from independents voters than the parties get second or even third vote share. As we can notice this result when we see the correlation between number of independent candidates competing, and DV2, which is strongly positive, 77%, but opposite relation with DV1 is shown as -52%.

In our three samples of election, the independent candidates and small parties compete strongly against the big parties in district level, that gives them more vote- share percentage from all of the votes in districts level, as for example, 4.3% in Lithuania election 1992, 3.4% in its legislative election in 1996. The huge percentage of vote sharing for independent candidates was in Palestinian legislative election in 2006, 20.4%, that is because there are more than 266 independent candidates; more than 130 of them are defectors from Fateh. This value explains why Hamas as opposite party beats Fateh easily; electoral split their tickets in districts level, and then of course, Fateh lose the game (see Model 1).

By regression in Model 1, we can prove our hypotheses H2 clearly; there is strong negative relation between effective number of parliamentary parties and both of vote share of independent candidates, and their numbers. It means that when the independent's vote share / numbers increases, the effective number will strongly be reduced, same as in our hypothesis.

As the table 1. appears, disproportionality average in our three cases is 11.7, which reflects high disproportionality in district level more than list. Indeed if we compare this rate of disproportionality with the mean rate of disproportionality of number of mixed electoral system, which was calculated in Moser & Scheiner's (2004) study, we find the means is 16.9, but our sample's mean of disproportionality is 11.7. Our rate is lower than means disproportionality in another mixed electoral system, which proves our hypothesis.

It's obvious from Model (1) that there is strong negative relation between disproportionality (Lsq) and both DV1, DV2 -60%, -87% respectively, that means while Lsq increases, the deviation of share of the vote for the both big parties into two tiers decreases, and that means more polarization for both parties because of high Lsq, the same as our hypothesis. Using correlation regression, Model (1), also, we can find that there is strong positive relation between disproportionality and effective number of parliamentary parties, and that means that when Lsq increases, the effective number of electoral parties, increases also. This result indeed, is in contrast with our hypothesis, as we notice from previous study, the relation must be negative; may be the reason for that, is because of small size of samples, or because of big number of small parties in district level in Lithuania or big numbers of independent candidates in Palestine case.

Conclusion

This study investigates in mixed electoral system with 3 samples, 2 in Lithuanian legislative election 1992, 1996, and the last is Palestinian election. We have found interesting result in this field. The main point in this research is explaining the strong relation between electoral fractionalization and cohabitation. By comparative method between three samples of legislative election in cohabitation periods, we have found there negative relation between polarization to big parties and likelihood of cohabitation. It is obvious that Duverger law is not working well in our three-mixed electoral system. The voters give less votes to big parties in district level. In addition, in contrast of Duverger law, the parties and independent candidate has much involvement in district level. We notice less disproportionality in our three samples comparing with other mixed elections in previous studies. However, we have not found much support about our hypothesis that relation between effective and disproportionality; we think that hypothesis needs more investigation.

The main recommendation for this study is to fill the gap by researches about the relation between electoral system and cohabitation. We think this study is one-step in this field, but there must be many researches in order to know and examine all of electoral characters, which influence to occur cohabitation. We believe that cohabitation has many risks at new democracies; by this future research, they can contribute to avoid these risks.

TABLE 1. ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND COHABITATION

Cohabitation periods	Table of Independent variables				
	EffNv	Dv1	Dv2	Isq	Nc
Lithuania 1992	4.62	9.8	2.77	9.61	32
Lithuania 1996	7.52	2.6	-2.7	15.7	53
Palestine 2006	2.68	3	7	10	26
Mean	4.94	5.13	2.4	11.7	11

Eff Nv : effective number of parties, Isq : Disproportionality . Nc : Number of Independent candidates

Dp : Number of parties in List tier (Npr) minus Number of parties in district(Nd)

Dv1 : deviation of share of the vote for the first party between the two tiers

Dv2: deviation of share of the vote for the second party between the two tiers

MODEL 1. CORRELATION RELATIONS OF ELECTORAL FRACTIONALIZATION

Column1	Eff Nv	Dv1	Dv2	Isq	N c	Vote share for N c
Eff Nv	1					
Dv1	-0.16274	1				
Dv2	-0.99919	0.122808	1			
Isq	0.893008	-0.58937	-0.87413	1		
N c	-0.75259	-0.52724	0.778538	0.37572	1	
Vote – share for N c	-0.83105	-0.41354	0.852806	0.49182	0.991691	1

Eff Nv : effective number of parties, Isq : Disproportionality . Nc : Number of Independent candidates

Dp : Number of parties in List tier (Npr) minus Number of parties in district(Nd)

Dv1 : deviation of share of the vote for the first party between the two tiers

Dv2: deviation of share of the vote for the second party between the two tiers

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