

ON THE DISCUSSION ABOUT THE EFFECT OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM ON PARTY SYSTEM AND ITS PERFORMANCE REGARDING THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM*

UDC 342.8

DOI: 10.52063/25792652-2022.1.12-128

TIGRAN MUGHNETSYAN

*Public Administration Academy of the Republic of Armenia, Chair of Political Management and Public Policy, Ph.D. Student,
Yerevan, the Republic of Armenia
mugntigran@gmail.com*

The paper aims to examine theoretical grounds of political institutions, particularly electoral institutions and its impact on political party system. Moreover, paper explores behavior of electoral system in certain governing systems.

To accomplish that purpose following problems were set and methodology applied: discourse analysis and comparative method are utilized through scrutiny of Linz's, Lipset's and Horowitz's approaches regarding governance system, as well as Colomerian and electoral system-party system models. For all institutional models advantages and perils are discussed: from government formation flexibility, regime volatility to party system discipline and electoral system features. Consequently, electoral system and its impact on party system are explored in detail.

Two general concepts are outlined: mechanistic and psychological voting, as main factors, which affect party system. Apart from that impact of electoral system on party system and regime change in paper is described through the party system stability concept: party volatility and party replacement.

The paper suggests that certain set of political institutions are relevant for certain aims and that sustainability of that institutions is reliant on path dependency.

Keywords: *electoral system, party system, institutional environment, governance system, regime volatility, governance effectiveness, mechanistic and psychological voting, path dependence.*

This paper discusses two major debates in political discourse and science in particular. One is a debate over a system of governance: parliamentarism versus presidentialism. The second is the link between electoral system and party system.

The discussion over optimal form of governance was significantly enriched by the debate between Linz, Lipset and Horowitz, as well as with the reflection on the debate by other scholars. Before introducing the central arguments concerning the debate, it is essential to describe main features of both systems.

* Հոդվածը ներկայացվել է 09.02.2022 թ., գրախոսվել՝ 10.03.2022 թ., տպագրության ընդունվել՝ 10.04.2022 թ.:

Governance system and institutional performance

Cheibub (Cheibub 27) suggests three dichotomic criteria for distinguishing the governing system: a) whether president is elected directly; b) government is accountable to parliament; c) government is accountable to president. Shugart and Carey (Shugart and Carey 32) offer somewhat similar characteristics: a) dependency of governmental survival; b) the locus of the authority over government. The literature is abundant with more detailed criteria (Krouwel 341) for measuring both systems: *presidential elections, locus of executive power, prime-minister appointment, appointment of government members, forming government after parliamentary/presidential elections, right of legislative initiative, vote of confidence, presidential veto, release of the parliament and compatibility of parliamentary mandate*. Afore-mentioned 10 criteria are distinctive features of parliamentary/presidential systems, and with the absence/existence of the features it can be measured the extent of parliamentarism/presidentialism. Moreover, distinguishing features of both systems regarding governance are linked to 10 criteria. For instance, in presidential systems decision-making is quicker than in parliamentarism; politics is less costly in presidentialism, as founding, financing, organizing and maintaining parties, main subjects in parliamentarism, are very expensive; while the probability of fast-changing government is high in parliamentarism due to its reliance on party coalitions.

It is significant to underline that advantages and disadvantages of both systems can be traced in certain context and environment, hence it's fair to mention Sartori's (Sartori 48) notion that when criticizing the existing system, we prescribe its alternative with virtues; if presidentialism has flaws, it doesn't mean that parliamentarism is flawless. Linz (Linz 59) a strong proponent of parliamentarism implies that it's more conducive to stable democracy. To back up his idea Linz proposes three main arguments.

a) Parliamentarism over time creates incentives for forming coalitions, while presidentialism offers little for coalitions. Lack of president-parliament cooperation is due to three reasons, division of powers, where president needs no strong support from political parties and parliament; presidential elections, where president receives direct and nation-wide mandate and opposes to MPs that represent local constituencies and interests and; presidentialism is a zero-sum game, where winner takes all. Parliamentary system has collegial executives, while in presidential system there is one person executive (Lijphart 242).

b) Lack of party discipline is causing democratic instabilities in presidentialism, where party fragmentation and insufficiency of leverages dictate short-term interests to party system. Exception to this rule are strong ideological political parties as in US (Linz and Valenzuela 66).

c) The last argument against presidentialism is government formed by minority. Moreover, given the multiparty system and presidents ability to form the government on his own increases the possibility of miscommunication between president and parliament, thus democratic breakdown. Lijphart (Lijphart 244) describes the situation when government doesn't represent parliamentary majority in parliamentarism as a "consensual democracy", whereas in presidentialism as "conflicting democracy".

In response to those arguments Horowitz (Horowitz 74) accuses Linz for mechanistic approach, making strawmen of presidentialism and selection bias, that is concentrated on Latin America's cases. Furthermore, Horowitz notes that Westminsterian parliamentary model (*first-past-the-post*) endows winner-takes-all situation more than many presidential elections, and that true object of Linz's criticisms is Westminster system rather than presidentialism. He also underlies that the fixed presidential terms are in practice more flexible rather than terms of parliamentary government. Although, Linz

(Linz 54) accepts Horowitz's certain comments he insists on personalistic character of presidentialism, which fuels factionalism and clientelism, thus impeding democratic rules.

Interestingly, Mainwaring and Shugart (Mainwaring and Shugart 452) and later Cheibub (Cheibub 38) reflecting on the above-mentioned discussion argue that presidential system per se isn't the reason of democratic breakdowns, rather than institutional fragility and external environment, where presidential systems are found. This situation lowers viability chances of any system, including parliamentarian.

Regarding the institutional environment, it's important to discuss electoral system and party system as they are defining factors for any democratic political system. Election (Przeworski 15) results must be uncertain; winner should take the office; and elections with afore-mentioned two features should be conducted regularly and dates known to everyone for a system that is deemed democratic. Prior to that it is worthy to outline general understanding of political regime. Political regime is a broad concept, which generally can be characterized as a set of the rules, values and principles with which state, authorities execute power. There are numerous and sophisticated typologies for political regimes, "but the basic classification is dichotomous: either democracy or dictatorship, latter term is interchangeably used with "authoritarian regimes"" (Alvarez, et al. 7). Dahl (Dahl 1998) provides already classic criteria for identifying democracy: effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, control of the agenda and inclusion of adults.

Electoral System Effect on Party System

Electoral systems (Herron et al. 13) are the set of rules that determine the seats in the elected institution by taking votes in any given election. In this regard electoral systems are in link with both interparty and intraparty dimensions (Shugart 37). It's also important that in this frame parliamentary elections are priorly considered. As already mentioned, there is debate whether electoral systems shape party system or vice versa. The proponents of the first approach are majority in the discipline. Arguably, the most famous for this approach is Duverger and his proposed rules (Duverger 113) of electoral system that shape party system. The rules imply a) proportional representation tends to form multi-party system; b) two-round elections form a multi-party system, where parties are linked with coalitions; c) single-member electoral system favors two-party system. He explains this by two factors: mechanistic, when third parties don't get sufficient representation in single-member systems and; psychological, when voters choose favorites in fear of "wasting" their vote. The psychological factor is also supported by Riker (Riker 758).

However, the ideas of Duverger were criticized both from the electoral system, as defining institution proponents and the opponent camp. Particularly Cox (Cox 64), Sartori (Sartori 38) and Leys (Leys 135) stress that psychological factor, thus strategic voting is present in proportional systems as well, which Duverger rejected. Moreover, Duverger's law was deemed (Shugart and Taagepera 31) non-scientific and proposed instead more quantitatively precise model, which follows the idea that electoral system shapes party system.

On the other hand, Colomer (Colomer 15) came up with the "electoral-institutional equilibrium" model, which by 219 election data analysis infer that it is parties that choose electoral rules not vice versa. Although, from my point of view Colomer's arguments are reasonable and political parties in fact choose electoral system, that interaction happens not on the initial stage, rather it's more "rebound" interaction. Both those institutions are mainly defined by external factors, however in frame of perpetual relation between those two, electoral system has primal effect. Hence, I adhere to the first approach. Electoral

system affects party system and other institutions through four main and four secondary components, although the effect in many cases is exaggerated (Lijphart 49). The four main elements are: election formula, district magnitude, assembly size and threshold; while the secondary ones are: ballot structure, district poor distribution, legislative election difference between parliamentary and presidential systems and party lists. For instance, high electoral thresholds are more likely to guarantee party systems with less actors, same implication can be applied to small district magnitude and D'Hondt's electoral formula, which consequently will affect governance in a manner that's discussed above.

As the models and variations of how electoral systems affect party systems are extensive, here will be superficially described only several of them. Given the four aforementioned essential variables can be measured the effective number of parties, which summarize the unequal sized parties into a single number; number of seat-winning parties, number of vote-earning parties and via Seat Product Model it is possible to gauge the party system (Shugart and Taagepera 21).

Another significant concept that reflects relation between electoral system and party system is party system stability. Moreover, party system stability is linked to the regime change as well. The term party system stability combines two variables: party system volatility and party replacement. Party system volatility reflects changes over successive elections in the balance of party support, while party replacement is the extent to which new political formations are successful in drawing electoral support (Birch 57). Party system volatility is well-studied concept. Ascher and Tarrow (Ascher and Tarrow 478) define volatility as "net change of party's aggregate success from election to election", thus they derive the following formula for volatility = $\sum |x_i - x_{i-1}| / n-1$, where x_i is the party's vote percentage in election i and n is the number of elections under consideration. With conceptual base very much the same Pedersen (Pedersen 1977) replaces $n-1$ in the denominator with 2, thus suggesting a simpler way of measuring party system volatility. However, in this paper the following party system volatility formula and definition of party system stability are used: $\sum |c_{i,t+1} - c_{i,t}| / \sum c_{i,t+1} + \sum c_{i,t}$, where V is volatility, $c_{i,t}$ is the vote share of continuous party i at the first election (t) and $c_{i,t+1}$ is the vote share of continuous party i at the second election ($t+1$); party system volatility is the difference over successive elections in the balance of party support, while party replacement is the degree to which new political subjects are successful in drawing electoral support, it is measured by summing the vote shares won by electoral contenders at election $t+1$ that had not contested election t (Birch 58). Directly speaking, the smaller party system volatility and party replacement scores, the more stable party system is, and vice versa. However, it is important to note that even a concept is simple, when calculating in practice several problems arise when parties split, merge, form or leave coalitions, and/or change their names. The definition and formula provided by Birch are more applicable to this research as it is more up to date and was executed for post-communist counties' party systems. Birch (Birch 33) outlines the negative effect of high level of volatility to democratic consolidation, due to a) reduced accountability, b) impeded party institutionalization, c) significantly increased uncertainty, d) high stake of the electoral game, weakening democratic commitment of politicians, however, Birch does not provide proper quantitative analysis to back her assumption.

Conclusion

To sum up this part, it is important to note that both parliamentary and presidential systems have their advantages and disadvantages, which are exhibited regarding the historical path, institutional environment and external factors. Consequently, choice of constitutional design is highly dependent on the aims and

internal/external factors of nation. If nation's top priority is security, as for Armenia, then quick response and decision-making is demanded, with less probability of government inaction due to political instability. To further strengthen governmental system pillars it is required to implement appropriate electoral and party institutions and the schism between aims, factors and institutions can impede state stability and democratic prospects.

WORKS CITED

1. Birch, Sarah. *Electoral systems and political transformation in post-communist Europe*. Springer, New York, 2003.
2. Cheibub, José Antonio. *Presidentialism, parliamentarism, and democracy*. Cambridge University Press, Urbana-Champaign, 2007.
3. Cox, Gary. *Making votes count: strategic coordination in the world's electoral systems*. Cambridge University Press, San Diego, 1997.
4. Dahl, Robert. *On democracy*. Yale University Press, London, 1998.
5. Duverger, Maurice. *Political parties: Their organization and activity in the modern state*. Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1959.
6. Lijphart, Arend, and Don Aitkin. *Electoral systems and party systems: A study of twenty-seven democracies, 1945-1990*. Oxford University Press, San Diego, 1994.
7. Linz, Juan, and Arturo Valenzuel. *The failure of presidential democracy*. Vol. 1. JHU Press, Baltimore, 1994.
8. Przeworski, Adam. *Democracy and the market: Political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge university press, San Diego, 1991.
9. Sartori, Giovanni. *Comparative constitutional engineering: an inquiry into structures, incentives, and outcomes*. NYU Press, New York, 1997.
10. ---. *Political development and political engineering*. Comparative Administration Group, American Society for Public Administration, San Diego, 1967.
11. Shugart, Matthew, and John Carey. *Presidents and assemblies: Constitutional design and electoral dynamics*. Cambridge University Press, San Diego, 1992.
12. Alvarez, Mike, et al. "Classifying political regimes". *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 31 June 1996, pp. 3-36.
13. Ascher, William, and Sidney Tarrow. "The stability of communist electorates: evidence from a longitudinal analysis of French and Italian aggregate data". *American Journal of Political Science*, Aug. 1975, pp. 475-499.
14. Colomer, Josep. "It's parties that choose electoral systems (or, Duverger's laws upside down)". *Political studies*, 53.1, March 2005, pp. 1-21.
15. Herron, Erik, et al. "Terminology and basic rules of electoral systems". *The Oxford handbook of electoral systems*, March 2018, pp. 1-20.
16. Horowitz, Donald. "Presidents vs. parliaments: Comparing democratic systems". *Journal of Democracy*, 1.4, Fall 1990, pp. 73-79.
17. Krouwel, André. "Measuring presidentialism and parliamentarism: An application to Central and East European countries". *Acta politica*, 38.4, December 2003, pp. 333-364.
18. Leys, Colin. "Models, theories, and the theory of political parties". *Political Studies*, 7.2, June 1959, pp. 127-146.
19. Lijphart, Arend, and Markus Crepaz. "Corporatism and consensus democracy in eighteen countries: Conceptual and empirical linkages". *British Journal of political science*, 21.2, April 1991, pp. 235-246.
20. Linz, Juan. "Presidents vs. Parliaments: The Virtues of Parliamentarism". *Journal of Democracy*, 1.4, Fall 1990, pp. 84-91.

21. ---. "The perils of presidentialism". *Journal of democracy*, 1.1, Winter 1990, pp. 51-69.
22. Mainwaring, Scott, and Matthew Shugart. "Juan Linz, presidentialism, and democracy: a critical appraisal". *Comparative Politics*, July 1997, pp. 449-471.
23. Riker, William. "The two-party system and Duverger's law: an essay on the history of political science". *American political science review*, 76.4, December 1982, pp. 753-766.
24. Sartori, Giovanni. "Comparing and miscomparing". *Journal of theoretical politics*, 3.3, July 1991, pp. 243-257.
25. Shugart, Matthew. "Comparative electoral systems research: The maturation of a field and new challenges ahead". *The politics of electoral systems*, September 2005, pp. 25-56.
26. Shugart, Matthew, and Rein Taagepera. "Electoral system effects on party systems". *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems*, March 2018, pp. 1-41.

ԸՆՏՐԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԿԱՐԳԻ ԱՉԴԵՑՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ԿՈՒՍԱԿՑԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԿԱՐԳԻ ՎՐԱ ԵՎ ԿԱՌԱՎԱՐՄԱՆ ՁԵՎԻՑ ԿԱՆՎԱԾ ԸՆՏՐԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԿԱՐԳԻ ՎԱՐՔԱԳԻԾԸ

ՏԻԳՐԱՆ ՄՈՒՂՆԵՑՅԱՆ

*Հայաստանի Հանրապետության պետական կառավարման
ակադեմիայի քաղաքական կառավարման և հանրային
քաղաքականության ամբիոնի ասպիրանտ,
ք. Երևան, Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն*

Սույն հոդվածի նպատակն է ուսումնասիրել քաղաքական ինստիտուտների տեսական հիմքերը, մասնավորապես ընտրական ինստիտուտները և դրանց ազդեցությունը կուսակցական համակարգի վրա: Հոդվածում նաև անդրադարձ է կատարվում ընտրական համակարգի վարքագծին՝ կախված կառավարման ձևից:

Առաջադրված նպատակն իրագործելու համար սահմանվել են ուսումնասիրության խնդիրները, և կիրառվել են դիսկուրս-վերլուծության ու համեմատության մեթոդները: Խնդիր ենք դրել ուսումնասիրելու Լինցի, Լիփսեթի և Հորովիցի կառավարման ձևին առնչվող մոտեցումները, ինչպես նաև քվոմեյոյան և ընտրական համակարգ-կուսակցական համակարգ մոդելները: Աշխատանքում քննարկվում են բոլոր ինստիտուցիոնալ մոդելների առավելություններն ու թերությունները՝ կառավարության ձևավորման ճկունությունից, վարչակարգի ճկունությունից մինչև կուսակցական համակարգի կարգապահություն և ընտրական համակարգի հատկանիշներ:

Այնուհետև աշխատանքում մանրամասնորեն բացահայտվում են ընտրական համակարգն ու դրա ազդեցությունը կուսակցական համակարգի վրա երկու հիմնական հասկացությունների միջոցով՝ «մեխանիկական քվեարկություն» և «հոգեբանական քվեարկություն», որոնք կուսակցական համակարգի վրա ազդեցության երկու գլխավոր գործոններն են: Բացի դրանից՝ ընտրական համակարգի ազդեցությունը կուսակցական համակարգի և վարչակարգի փոփոխության վրա բացահայտվում է «կուսակցական համակարգի կայունություն» հասկացությամբ:

Ամփոփելով ուսումնասիրությունը՝ հանգել ենք այն եզրահանգման, որ քաղաքական ինստիտուտների կարևորությունը կախված է քաղաքական

նպատակադրումից, և որ ինստիտուտների կայունությունը մեծապես հիմնվում է կաճանային կախվածության վրա:

Հիմնաբառեր՝ ընտրական համակարգ, կուսակցական համակարգ, ինստիտուցիոնալ միջավայր, կառավարման ձև, վարչակարգի անկայունություն, կառավարման էֆեկտիվություն, մեխանիկական և հոգեբանական քվեարկություն, կախվածության կաճան:

О ВОЗДЕЙСТВИИ ИЗБИРАТЕЛЬНОЙ СИСТЕМЫ НА ПАРТИЙНУЮ СИСТЕМУ И ЕЕ ЗАВИСИМОСТЬ ОТ ФОРМЫ ПРАВЛЕНИЯ

ТИГРАН МУГНЕЦЯН

*аспирант кафедры политического управления и публичной политики
Академии Государственного Управления РА,
г. Ереван, Республика Армения*

Целью данной статьи является исследование теоретических основ политических институтов, в частности, избирательного института и его влияние на устройство политических партий. Кроме того, в статье изучается институциональное поведение избирательных систем в зависимости от формы правления.

Для этой цели поставлены задачи детального изучения теоретических подходов Линца, Липсета и Горовитца, касающихся форм правлений, а также модели воздействия Коломера и избирательная, партийная система.

Для выполнения указанных задач используются дискурс -анализ и сравнительный метод. Для каждой институциональной модели разбираются их преимущества и недостатки: от гибкости формирования правительства, волатильности политического режима до дисциплины в партийной системе и характеристик избирательной системы. Кроме того, также детально дискутированы избирательные системы и их методы воздействия на партийные системы.

Выделяются две важные категории: механистическое и психологическое голосование как основные факторы, которые влияют на партийную систему. В статье при применении категории стабильности партийной системы, описывается воздействие избирательной системы на партийную систему и смену режима.

В качестве заключения статьи является предположение, что конкретный набор политических институтов уместен для конкретных целей и что устойчивость этих институтов держится от колеи зависимости.

Ключевые слова: *избирательная система, партийная система, институциональная среда, форма правления, нестабильность режима, эффективность управления, механистическое и голосование, эффект колеи.*