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Attributes, Logics, and Reasons for the Choice of Semi-Presidentialism: A Verification and Systematisation on the Example of European Countries*

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the study of the attributes, logics, and reasons for the choice of semi-presidentialism in European countries. The supposition is that the verification and systematisation of the attributes of semi-presidentialism can be both constitutional and political that confirms its both institutional and political nature. Firstly, the article focuses on theoretical, methodological, practical, and empirical tools for the verification and systematisation of the attributes, logics and reasons of semi-presidentialism. Secondly, the article concerns the systematisation of the attributes and cases of semi-presidentialism in Europe. Thirdly, the study addresses the logics, patterns and reasons for the choice, attribution, and development of semi-presidentialism in Europe. It was stated that semi-presidentialism can be distinctively delineated formally (institutionally-procedurally) and actually (politically-behaviourally), even though it is outlined by the common definitional attributes. Thus, European semi-presidentialism is not a homogeneous, but a heterogeneous phenomenon. It remains the most common constitutional type in Europe, even though its attribution, logics and reasons have not created the equilibrium state in European countries. Therefore, the descriptive novelty is that semi-presidentialism is distinctively positioned formally and actually, since despite definition it is characterised by diverse complementary (typological) and temporary (transitive) attributes and reasons for the choice. In turn, the analytical novelty is that semi-presidentialism as the dominant European

* In memory of Maurice Duverger and Robert Elgie, the most prominent researchers of semi-presidentialism.

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model operates quite variably in practice, certifying that its formal side does not always correspond to its actual side.

Keywords: system of government, semi-presidentialism, attributes of semi-presidentialism, logics and reasons for the choice of semi-presidentialism, European countries.

Introduction

The scientific literature agrees that semi-presidentialism is an independent type of systems of governments' typology alongside and in contrast mainly to presidentialism and parliamentarism. Semi-presidentialism is endowed with exceptional or overwhelming institutionally-procedural and politically-behavioural attributes and features, which allow scholars to distinctively systematise it at the background of other systems of government. However, the systematisation of the attributes and features of semi-presidentialism can be both constitutional (legal) and political that accordingly confirms both institutional (formal or constitutional) and political (actual or behavioural) nature of this system of government. To a large extent, it is evident given the variability of the approaches to the conceptualisation of semi-presidentialism, as well as taking into account the descriptive and analytical assumption that it is necessary to understand the institutionally-procedural and politically-behavioural non-equivalence of the essence and cases of semi-presidentialism and consequently the non-equivalence of its institutionally-procedural and politically-behavioural attributes, logics and reasons for the choice. The situation in the countries of Europe (in its geographical sense), among which researchers traditionally single out the largest number of current and historical cases of semi-presidentialism in the world, is hypothetically no exception in this context. Thus, the article is devoted to solving a common, but still unfinished research problem: the distinction, verification and systematisation of formal (institutional, procedural) and actual (political, behavioural) attributes, features, logics and reasons for the choice of semi-presidentialism in the region of Europe. The solution of the research task is not possible without taking into account the previous efforts in this direction, as well as theoretical, methodological, practical and empirical tools in the fields of Constitutional Engineering, Institutional Design and Comparative Political Science, developed over several decades and "waves" of the study of semi-presidentialism.

The first part of the article is devoted to these issues, while in the second part the focus is mainly on the distinction, clarification, verification and systematisation of institutionally-procedural and politically-behavioural attributes and cases of semi-presidentialism in European countries, in particular in the current context (as of 2019) and in historical retrospect. Finally, the third part of the study addresses the issues of the logics, patterns and reasons for the choice, attribution, and development of semi-presidentialism in European countries.

The Approaches to the Definition and Attribution of Semi-Presidentialism: Theoretical and Methodological Contexts

During the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, political scientists from around the world tested and verified at least two crucial theoretical and methodological approaches to the definition and conceptualisation of semi-presidentialism, as well as made several efforts at its distinctive interpretation and positioning. However, even this did not allow to develop a maximally reliable and synthetic instrument that can be successfully applied based on a universalist comparison simultaneously to all countries of the world. The reason is that according to the historically first approach, which is increasingly called classical, maximalist or Duvergerian one (it is represented mainly by Maurice Duverger and his followers, in particular by Horst Bahro, Bernhard Bayerlein and Ernst Veser, Vitalino Canas, Olivier Duhamel, Rafael Martinez, Gianfranco Pasquino, Giovanni Sartori, etc.),¹ semi-presidentialism is mainly considered to be the system of government and the type of inter-institutional relations, according to which the president is elected on the basis of universal suffrage; the president is endowed with considerable powers and is opposed by a prime minister and ministers who have executive powers and can remain in office (i.e. governmental cabinet) only if parliament does not express its disagreement, no confidence or opposition to them.² In contrast, according to the historically second approach, which is often called post-classical, minimalist, post-Duvergerian or Elgieian approach, semi-presidentialism is mainly considered to be the system of government and the structure of inter-institutional relations, which provides both for the position of popularly elected for a fixed term president, as well as the institutions of prime minister and governmental cabinet that are necessarily collectively responsible to

¹ Maurice Duverger, "A New Political System Model: Semi-Presidential Government," *European Journal of Political Research* 8, no. 2 (1980): 166; Maurice Duverger, *Xeque Mate – Análise Comparativa dos Sistemas Políticos Semi-Presidenciais* (Lisboa: Edições Rohm, 1979); Horst Bahro, Bernhard Bayerlein, and Ernst Veser, "Duverger's Concept: Semi-Presidential Government Revisited," *European Journal of Political Research* 34 (1998): 201–24; Vitalino Canas, "The Semi-Presidential System," *ZaöRV* 64 (2004): 95–124; Olivier Duhamel, "Remarques Sur la Notion du Régime Semi-Présidentiel," in *Droit, Institutions et Systèmes Politiques – Mélanges en Hommage à Maurice Duverger*, eds. Dominique Colas and Claude Emeri (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1988), 581–90; Rafael Martinez, "Semi-Presidentialism: A Comparative Study," *Paper presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions* (Mannheim, March 26–31, 1999); Gianfranco Pasquino, "Semi-Presidentialism: A Political Model at Work," *European Journal of Political Research* 31, no. 1 (1997): 128–46; Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes* (London: Macmillan, 1997).

² Maurice Duverger, *Échec au roi* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1978), 17, 28.

parliament.³ Several researchers support this approach: Robert Elgie and his followers, in particular Octavio Amorim Neto and Kaare Strøm, José Antonio Cheibub, Zachary Elkins and Tom Ginsburg, Sean Müller, David Samuels and Matthew Søberg Shugart, Petra Schleiter and Edward Morgan-Jones, Cindy Skach, etc.⁴

However, both approaches to the definition of semi-presidentialism are characterised mutually by strengths and weaknesses. Since responding to the definitive essence of semi-presidentialism, they are extremely diverse and therefore cannot be reduced to a single model and common denominator, but instead need to be elaborated. In particular, the classical or Duvergerian definition of semi-presidentialism tends mainly to focus on political practice, while the post-classical, post-Duvergerian or Elgieian definition concerns mostly the constitutionalised principles of law. Accordingly, especially based on the essence of systems of government, it is expedient to synthesise and complement the latter. Thus, Political Science theorists still (although to a lesser extent than earlier) feel the need for the theoretical and methodological refinement or improvement of the definition of semi-presidentialism, and therefore for the practical and empirical verification and systematisation of institutionally-procedural and politically-behavioural attributes of semi-presidentialism on the example of certain real cases, in particular in what concerns examples of European countries.

³ Robert Elgie, "Semi-Presidentialism: An Increasingly Common Constitutional Choice," in *Semi-Presidentialism and Democracy*, (eds.) Robert Elgie, Sophia Moestrup S., and Wu Yu-Shan (New York: Springer, 2011), 1–20; Robert Elgie, "The Classification of Democratic Regime Types: Conceptual Ambiguity and Contestable Assumptions," *European Journal of Political Research* 33, no. 2 (1998): 224; Elgie, "The Politics of Semi-Presidentialism," 13; Elgie, "Variations on a Theme," 13.

⁴ Robert Elgie, "The Politics of Semi-Presidentialism," in *Semi-Presidentialism in Europe*, ed. Robert Elgie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1–21; Robert Elgie, "Variations on a Theme: A Fresh Look at Semi-Presidentialism," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 3 (2005): 1–21; Octavio Amorim Neto and Kaare Strøm, "Breaking the Parliamentary Chain of Delegation: Presidents and Non-Partisan Cabinet Members in European Democracies," *British Journal of Political Science* 36, no. 4 (2006): 619–43; José Antonio Cheibub, Zachary Elkins, and Tom Ginsburg, "Beyond Presidentialism and Parliamentarism," *British Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 3 (2014): 515–44; José Antonio Cheibub, *Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Sean Müller, *Presidential Power in Semi-Presidential Systems: The Case of Romania* (PhD diss., Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Freiburg, 2006); David Samuels and Matthew Søberg Shugart, *Presidents, Parties, and Premiers. How the Separation of Powers Affects Party Organization and Behaviour* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Matthew Søberg Shugart, "Semi-Presidential Systems: Dual Executive and Mixed Authority Patterns," *French Politics* 3, no. 3 (2005): 323–51; Petra Schleiter and Edward Morgan-Jones, "Citizens, Presidents and Assemblies: The study of Semi-Presidentialism Beyond Duverger and Linz," *British Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 4 (2009): 871–92; Petra Schleiter and Edward Morgan-Jones, "Party Government in Europe? Parliamentary and Semi-Presidential Democracies Compared," *European Journal of Political Research* 48, no. 5 (2009): 665–93; Cindy Skach, *Borrowing Constitutional Design: Constitutional Law in Weimar Germany and the French Fifth Republic* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

From the point of view of the theoretical and methodological refinement or improvement of the definition of semi-presidentialism, it is obvious that the imposition or synthesis of conceptually distinctive meanings and approaches makes it possible to develop the definition of semi-presidentialism (as opposed to presidentialism and parliamentarism) as a system of government, which must include three separate attributes. The first characteristic is the existence of the institution/position of president, whether individual or collective one, but necessarily as the head of state, although possible both as the head of state and the head of the executive, that gains powers for a fixed term based on direct or indirect popular (not in parliament) election and is not responsible to legislature. A second attribute of semi-presidentialism is the presence of the institutions/positions of prime minister not necessarily as the head of the executive and governmental cabinet that do not obtain powers for a fixed term based on direct or indirect popular (not in parliament) elections, but are necessarily collectively responsible on the basis of votes of confidence and/or no confidence at least to the legislature, but possibly both to the legislature and the president. In the third place, these political systems see the combination/dualisation of the executive, on the one hand, by the president as the head of state and, on the other hand, by the prime minister heading a governmental cabinet.⁵ Such a definition of semi-presidentialism is largely proposed on the basis of a synthesis of existing scientific achievements by Elgie and Sartori.⁶ At the same time, all the definitive attributes and features of semi-presidentialism are dispositional and objectified in this context, and the definition of semi-presidentialism as a whole is more minimalist than maximalist.

Meanwhile, while synthesising and systematising the attributes and features of semi-presidentialism, derived from its maximalist (classical) and minimalist (post-classical) definitions and approaches, in particular based on the researches by Cheibub, Elkins, Ginsburg, Jennifer Gandhi and James Raymond Vreeland, Elgie, John Gerring, Strom Thacker and Carola Moreno, Arendt Lijphart, Kenneth Newton, Sartori, Douglas Verney, etc.,⁷ we reduce them to

⁵ Vitaliy Lytvyn, "Categorization and Systematization of Institutionally-Procedural and Politically-Behavioral Attributes and Features of Semi-Presidentialism: Theoretical and Methodological Cut," *Studium Europy Srodkowej i Wschodniej* 10 (2018): 158–79; Vitaliy Lytvyn, "Do Otsiniuvannia Klasychnykh i Postklasychnykh ta Formulivannia Onovlenoho i Syntetychnoho Vyznachen Napivprezydentalizmu" [Towards the Evaluation of Classical and Post-Classical and Formulating Updated and Synthetic Definitions of Semi-Presidentialism], *Epistemolohichni doslidzhennia v filosofii, sotsialnykh i politychnykh naukakh* 3 (2016): 30–46.

⁶ Elgie, "The Politics of Semi-Presidentialism," 13; Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering*, 131.

⁷ Cheibub, Elkins, and Ginsburg, "Beyond Presidentialism and Parliamentarism," 515–44; José Antonio Cheibub, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Raymond Vreeland, "Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited," *Public Choice* 143 (2010): 67–101; Elgie, "The Politics of Semi-Presidentialism," 1–21; John Gerring, Strom Thacker, and Carola Moreno, "Are Parliamentary Systems Better," *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no. 3 (2009): 327–59; Arendt Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-*

a common “uncontroversial” denominator, which covers definitional (constant), as well as complementary (typological) and temporary (transitive) attributes. The main definitional and constant attributes of semi-presidentialism, as mentioned above, are the following features of this system of government: the popular election of president for a fixed term; the obligatory collective responsibility of prime minister and governmental cabinet to the legislature; the combination/dualisation of the executive by president as the head of state and prime minister as the head of governmental cabinet. These attributes are stable and unambiguous and verify the presence or absence of the formal (institutionally-procedural) semi-presidential nature of a particular system of government. Instead, complementary, temporary and transitive attributes of semi-presidentialism are variational and optional ones, and therefore their use contributes to the identification of the actual (politically-behavioural) nature of semi-presidentialism, as well as to increase the quality of its typology. These attributes based on various indicators should be divided into the groups: related to the formation, functioning and dismissal of governmental cabinets; related to the activities of presidents and parliaments; based on legislative, functional, prescriptive, terminal and other features of inter-institutional relations. Thus, such a theoretical, methodological and operational logics of the definition and attribution of semi-presidentialism satisfies the observations by Cheibub, Elkins and Ginsburg,⁸ according to which there are two sets of features of this system of government. The first (permanent or definitive) set of features determines whether a certain system of government is institutionally and procedurally a semi-presidential system. Instead, the second (temporal or transitive) set of features complementary and typologically outlines the institutional, procedural, political, and behavioural attributes of semi-presidentialism.

The Verification and Systematisation of the Attributes and Cases of Semi-Presidentialism: Practical and Empirical Contexts of European Countries

The application of the first set of features of systems of government makes it possible, at least as of December 2019 and in chronological order from the oldest to the newest ones, to institutionally and procedurally identify as such the existing cases of semi-presidentialism in Europe. The years in parentheses refer

Six Countries (Yale University Press, 1999); Kenneth Newton, *Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering*; Douglas Verney, “Parliamentary Government and Presidential Government,” in *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government*, ed. Arendt Lijphart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 31–47.

⁸ Cheibub, Elkins, and Ginsburg, “Beyond Presidentialism and Parliamentarism,” 515–44.

to the years of adoption of semi-presidential constitutions, the years of adoption of amendments to semi-presidential constitutions or the years of the annulment of the previous versions of semi-presidential constitutions. The European semi-presidential countries are: Finland (1919/1999), Ireland (1937), Iceland (1944), Austria (1945), France (1962), Portugal (1976/1982), Poland (1990/1992/1997), Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania and Slovenia (1991), Croatia (1991/2000), Lithuania (1992), Russia (1993), Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995), Belarus (1996) and Ukraine (1996/2006/2010/2014), Slovakia (1999), Georgia (2004/2013/2017),⁹ Serbia (2006), Montenegro (2006/2007), the Czech Republic (2012) and Moldova (2016) (see Table 1).

At the same time, it is obvious that the application of the first set of features of systems of government, as well as taking into account the ideas of Duverger, Elgie, Acir Almeida and Seok-Ju Cho, Shugart, Müller and Cheibub make it possible to identify,¹⁰ at least as of December 2019 and in chronological order, several historical (not replicate at the time of analysis) cases of European semi-presidentialism. The examples include the Weimar Republic in Germany (1919–1933), the regime in Austria (1929–1933), Moldova (1994–2001), Yugoslavia (2000–2003), Armenia (1995/2005–2018) and Turkey (2007–2018) (see also Table 1).

As we can see, the initialisation and spread of European semi-presidentialism starting from its historically first cases in Finland and the Weimar Republic were non-linear. From the very beginning, especially in the first half of the twentieth century (i.e. before the World War II), there were only four cases of European semi-presidentialism. Later, from the end of the Second World War and until the beginning of the “third wave” of democratisation, there were six cases of European semi-presidentialism. Finally, since the beginning of the “third wave” of democratisation and as of December 2019, there were 24 up-to-date cases and several historical examples of semi-presidentialism in Europe. Accordingly, it is expedient to distinguish three temporal and non-geographical “waves” of the spread of European semi-presidentialism, which correspond to the nonlinearity of its historical development, but to the linearity of the development of European civilisation. The first wave was seen before the World War II, the second one after the beginning of the World War II and before the beginning of the “third wave” of democratisation and the third one from the beginning of the “third

⁹ In 2017, the constitution of Georgia was amended, and starting 2024 the country should become a parliamentary republic with a President elected by the Parliament.

¹⁰ Maurice Duverger, *Institutions Politiques et Droit Constitutionnel* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), 116; Duverger, *Xeque Mate*, 89–90.; Duverger, “A New Political System Model,” 177–78; Robert Elgie, ed., *Semi-Presidentialism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Acir Almeida, Seok-Ju Cho, “Presidential Power and Cabinet Membership Under Semi-Presidentialism,” *Paper Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting* (Chicago, April 3–6, 2003); Shugart, “Semi-Presidential Systems,” 332; Müller, *Presidential Power in Semi-Presidential Systems*; Cheibub, *Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy*.

wave” of democratisation. Moreover, as Wu Yu-Shan¹¹ notes, it is appropriate to single out two temporal and geographical “waves” of the spread of European semi-presidentialism: the first so-called gradual “wave” was mostly represented by Western European countries including Scandinavian ones during the 1910s and 1970s; the second so-called mass “wave” has mainly become the characteristic of the countries of Southern, Central and Eastern Europe since the 1970s, but mainly the 1990s.

It is much more interesting to consider that the various semi-presidential countries of Europe are heterogeneous in their political regimes, because among them, at least as of 2019 or historically (see Table 2 for details), there were different types of cases that should be described. The examples include: complete (full) liberal democracies (Austria, Czechia, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal and Slovenia); incomplete liberal democracies (Croatia, Poland and Slovakia); electoral or minimal democracies (Bulgaria, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine, as well as Yugoslavia during its existence); competitive or minimal autocracies (Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as historically Armenia and Turkey); and non-competitive or full autocracies (Azerbaijan, Belarus and Russia).

This conclusion results of the most similar results of various analytical methods and indexes, in particular the “Freedom in the World” project by “Freedom House”, “Polity 4” project by “Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research”, the Vanhanen’s index of democratisation, the democracy index by “The Economist Intelligence Unit” and the “V-Dem” project by “The V-Dem Institute.” This article does not propose a specialized mechanism for aggregating data from different indices of political regimes, but instead appeals to outlining the identical or similar positioning of certain countries in the linear spectrum of political regimes from democracies to autocracies ones, or their substantive or project synonyms and adjectives, in particular according to the methods of each of the projects. This is a rather relational approach, but it does not deny the similarity of the positioning of the political regimes of certain countries in different projects. Moreover, we do not rank countries by specific index or quantitative data, but instead take into account the positioning of countries within the whole ranges/groups of index or quantitative data within different projects. On the one hand, this argues that semi-presidentialism has more often at least than earlier begun to be the choice of new and mainly existing constitutions of both democratic, hybrid and autocratic political regimes. On the other hand, this proves that dictators/autocrats and political actors in general have increasingly and especially since the 1990s begun to consider the choice of semi-presidentialism among

¹¹ Yu-Shan Wu, “Clustering of Semi-Presidentialism: A First Cut,” in *Semi-Presidentialism and Democracy*, eds. Robert Elgie, Sophia Moestrup S., and Wu Yu-Shan (New York: Springer, 2011), 21–41.

other systems of government, in particular as a constitutional (institutionally-procedural) and political (politically-behavioral) type of inter-institutional relations, which is a fairly effective tool for the prolongation of the “political life” of the ruling elite.¹²

Accordingly, it is quite clear that the spread of semi-presidentialism in European democratic, hybrid and autocratic political regimes shows not only an unquenchable interest in this system of government, but also the fact that semi-presidentialism, according to Shugart,¹³ is probably the type of system of government whose time has come, and, according to Anna Fruhstorfer, Samuels and Shugart, the option of institutionally-procedural and politically-behavioral choice of the best of the two worlds.¹⁴ Although, on the other hand, the choice of semi-presidentialism in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century is no longer the same common practice as before.¹⁵ This is largely due to the desire of political actors to preserve the established and institutionalized systems of inter-institutional relations in different countries, and therefore the choice in favor of semi-presidentialism in some of them is often just an attempt to democratically veil the prospects for autocratization.¹⁶ Consequently, there is a direct link between the need for democratization and the number of countries choosing semi-presidentialism as their system of government. In general, this necessitates the study of European semi-presidentialism beginning with the end of the World War II and from the second half of the twentieth century. Especially at the background that the early cases of European semi-presidentialism are not relevant today, and therefore they do not correspond to the historical, political and institutionally-procedural features of the development of European countries

¹² Masako Shimizu, “Comparative Executive-Legislative Relations under Authoritarianism: Focusing on the Choices and Practices of Semi-Presidentialism,” *AGLOS: Journal of Area-based Global Studies* 7 (2016): 1–49.

¹³ Shugart, “Semi-Presidential Systems,” 344.

¹⁴ Anna Fruhstorfer, “Recent Debates and Advances in the Scholarly Examination of Presidential Institutions,” *French Politics* 14, no. 2 (2016): 254–71; David Samuels and Matthew Søberg Shugart, *Presidents, Parties, and Prime Ministers: How the Separation of Powers Affects Party Organization and Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 257.

¹⁵ Robert Elgie, Sophia Moestrup, and Wu Yu-Shan, “Semi-Presidentialism: What Have We Learned?,” in *Semi-Presidentialism and Democracy*, eds. Robert Elgie, Sophia Moestrup S., and Wu Yu-Shan (New York: Springer, 2011), 264–74.

¹⁶ Vitaliy Lytvyn, “Kontsepty “Defektnoi” ta “Vbudovanoi” Demokratii: Definitsiia ta Heneralizatsiia” [Concepts of “Defective” and “Embedded” Democracies: Definition and Generalization.] *Naukovi Zapysky Instytutu Politychnykh i Etnonatsionalnykh Doslidzhen im. I. F. Kurasa NAN Ukrainy* 6, no. 62 (2012): 68–90; Vitaliy Lytvyn, “Kontsepty Defektnoi ta Vbudovanoi Demokratii u Suchasni Porivnialni Politolohii” [Concepts of Defective and Embedded Democracy in Contemporary Comparative Politics.] *Visnyk Dnipropetrovskoho Universytetu: Filozofia, Sotsiologhii, Politolohii* 20, no. 22/3 (2012): 200–06; Vitaliy Lytvyn, “Effektivnost i Kachestvo Demokratii v Sravnitelnoi Polytolohii: Defynityvnie i Kontseptualnie Parametry Analiza” [Efficiency and Quality of Democracy in Comparative Politics: Definitive and Conceptual Options of Analysis.] *Świat Idei i Polityki* 14 (2015): 110–32.

after the end of the World War II or the collapse of the USSR/the “Warsaw Pact” and from the beginning of the “third wave” of democratization.¹⁷ That is why the historical and current cases of European semi-presidentialism are subjected to distinction on the basis of the first (permanent or definitive) set of attributes, but only current cases of European semi-presidentialism can be tested for the second (temporary or transitive) set of features.

The Logics, Patterns and Reasons for the Choice, Attribution and Development of Semi-Presidentialism in European Countries

All of the above-mentioned is extremely important given the fact that the separation and systematization of temporary/transitive institutionally-procedural and politically-behavioral attributes and features of semi-presidentialism and hence its typology are determined by a clarification of the logics and causality of the choice of semi-presidentialism as both the constitutional and political type of inter-institutional relations in European countries. It is including significant inter-institutional processes that regulate the methods of elections and powers of presidents, the structure and nature of the legitimacy of the executive, the formation and responsibility of governmental cabinets and the opportunities for dissolution of legislatures. At the same time, the choice of semi-presidentialism is only an empirical side of the analytical model, since its theoretical and methodological sides are caused by the parameters of the selection of the constitutional type as such one.¹⁸

Therefore, the researcher notes that the choice of semi-presidentialism necessarily as a constitutional system of government can occur in particular in two distinct forms. In the first place, an initial or new introduction and implementation when semi-presidentialism is perceived as the first/initial form of a constitutionally determined (as a result of the adoption of a new constitution) system of inter-institutional relations in the triangle “the head of state – governmental cabinet – parliament”, at least after the collapses of political regimes or restoration/establishment of the independence of certain states. The cases when this happened include, in particular, the examples of Austria since 1945, Azerbaijan since 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1995, Bulgaria since 1991, Croatia in 1991–2000, Finland in 1919–1999 and since 1999, Iceland since 1944, Ireland since 1937, Lithuania since 1992, Macedonia since 1991, Montenegro in 2006–2007 and since 2007, Poland in 1992–1997 and since

¹⁷ Robert Elgie, “Duverger, Semi-presidentialism and the Supposed French Archetype,” *West European Politics* 32, no. 2 (2009): 248–67; Robert Elgie, ed. *Semi-Presidentialism: Sub-Types and Democratic Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 24.

¹⁸ Elgie, “Semi-Presidentialism,” 12.

1997, Portugal in 1976–1982, Romania since 1991, Serbia since 2006, Slovenia since 1991, Ukraine in 1996–2006 and the Weimar Republic in 1919–1933, etc. A second aspect involves a reformation (restructuring) introduction and implementation (secondary or additional choice), when semi-presidentialism is actualised as a change of the previously established or regulated system of inter-institutional relations (in particular, semi-presidential one), including after the collapses of political regimes, but without the adoption of new constitutions of certain countries. The cases when this happened include, in particular, the examples of Armenia in 2005–2018, Austria in 1929–1933, Belarus since 1996, Croatia since 2000, the Czech Republic since 2012, France since 1962, Georgia in 2004–2013, 2013–2017 and since 2017, Moldova since 2016, Poland in 1990–1992, Portugal since 1982, Slovakia since 1999, Turkey in 2007–2018, Ukraine in 2006–2010, 2010–2014 and since 2014, Yugoslavia in 2000–2003, etc.¹⁹ At the same time, as political practice shows, such a dichotomy of the logics and reasons for the choice of semi-presidentialism should be empirically (albeit seldom) supplemented by the scenario of the expected introduction of the analysed system of government immediately after the collapses of political regimes and/or restoration/establishment of the independence of certain countries, but before the adoption of their new constitutions, although with the further implementation of semi-presidentialism in the basic laws (in particular in the cases of Armenia in 1995–2005 and earlier, Moldova in 1994–2001 and earlier, Russia before and since 1993, etc.) (see Table 2 for details).

This certainly means that the legal basis for the selection, approbation, and verification of semi-presidentialism, including in European countries, can be outlined in different ways. In particular, the choice and/or termination of semi-presidentialism (primarily as a formal, constitutional and institutionally-procedural type) is traditionally evidenced by the adoption of the relevant new constitutions or the amendments to the existing basic laws.²⁰ The same can be said about the initiation or termination of semi-presidentialism on the basis of pre-constitutional acts (laws or amendments to the existing constitutions) in the countries that are currently being transformed (especially at one time in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe).²¹ However, the difference between such cases is that the operationalisation of semi-presidentialism is mostly actual and takes place immediately after gaining or restoring the independence of certain countries, when the institutions of popularly elected presidents are usually co-opted into the previous systems of government, in particular, if we continue the example of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, into parliamentary, quasi-parliamentary or parliamentary-like ones. This generates the conclusion that semi-presidentialism

¹⁹ Elgie, “Semi-Presidentialism,” 12–15.

²⁰ Elgie, “Semi-Presidentialism,” 1–20.

²¹ Levent Gonenc, *Prospects For Constitutionalism in Post-Communist Countries* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2002), 270–76.

in this context can be considered even before the first (transformational) popular presidential and parliamentary elections, but provided that the analysed system of inter-institutional relations will be (or has already been) enshrined in the constitution. In addition, the choice and/or termination of semi-presidentialism can also be interpreted by the de facto termination of constitutions due to military coups and so on.

In the theoretical and methodological context of the study of the logics and reasons for the choice of semi-presidentialism, it is important to take into account Duverger's remark that the preconditions for the implementation of the analysed system of government greatly help to explain the impact of separate/individual political institutions and inter-institutional relations within a certain political system. The reason is that it is extremely important to clarify the features of the combination of traditions and circumstances that affect the evolution of semi-presidential system of government, because they play an important role not only at the time of drafting national constitutions, but also in the early years of their operationalization and verification.²² This leads us to argue that the founding (constituent) conditions of inter-institutional relations (or the so-called "path-dependency trajectory") are the crucial reasons for how political relations will function in the future within a specific, in particular semi-presidential one, constitutional and political type. From the theoretical and methodological point of view, this is due to the fact that political institutions (although sometimes both exogenously and endogenously) influence individual and collective political behavior and vice versa.²³ Accordingly, political institutions can be at the same time both an independent variable, i.e., the result of many decisions of political actors, as well as a dependent variable, i.e., the factor influencing the decisions made by political actors. In the context of the study of semi-presidentialism, this is manifested in the fact that the institutional component and attributes are more important only when the degree of dependence of the actual operationalization of political system on institutionally-procedural motivation to choose the system of government increases (in contrast to the situations of the influence of external factors, non-acquaintance of political actors and manifestations of anarchism on the choice of semi-presidentialism). According to Stacey and Choudhry,²⁴ this means that the historical prejudice towards a certain system of government can lead to increased support for this system of government, at least compared to any other one.

²² Elgie, "Duverger, Semi-presidentialism and the Supposed French Archetype," 248–67.

²³ Robert Elgie and Sophia Moestrup, "The Choice of Semi-Presidentialism and Its Consequences," in *Semi-Presidentialism Outside Europe: A Comparative Study*, eds. Robert Elgie and Sophia Moestrup (London: Routledge, 2007), 237–48.

²⁴ Richard Stacey and Sujit Choudhry, *Semi-Presidential Government in the Post-Authoritarian Context* (New York: The Center for Constitutional Transitions at NYU Law, 2014).

A clear reflection of the stated explanation can be seen in the example of Croatia, where semi-presidentialism was implemented in the context of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and causing the conflict situation in this regard. The reason is that there was a new strong party, i.e., the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), which had a sufficient majority in the legislature and the figure of a strong political leader such as Franjo Tuđman at the time of gaining independence. Consequently, the introduction of the institution of a popularly elected president was an option to legitimize party dominance and political leadership. Therefore, it is not surprising that Croatia, at least in the early years after the declaration of its independence, chose semi-presidential system of inter-institutional relations with the institution of a strong president.

In contrast, in Slovenia, which also emerged from the former Yugoslavia, the threat of a conflict situation was overcome almost immediately, and therefore president Milan Kučan was a fairly popular figure and was considered the main contender during the next presidential election. However, the presidential/pro-presidential party (the Social Democrats, SD) did not have a sufficient majority and influence in the legislature, and instead all the other parties and electoral coalitions were afraid to constitutionalize the significant powers of the head of state, in particular being confident of the defeat of their presidential candidates. As a result, Slovenia has implemented a semi-presidential system of government with a position of a nominal president.²⁵

A similar situation once occurred in France, where a parliamentary system of government was intentionally institutionalized in 1958.²⁶ However, the figure of the president Charles de Gaulle, who was active in defense and foreign policy, as well as in domestic reforms, and who appointed loyal prime ministers, prompted him to use his extraordinary powers in April–September 1961. Moreover, in October 1962 before the referendum on the institution of a popularly elected president, de Gaulle dissolved the National Assembly (the lower house of the bicameral French parliament), which did not support the prime minister and governmental cabinet in the vote of confidence initiated by the latter. This means that even before 1962 the head of state was the main political “veto player” in France. In turn, in 1962, when France became a semi-presidential republic, such a political or politically-behavioral practice was enshrined constitutionally – institutionally and procedurally. In view of this, it is clear that semi-presidentialism in France proved to be a tool for institutionalizing the primacy of the presidency over the entire political system in the future.

In the statistical context of the founding (constituent) conditions of inter-institutional relations, it is noticeable that semi-presidentialism in European

²⁵ Elgie, “Duverger, Semi-presidentialism and the Supposed French Archetype,” 248–67.

²⁶ Robert Elgie, “Semi-Presidentialism in Western Europe,” in *Semi-Presidentialism and Democracy*, eds. Robert Elgie, Sophia Moestrup S., and Wu Yu-Shan (New York: Springer, 2011), 81–97.

countries is usually implemented within the framework of an integral constitutional package and much less often within the framework of constitutional amendments. In addition, semi-presidentialism is often an attempt to respond to the need for socio-economic liberalization and modernization, socio-political democratization and state-building. However, the founding context or the conditions of inter-institutional relations within semi-presidentialism is an over-comprehensive concept that covers many variables, including political, party, economic, exogenous, or situational ones. On the one hand, this means that the constituent context of inter-institutional relations in the triangle “the head of state – governmental cabinet – parliament” cannot serve as a full-fledged and completely self-sufficient explanatory variable of semi-presidentialism. On the other hand, this suggests that the choice of semi-presidentialism can be explained by many reasons.

Accordingly, the imposition of theoretical, methodological and regulatory features, ways and predictors of the choice of different systems of government on the political practice of European countries makes it possible to identify and highlight various causes of semi-presidentialism.²⁷ In the first place, there were the attempts, including on the part of political elites, to reach a compromise between the supporters of presidentialism and parliamentarism, in particular on the introduction of the institution of popular presidential election such as during the transition to democracy in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Ukraine, etc. In a second place, there was the confirmation of the mandate of democracy, in particular through the prism of the introduction of the institution of popularly elected president after gaining or restoring the independence or during political transformations (for example, in Iceland, Ireland and Portugal). Thirdly, there was the pretending to appeal to the mandate of democracy, in particular through the prism of the desire of influential political leaders or dictators to stay in power as in Belarus. Fourthly, there was the appeal to a new/modified constitutional model of inter-institutional relations in order to streamline the

²⁷ Elgie, “Semi-Presidentialism,” 12–15; Elgie, “Semi-Presidentialism in Western Europe,” 81–97; Robert Elgie and Sophia Moestrup, eds., *Semi-presidentialism in Central and Eastern Europe* (Manchester University Press, 2008); Robert Elgie, “Semi-Presidentialism and Comparative Institutional Engineering,” in *Semi-Presidentialism in Europe*, ed. Robert Elgie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 281–99; François Frison-Roche, “Semi-Presidentialism in a Post-Communist Context,” in *Semi-Presidentialism Outside Europe: A Comparative Study*, eds. Robert Elgie and Sophia Moestrup (London: Routledge, 2007), 56–77; Vitaliy Lytvyn, “Rehionalni Osoblyvosti Teoretyzatsii i Vyboru Napivprezidentskoi Systemy Derzhavnoho Pravlinnia v Krainakh Tsentralno-Skhidnoi Yevropy” [Regional Features of Semi-Presidential System of Government’s Theorizing and Choice in Central and Eastern European Countries,] *Mizhnarodna Naukovo-Praktychna Konferentsiia “Rehionalna Polityka ta Administratyvna Reforma v Ukraini: Uroky Yevropeiskoho Dosvidu Vprovadzhenia i Realizatsii”* [International Scientific and Practical Conference “Regional Policy and Administrative Reform in Ukraine: Lessons from the European Experience of Implementation and Realization”] (Uzhhorod, December 14–15, 2016).

executive in the conditions of political instability (for example, in France, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Turkey, etc.). In a fifth place, there was the idea of balancing the powers of strong and popularly elected president by introducing the institutions of prime minister and governmental cabinet responsible to parliament (as in Belarus, Georgia, partly Azerbaijan). In a sixth place, there was the desire to implement the institution of nominal, but popularly elected president as opposed to the idea of a strong president as a risk factor for the collapse of democracy and autocratization of political regime as in Austria or to mark a symbolic break with colonial history as in Iceland and Ireland. Seventhly, there was the idea of introducing the institution of weak (nominal) or strong (all-powerful), but popularly elected president as a consequence of political elites' – the former or new system majority – understanding, respectively, their inability (Bulgaria and Slovenia) or ability (Croatia and Romania) to win democratic/regular elections. In an eighth place, there was an understanding of the need to introduce the institution of weak (the Czech Republic, Iceland, Ireland, Macedonia and Slovakia) or strong (formerly Finland) popularly elected president as a legacy of the modified historical tradition of the previous political regimes. Finally, there was the introduction of the institution of popularly elected president to simplify its election or to strengthen its powers (the Czech Republic, France, Moldova and Slovakia, partly Azerbaijan) (see Table 2 for details).

Summarizing the consideration of the reasons for the choice of semi-presidentialism in European countries, we appeal to Yu-Shan's remark that there are certain geographical and temporal trends in the institutional choice of such a system of government.²⁸ In particular, semi-presidentialism in the consolidated democracies of Western Europe has often been an option for systematizing inter-institutional relations in the context and as a result of confronting political crises after some experience of verification and testing parliamentarism or presidentialism (for example, in Austria, Finland, France, Portugal and the Weimar Republic),²⁹ as well as an option of confirming national sovereignty (for example, in Iceland and Ireland).

Therefore, semi-presidentialism in this case is positioned as a situational change, which does not have a well-established nature and structured basis. In contrast, the choice in favour of semi-presidentialism in the post-communist/post-Soviet countries of Southern, Central and Eastern Europe was or still is associated with the established practice of a kind of dual powers (diarchy) of

²⁸ Yu-Shan, "Clustering of Semi-Presidentialism," 24–29.

²⁹ Elgie, Moestrup, and Yu-Shan, "Semi-Presidentialism," 264–74; Elgie, "Semi-Presidentialism and Comparative Institutional Engineering," 281–99; Elgie, "Semi-Presidentialism in Western Europe," 81–97.

communist political systems,³⁰ in particular with the confrontation between the general secretaries (as if presidents) and prime ministers responsible to legislatures.

Thus, the choice of semi-presidentialism in this case is positioned as a “middle path” between presidentialism and parliamentarism. In this context, the choice of semi-presidentialism was often a simple “calculation” by the representatives of political elites who were merely trying to maximize their interests and dividends. It also happened that some European countries especially during post-communism simply followed the other institutional cases, which implemented and tested semi-presidential system of government very often. At the same time, it is quite reasonable to understand that the listed trends in the choice of semi-presidentialism were quite often not systemic, but only situational ones. Moreover, they could and do appear not only in the regions “assigned” to them, but also in other political practices. In particular, if we consider the reasons for the introduction of semi-presidentialism in Czechia, then it is obvious that they are more similar to the reasons for the introduction of semi-presidentialism in Western Europe rather than in Central and Eastern Europe.

On the other hand, the patterns of the choice of semi-presidentialism significantly influence its support and verification in practice. For example, semi-presidentialism in the consolidated and semi-consolidated democracies is primarily understood through the prism of responsibility and accountability of governmental cabinets to legislatures as a fundamental principle of the constitutional order and inter-institutional relations necessary for the implementation and realization of democracy. This is especially true mainly for the countries in Western Europe, which have tested the long experience of parliamentarism before the introduction of semi-presidentialism. That is why the institution of the president in such countries is traditionally positioned as an instrument of exercising powers only in the conditions of extreme necessity, in particular in the conditions of “parliamentary failure”, or much less often when the head of state is the leader of a party/coalition that has the majority in the legislature and forms a governmental cabinet.³¹ Instead, semi-presidentialism in the consolidated and semi-consolidated or competitive autocracies and in most hybrid political regimes is commonly understood through the prism of governmental cabinet control and responsibility to the president or through the prism of the limitation of the powers of president by the legislature. This is especially true for the former “party states” mainly in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, which chose semi-presidentialism as a way to eliminate the tested or hypothetical imbalances of presidentialism after gaining their independence, even though semi-presidentialism is characterized by the

³⁰ Jean Blondel, “Dual Leadership in the Contemporary World: A Step Towards Executive and Regime Stability,” in *Comparative Government and Politics*, eds. Dennis Kavanagh, Samuel Edward Finer, Gillian Peele (Boulder Co: Westview Press, 1984), 162–72.

³¹ Yu-Shan, “Clustering of Semi-Presidentialism,” 24–29.

dualism of the executive. Due to this and the peculiarities of the historical heritage, presidents in such countries, including due to the significant influence of the culture of “politics of strong personalities”, have to varying degrees been the successors of the omnipotent general secretaries, and parliaments have been positioned as secondary or supplementary political actors.³²

In this context, a special generalization is needed to clarify the reasons for the introduction and verification of semi-presidentialism during the third stage of its spread in European countries, in particular after the beginning of the “third wave” of democratization. Mainly regardless of the regions, the reasons for the choice of semi-presidentialism in this perspective traditionally corresponded to the task of adopting new or updating existing constitutions of certain countries along the way and in accordance with the requirements of their democratization (usually) or autocratization (much less), but in general of their transformations and modernizations. However, such a reason for the choice of semi-presidentialism always hides and formalizes, but does not always unravel the motive to define inter-institutional process as the most democratic one. Accordingly, the fact that the president within the framework of semi-presidentialism is elected popularly and the governmental cabinet is necessarily collectively responsible to a popularly elected legislature even by the definition generates a public perception (in the way of determining the legitimacy of power) of a certain political regime as maximally democratic and legitimate one. Although this is not always true in practice. At the same time, this means that the choice in favor of semi-presidentialism is more than just a consequence of public pressure, but also a consequence of the taking into account by political elites of the internal inter-institutional risks and benefits. That is why, as political practice shows,³³ the choice of semi-presidentialism can be agreed with the stable or unstable desire of political elites to strengthen the mandate of the monocentric/monocratic executive and create the conditions for strong monocentric/monocratic leadership (in Azerbaijan, Belarus and Russia, as well as Croatia and Georgia earlier, etc.). On the other hand, the choice of semi-presidentialism can be agreed to strengthen the mandate of the collective executive and create the conditions for weakening monocentric/monocratic leadership (as in Bulgaria, Czechia, Slovenia, etc.) or to synthesize and balance the mandates of the monocentric/monocratic leadership and the collective executive and, accordingly, the two scenarios proposed above (as in Lithuania, Romania, Ukraine, etc.).

It is also important that the choice of semi-presidentialism in the constitutional context of the “third wave” of democratization turned out to be as

³² Frison-Roche, “Semi-Presidentialism in a Post-Communist Context,” 56–77.

³³ Elgie, “Duverger, Semi-presidentialism and the Supposed French Archetype,” 248–67.; Lytvyn, “Rehionalni Osoblyvosti” [Regional Features].

convenient as possible, because its imposition on the “constitutional chaos” as a result of the sudden collapse of the previous political regimes and gaining or restoring the full-fledged independence by some European countries responded as quickly and loyally as possible to the challenges of democratization or hid the prospects for autocratization. In other words, the choice of semi-presidentialism was largely the result of the constitutional effect of a “chain reaction” to the events of the late 1970s, but mainly of the early 1990s, inherent in Europe (especially in its post-communist part) during its transformation. However, this would not be enough if not for the influence of specific conditions of political and institutional development in European countries. In particular, it is important to take into account the fact that semi-presidentialism (much more intensively than other systems of government, mainly given the formal and actual, albeit to varying degree, nature of the combination or dualization of the executive) in some of the cases of the “third wave” of democratization was an institutional choice of new states and a way to serve the goals of political elites. In addition, semi-presidentialism served as a means of reconciling and harmonization institutional, electoral and political preferences of new states (when not always and not all political elites agreed to some obvious and more radical (from the point of view of a part of political elite) option of system of government, in particular presidentialism or parliamentarism one).

In addition, in one sample of countries, the reason was that the attributes of the parliamentary or quasi-parliamentary system of government continued to be influential even after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and its system. In other countries, on the other hand, presidentialism was relatively more established and common. As a result, semi-presidentialism proved to be a convenient compromise between the ideas and supporters of presidentialism and parliamentarism.³⁴ This was manifested in the fact that semi-presidentialism, in particular based on the dualism of the executive, was perceived by the drafters and founders of the constitutions as the type of inter-institutional relations that would not contribute to the centralization of president or prime minister powers (even in the conditions of the excessive parliamentary fractionalization and parliamentary-governmental (inter-institutional) crisis), but would reduce the risks associated with the “clear” systems of government.³⁵ Moreover, semi-presidentialism attracts attention given the expectation that president is a direct “agent” of the electorate and can act to scrutinize political parties.

³⁴ Stacey and Choudhry, *Semi-Presidential Government.*; Sujit Choudhry and Richard Stacey, “Semi-Presidentialism as a Form of Government: Lessons for Tunisia,” *NYU Law Working Papers: Consolidating the Arab Spring – Constitutional Transition in Egypt and Tunisia* (2013).

³⁵ Juan Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism,” *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 1 (1990): 51; Juan Linz, “The Virtues of Parliamentarism,” *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 4 (1990): 84; Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering*; Elgie, Moestrup, and Yu-Shan, “Semi-Presidentialism,” 264–74.

It is also quite obvious that the spread of European semi-presidentialism in the “third wave” of democratization was a specifically-regional and/or culturally-political phenomenon, which was differently and variably tested in the countries of Southern, Central and Eastern Europe and so on. For example, as François Frison-Roche notes,³⁶ the choice in favor of semi-presidentialism in the countries, which originated within the geographical areas of the Soviet Union, was made in view of its interpretation as the most desirable institutional and legal tool that, accordingly, should ensure the preservation of the prevailing patterns of domination of political elites of the previous/communist political regime as effectively as possible. As a result, regardless of the mechanisms for the choice of semi-presidentialism in the various countries of the post-Soviet bloc, the emphasis was on maintaining or dispersing the power and political balance between different political actors, but provided that they would all be affected and influenced. In contrast, the choice of semi-presidentialism in modern non-post-Soviet countries of Central and Southern Europe was made in view of the fact that the outlined system of government should the most effectively ensure the separation of powers in the context of mutual fear and suspicions among the opposing political actors (politicians, parties and coalitions), especially in the early 90s of the twentieth century. As a result, the choice of semi-presidentialism in the post-Soviet countries of Europe contributed to the cyclicity and preservation of political elites, as well as the previous institutional and political model, where the institution of strong and protected president played a major or even monopolistic role.³⁷ Instead, the choice of semi-presidentialism in other post-communist countries of Europe helped to build the system of inter-institutional relations, where the head of state is more (if not completely) limited, even if it is endowed with certain significant sources of power.

Such divergent features of the initial choice, introduction and implementation of semi-presidentialism in different countries of the “third wave” of democratization determined quite distinctive evolutionary patterns and models of inter-institutional development, which began to be influenced mainly by the intentions of various political actors in some cases and by the intentions of various political institutions in other cases. The reason, for example, is that constitutional rules in most post-Soviet countries were incorporated into political life in the form of a “constitutional theatre” that protects the oligarchs and helps them not to share power. In other post-communist cases in Europe, on the other hand, the choice in favor of semi-presidentialism was made primarily because of its understanding as a “sacred pact”, through which a society could unite around the goal of achieving democratic and republican values. The only thing that unified the various samples and regions of the “third wave” of

³⁶ Frison-Roche, “Semi-Presidentialism in a Post-Communist Context,” 56–77.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

democratization is the fact that they were not always ready for “real” statehood and nationhood, and therefore their choice in favor of semi-presidentialism was an instant chance rather than a thought-out institutional design.³⁸ Moreover, such a choice appeared even in those countries that did not immediately become semi-presidential republics, but chose initially presidentialism such as Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine at different times. This was demonstrated by the fact that such countries were initially characterized by only a few, but insufficient attributes of semi-presidentialism including the positions of prime ministers, who were appointed by presidents, but were only partially responsible to parliaments. This means that the attribution of the reasons for the choice of semi-presidentialism has led to the passage of a type of equilibrium state, although this was not the case for all the countries of the “third wave” of democratization. Though, in contrast, semi-presidentialism still remains the most common constitutional type among the countries of the former communist bloc.³⁹ This, in turn, hypothetically does not deny, but allows the incremental spread of semi-presidentialism in the future, although possibly in another specifically-regional and/or culturally-political context.

Summarizing the verification of the logics, patterns and reasons for the choice of semi-presidentialism in European countries, it is also appropriate to refer to Elgie’s⁴⁰ remark, which identifies three types of contexts, according to which political elites of certain countries choose the analyzed system of government, mainly appealing to the understanding and meaning of the introduction of the institution of popularly elected president. The first context is a symbolic one, since semi-presidentialism is often the choice of “young” countries that seek to increase the democratic legitimacy of their political institutions – that grows if the maximum number of institutions is elected popularly, but do not want the introduction of a presidential system of government and the position of strong president. The second context, on the other hand, is related to governance issues, since semi-presidentialism is often the choice of developed countries that have situationally or systematically faced the problems, difficulties and shortcomings of the previously existing parliamentary systems of government. Finally, the third context is inherent in the conditions of transition to democracy, when the choice of the system of government often depends on the set of powers within political elite that, among the other options, can lead to the formation of the institution of strong or weak, popularly or

³⁸ Elgie, “Semi-Presidentialism,” 1–20.

³⁹ Oleh Protsyk, “Semi-Presidentialism under Post-Communism,” in *Semi-Presidentialism and Democracy*, eds. Robert Elgie, Sophia Moestrup S., and Wu Yu-Shan (New York: Springer, 2011), 98–116.

⁴⁰ Elgie, “Semi-Presidentialism,” 12–15.

non-popularly elected president.⁴¹ As a consequence, semi-presidentialism in some European countries resulted from the situations, where presidents had a strong influence on the process of adopting new or amending existing constitutions. This was especially verified in hybrid or autocratic political regimes in Eastern Europe, or from the situations, where the advantage in favor of this system of government was understood by competing political elites as it was the case for the countries of Central and Southern Europe, as well as earlier for the countries of Eastern Europe and for the democratic vector of transition in general.⁴² Due to the uncertainty and real or potential political instability observed during the transition period, all this was a consequence of the anticipated need to create the institution of popularly elected president with “quite strong” powers.⁴³ At the same time, although quite often by mistake, it was believed that such logics and reasons for the choice and implementation of semi-presidentialism should take into account all the strengths and overcome all the weaknesses of both presidentialism and parliamentarism. Accordingly, semi-presidentialism avoids structural inter-institutional deadlock and the weakness (instability) of governmental cabinets.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Within the existing types of systems of government (presidentialism, semi-presidentialism and parliamentarism ones), but regardless of the types of political regimes (democratic, hybrid or autocratic ones), the main contribution of this study is that it showed that semi-presidentialism is, or previously was the most widespread, albeit very variational one in Europe. Especially considering that semi-presidentialism can be distinctively positioned and outlined formally (institutionally-procedurally) and actually (politically-behaviorally). Even though this system of government is necessarily outlined by such common definitional and constant attributes as: the popular election of the president for a fixed term; obligatory collective responsibility of the prime minister and the governmental cabinet to legislature; the combination/dualisation of the executive by the president as the head of state and prime minister as the head of

⁴¹ Davor Boban, *Polupredsjednicki sustavi Rusije i Poljske* [Semi-Presidential Systems of Russia and Poland,] (Zagreb: Fakultet politickih znanosti, 2011), 36.

⁴² Mislav Vulić, *The Role of Presidents in Croatia and Serbia, 1990–2015* (Budapest, 2015); Jon Elster, “The Role of Institutional Interest in East European Constitution-Making: Explaining Legislative Dominance,” *East European Constitutional Review* 5, no. 6 (1996): 63–65.

⁴³ Boban, *Polupredsjednicki sustavi Rusije i Poljske* [Semi-Presidential Systems of Russia and Poland,] 13–14.

⁴⁴ Giovanni Sartori, “Neither Presidentialism nor Parliamentarism,” in *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Juan Linz and Arturo Valenzuela (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 106–18.

governmental cabinet. At the same time, semi-presidentialism, being the dominant model of inter-institutional relations in Europe, especially in Southern, Central and Eastern European countries, has undergone and still undergoes theoretical, methodological, conceptual, practical and empirical modifications. Therefore, it variably operates in practice, certifying that the formal side of constitutions and systems of government does not always correspond to their actual side. This is due to inter-institutional and political, as well as formal and informal differences, in particular, in the triangle “the head of state – governmental cabinet – parliament”, of democratic and undemocratic (hybrid or autocratic) countries, which are constitutionally defined as semi-presidential, but often tend to presidentialism or parliamentarism in their political practice. As a result, European semi-presidentialism is not a homogeneous, unified and monolithic phenomenon either regionally, historically or evolutionarily, nor in the context of its prerequisites and political regimes, but instead it turns out to be a heterogeneous phenomenon.

Thus, the comparative study of European semi-presidentialism was carried out on the basis of the maximum theoretical, methodological, practical and empirical versatility, since it concerns both the classical (Duvergerian) and post-classical/modern (post-Duvergerian or Elgieian) variants of its conceptualization. Even though semi-presidentialism is a separate type in the classification of systems of government, although it is a hybrid concept/phenomenon that has the attributes of both presidential and parliamentary systems of government at its core, but is still characterized by the presence of its own institutional, procedural, political and behavioral attributes. This is mainly confirmed by the presence of two groups of reasons and factors, i.e., exogenous and endogenous ones, that define and attribute semi-presidentialism: the actual content of constitution and the combination of traditions and circumstances (exogenous reasons), the composition of parliamentary majority/minority and the president's position on it (endogenous reasons). This is traced at the background of the highlighting definitional (constant), complementary (typological) and temporary (transitive) attributes, logics and reasons for the choice and implementing semi-presidentialism, in particular on the example of current and historical cases of this system of government in Europe. At the same time, it was found that semi-presidentialism uses its own hierarchical and transactional relations in the triangle “the head of state – governmental cabinet – parliament”, since: hierarchically, it is determined by the fact that some political institutions are subordinated to others; transactionally, it is caused by the fact that political institutions are or can be identical or equivalent ones. As a result, it is argued that semi-presidentialism remains the most common constitutional type among European countries (especially post-communist ones), even though the attribution, logics and reasons for the choice and implementing semi-presidentialism have not led to the passage of a type of equilibrium state in all European countries.

To summarize, it is descriptively clear that semi-presidentialism is distinctively positioned formally (institutionally-procedurally) and actually (politically-behaviorally), since it is constructed by common definitional (constant) attributes, but is characterized by diverse complementary (typological) and temporary (transitive) attributes and reasons for the choice and its implementation. Accordingly, it is analytically obvious that semi-presidentialism as the dominant model of inter-institutional relations in Europe quite variably operates in practice, certifying that the formal side of systems of government does not always and necessarily correspond to their actual side. Such an innovative conclusion was made on the basis of distinction, verification and systematization of the attributes and cases of semi-presidentialism in Europe, as well as taking into account the logics, patterns and reasons for the choice, attribution and development of semi-presidentialism on the example of European countries.

Table 1. The permanent/definitive attributes of semi-presidentialism and their descriptors on the example of European countries (for current/continuous examples – as of December 2019, for historical/interrupted examples – as of the period indicated in parentheses)⁴⁵

Country (year/years: historical or current example)	Popular election of president for a fixed term	Fixed term of presidential powers, y.	Maximum number of presidential terms	Collective responsibility of prime minister and cabinet to legislature	Parliamentary vote of no confidence in prime minister and cabinet	Actors for the election of prime minister and the formation of cabinet	Combination/dualisation of the executive by president and prime minister (cabinet)	President as the head of state	Prime minister as the head of cabinet
Armenia (1995/2005–2018: historical example)	Yes (50)	5 (50)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (50)	Yes + individual (84)	Yes (55.4, 84)	President (and parliament) (55.4)	Yes (49, 85)	Yes	Yes
Austria (1929–1933: historical example)	Yes (60)	4 (60)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (60)	Yes + individual (74)	Yes (74, 76, 142)	Parliament (and president) (70)	Yes (60, 69)	Yes	Yes
Austria (since 1945: current example)	Yes (60.1)	6 (60.5)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (60.5)	Yes + individual (70.1)	Yes (70.1)	Parliament (and president) (70)	Yes (60, 69)	Yes	Yes
Azerbaijan (since 1995: current example)	Yes (101)	7 (101.1)	Not regulated	Not regulated	Yes (109.5)	President (and parliament) (118.1)	Yes (103, 117)	Yes	Yes
Belarus (since 1996: current example)	Yes (81)	5 (81)	Not regulated	Yes + individual (84.7, 97.7)	Yes (106)	President (and parliament) (106)	Yes (79, 106)	Yes	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina (since 1995: current example)	Yes (5.1.A)	4 (5.1.B)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (5.1.B)	Yes (5.4.C)	Yes (5.4.C)	President (and parliament) (5.4)	Yes (5)	Yes	Yes

⁴⁵ The parentheses contain the information on the articles of the constitutions of the relevant countries that regulate the selected attributes and descriptors of semi-presidentialism. At the same time, no attention is paid to special laws. Historical/interrupted examples of semi-presidentialism (even in the case of current semi-presidentialism) are highlighted in Gray. The table is not an aggregate and quantitative index of the attributes of semi-presidentialism and this issue needs a separate analysis. Zachary Elkins, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton, *The Endurance of National Constitutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).; Vitaliy Lytvyn, “Napivprezydentski Systemy v Krainakh Tsentralnoi Yevropy: Determinanty Definiuvannia” [Semi-Presidential Systems in Central European Countries: Determinants of Definition.] in *Transformacje ustrojowe w Europie Srodkowej i Wschodniej [Systemic Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe,]* eds. Z. Bialoblocki and A. Romanyuk (Kutno: WSGK, 2012), 207–25.

Bulgaria (since 1991: current example)	Yes (93.1)	5 (93.1)	No more than 2 in total (95.1)	Yes (84, 108, 111, 112)	Yes (84, 89, 111, 112)	President (and parliament) (84.6, 99.1)	Yes (92, 108)	Yes	Yes
Croatia (since 1991/2000: current example)	Yes (95)	5 (95)	No more than 2 in total (95)	Yes + individual (115)	Yes (115)	President (and parliament) (98/109)	Yes (93, 108)	Yes	Yes
Czechia (since 2012: current example)	Yes (54.2, 58)	5 (55)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (57.2)	Yes + individual (62.A, 68, 74)	Yes (62.A, 72)	President (and parliament) (68.2)	Yes (54, 67.2, 68.2)	Yes	Yes
Finland (1919–1999: historical example)	Yes (23) ⁴⁶	6 (23.1)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (23.2)	Yes + individual (36B.1)	Yes (36B)	Not regulated	Yes (2.3, 2.4)	Yes	Yes
Finland (since 1999: current example)	Yes (54)	6 (54)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (54)	Yes + individual (60, 64, 68)	Yes (64)	Parliament (and president) (61)	Yes (54, 60)	Yes	Yes
France (since 1962: current example)	Yes (6)	5 (6)	Within the law (6)	Not regulated	Yes (8, 49, 50)	President (and parliament) (8)	Yes (5, 21)	Yes	Yes
Georgia (since 2004/2013/2017: current example)	Yes (70) ⁴⁷	5 (70)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (70)	Yes + individual (81)	Yes (81)	President (and parliament) (80)	Yes (69, 73, 78)	Yes	Yes
Iceland (since 1944: current example)	Yes (3)	4 (6)	Not regulated	No, but individual (14) ⁴⁸	Yes (14, 15)	President (and parliament) (17)	Yes (3–30)	Yes	Yes
Ireland (since 1937: current example)	Yes (12.2.1)	7 (12.3.1)	No more than 2 in total (12.3.2)	Yes (28.4.2)	Yes (28.10)	President (and parliament) (13.1.1)	Yes (12, 13)	Yes	Yes
Lithuania (since 1992: current example)	Yes (78)	5 (78)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (78)	Yes + individual (84.9, 96, 101)	Yes (67.9, 84.5, 101)	President (and parliament) (92, 84.4)	Yes (77, 91)	Yes	Yes

⁴⁶ The temporary exceptions in this rule, due to various transition and crisis phenomena, were the cases of the election of president of Finland in parliament (but not in the electoral college, as previously provided) in 1919 and 1946.

⁴⁷ In 2017, the constitution of Georgia was amended, and from 2024 the country should become parliamentary republic without a popularly elected president, but with a president elected in parliament.

⁴⁸ The consequences of the individual responsibility of prime minister in Iceland are always compared to the consequences of the collective responsibility of governmental cabinet.

Macedonia (since 1991: current example)	Yes (80)	5 (80)	No more than 2 in total (80)	Yes + individual (92)	Yes (92)	President (and parliament) (90)	Yes (79, 89)	Yes	Yes
Moldova (1994–2001: historical example)	Yes (78)	4 (80.1)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (78.5)	Yes + individual (82.2, 106.1)	Yes (103.2, 106)	President (and parliament) (98)	Yes (77, 96)	Yes	Yes
Moldova (since 2016: current example)	Yes (78)	4 (80.1)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (80.4)	Yes + individual (98.3, 103, 106)	Yes (103.2, 106)	President (and parliament) (98)	Yes (77, 96, 102)	Yes	Yes
Montenegro (2006–2007: historical example)	Yes (86)	5 (86)	No more than 2 in total (86)	Yes + individual (95, 97)	Yes (97)	President (and parliament) (88.4, 92)	Yes (86, 91)	Yes	Yes
Montenegro (since 2007: current example)	Yes (96)	5 (97)	No more than 2 in total (97)	Yes + individual (82.12, 91, 105, 107)	Yes (82.12, 91, 106, 107, 110)	President (and parliament) (82.12, 95.5, 103)	Yes (95, 102)	Yes	Yes
Poland (1990/1992–1997: historical example)	Yes (29)	5 (29.4)	No more than 2 in total (29.4)	Yes + individual (66, 67.1)	Yes (64)	President (and parliament) (57)	Yes (28, 53)	Yes	Yes
Poland (since 1997: current example)	Yes (127.1)	5 (127.2)	No more than 2 in total (127.2)	Yes + individual (157)	Yes (158)	President (and parliament) (154)	Yes (126.1, 148.1)	Yes	Yes
Portugal (1976–1982: historical example)	Yes (124.1)	5 (131.1)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (126.1)	Yes + individual (192–194)	Yes (136.F, 189.4, 198.2, 199)	President (and parliament) (190.1)	Yes (123, 186.1)	Yes	Yes
Portugal (since 1982: current example)	Yes (121.1)	5 (128.1)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (123.1)	Yes + individual (189, 191)	Yes (133.G, 186.4, 192–195)	President (and parliament) (187.1)	Yes (120, 183.1)	Yes	Yes
Romania (since 1991: current example)	Yes (81.1)	5 (83.1)	No more than 2 in total (81.4)	Yes + individual (109)	Yes (113, 114)	President (and parliament) (103)	Yes (80, 107)	Formally no, but actually yes	Yes
Russia (since 1993: current example)	Yes (81.1)	6 (81.1)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (81.3)	Not regulated	Yes (117)	President (and parliament) (111.1)	Yes (not regulated)	Yes	Yes
Serbia (since 2006: current example)	Yes (114)	5 (116)	No more than 2 in total (116)	Yes + individual (128, 130)	Yes (128–131)	President (and parliament) (112.3, 127)	Yes (111, 125)	Yes	Yes
Slovakia (since 1999: current example)	Yes (101.2)	5 (101.2)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (103.2)	Yes + individual (114.1, 116.1)	Yes (88; 114.1, 115, 116)	President (and parliament) (102.1.G, 110.1)	Yes (101, 109)	Yes	Yes

Slovenia (since 1991: current example)	Yes (103)	5 (103)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (103)	Yes + individual (114)	Yes (116, 119)	President (and parliament) (111)	Yes (102, 110)	Yes	Yes
Turkey (2007–2018: historical example)	Yes (101) ⁴⁹	5 (101)	No more than 2 in total (101)	Yes + individual (112)	Yes (99)	President (and parliament) (109)	Yes (101, 109)	Yes	Yes
Ukraine (since 1996/2006/2010/2014: current example)	Yes (103)	5 (103)	No more than 2 in a row + ∞ cycles (with pauses) (103)	Yes + individual (not regulated)	Yes (115)	President (and parliament) (114)	Yes (102, 114)	Yes	Yes
Yugoslavia (2000–2003: historical example)	Yes (97)	4 (97)	No more than 2 in total (97)	Yes + individual (102, 104)	Yes (104)	President (and parliament) (96.3, 101)	Yes (96, 100)	Yes	Yes
Weimar Republic (1919–1933: historical example)	Yes (41)	7 (43)	Not regulated (43)	Yes (54, 56)	Yes (54, 56)	President (and parliament) (53, 54)	Yes (15, 48, 50, 55, 77)	Yes	Yes

Table 2. The forms and reasons for the choice and introduction of semi-presidentialism and its correlation with the types of political regimes on the example of European countries⁵⁰

Cases of semi-presidentialism	Time periods	Types of political regimes (on average over the last few years)	Forms of the choice of semi-presidentialism	Main introductory reasons for the choice semi-presidentialism
Armenia 1	1995–2005	Competitive (minimal) autocracy	Expected introduction	Compromise between presidentialism and parliamentarism
Armenia 2	2005–2018	Competitive (minimal) autocracy	Reformation introduction	Streamlining the executive by popularly elected president during political instability
Austria 1	1929–1933	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Reformation introduction	Balancing president by the executive responsible to parliament
Austria 2	Since 1945	Complete (full) liberal democracy	Initial introduction	Weakening popularly elected president as a threat to democracy
Azerbaijan	Since 1995	Non-competitive (full) autocracy	Initial introduction	Streamlining the executive by strong popularly elected president during political instability

⁴⁹ The specificity of Turkey was manifested in the fact that the election of president was constitutionally regulated either as popular/nationwide or non-nationwide one (in parliament). Although, on the other hand, the Turkish constitution procedurally outlined exclusively the popular election of president.

⁵⁰ Historical/interrupted examples of semi-presidentialism (even in the case of current semi-presidentialism) are highlighted in Gray. See: Table 1; Official sites of “Freedom in the World”, “Polity 4”, the democracy index by “The Economist Intelligence Unit” and “V-Dem” projects.

Belarus	Since 1996	Non-competitive (full) autocracy	Reformation introduction	The desire of political elites to stay in power
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Since 1995	Competitive (minimal) autocracy	Initial introduction	Weakening president as inability to win this position by elite
Bulgaria	Since 1991	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Initial introduction	Compromise between presidentialism and parliamentarism + weakening president as inability to win this position by elite
Croatia 1	1991–2000	Competitive (minimal) autocracy	Initial introduction	Strengthening president as ability to win this position by elite
Croatia 2	Since 2000	Incomplete liberal democracy	Reformation introduction	Weakening popularly elected president as a threat to democracy
Czechia	Since 2012	Complete (full) liberal democracy	Reformation introduction	Introduction of weak popularly elected president as a previous legacy and way to simplify its election
Finland 1	1919–1999	Incomplete liberal democracy	Initial introduction	Introduction of strong popularly elected president as a previous legacy
Finland 2	Since 1999	Complete (full) liberal democracy	Initial introduction	Balancing president by the executive responsible to parliament
France	Since 1962	Complete (full) liberal democracy	Reformation introduction	Streamlining the executive by popularly elected president during political instability
Georgia 1	2004–2013	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Reformation introduction	Balancing president by the executive responsible to parliament
Georgia 2	2013–2017	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Reformation introduction	Balancing president by the executive responsible to parliament
Georgia 3	Since 2017	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Reformation introduction	Balancing president by the executive responsible to parliament
Iceland	Since 1944	Complete (full) liberal democracy	Initial introduction	Confirmation of democracy and the end of colonialism (weak popularly elected president)
Ireland	Since 1937	Complete (full) liberal democracy	Initial introduction	Confirmation of democracy and the end of colonialism (weak popularly elected president)
Lithuania	Since 1992	Complete (full) liberal democracy	Initial introduction	Compromise between presidentialism and parliamentarism
Macedonia	Since 1991	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Initial introduction	Introduction of weak popularly elected president as a previous legacy
Moldova 1	1994–2001	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Expected introduction	Compromise between presidentialism and parliamentarism
Moldova 2	Since 2016	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Reformation introduction	Streamlining the executive by popularly elected president during political instability
Montenegro 1	2006–2007	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Initial introduction	Compromise between presidentialism and parliamentarism
Montenegro 2	Since 2007	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Initial introduction	Weakening president as inability to win this position by elite
Poland 1	1990–1992	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Reformation introduction	Streamlining the executive during political instability
Poland 2	1992–1997	Incomplete liberal democracy	Initial introduction	Compromise between presidentialism and parliamentarism

Poland 3	Since 1997	Incomplete liberal democracy	Initial introduction	Streamlining the executive during political instability
Portugal 1	1976–1982	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Initial introduction	Confirmation of democracy (popularly elected president)
Portugal 2	Since 1982	Complete (full) liberal democracy	Reformation introduction	Balancing president by the executive responsible to parliament
Romania	Since 1991	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Initial introduction	Strengthening president as ability to win this position by elite
Russia	Since 1993	Non-competitive (full) autocracy	Expected introduction	Streamlining the executive by popularly elected president during political instability
Serbia	Since 2006	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Initial introduction	Streamlining the executive by popularly elected president during political instability
Slovakia	Since 1999	Incomplete liberal democracy	Reformation introduction	Streamlining the executive by popularly elected president during political instability
Slovenia	Since 1991	Complete (full) liberal democracy	Initial introduction	Compromise between presidentialism and parliamentarism + weakening president as inability to win this position by elite
Turkey	2007–2018	Competitive (minimal) autocracy	Reformation introduction	Streamlining the executive during political instability
Ukraine 1	1996–2006	Competitive (minimal) autocracy	Initial introduction	Compromise between presidentialism and parliamentarism
Ukraine 2	2006–2010	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Reformation introduction	Weakening popularly elected president as a threat to democracy
Ukraine 3	2010–2014	Competitive (minimal) autocracy	Reformation introduction	The desire of political elites to stay in power
Ukraine 4	Since 2014	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Reformation introduction	Weakening popularly elected president as a threat to democracy
Yugoslavia	2000–2003	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Reformation introduction	Streamlining the executive by popularly elected president during political instability
Weimar Republic	1919–1933	Electoral (minimal) democracy	Initial introduction	Balancing president by the executive responsible to parliament

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