University of St.Gallen

Center for Governance and Culture in Europe

КАФЕДРА ПОЛІТОЛОГІЇ ЛЬВІВСЬКОГО УНІВЕРСИТЕТУ

Prospects and Risks of Semi-Presidentialism in Conditions of Democratic Transition, Turbulence, and War: Quantitative and Statistical Comparative Analysis

Research project with the support of the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland.

For the academic course **"Semi-presidential system of government"**

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General description of the study

The study attempts to compare the **consequences of different types of semi-presidentialism** in the context of **political crises, wars and uncertainty**.

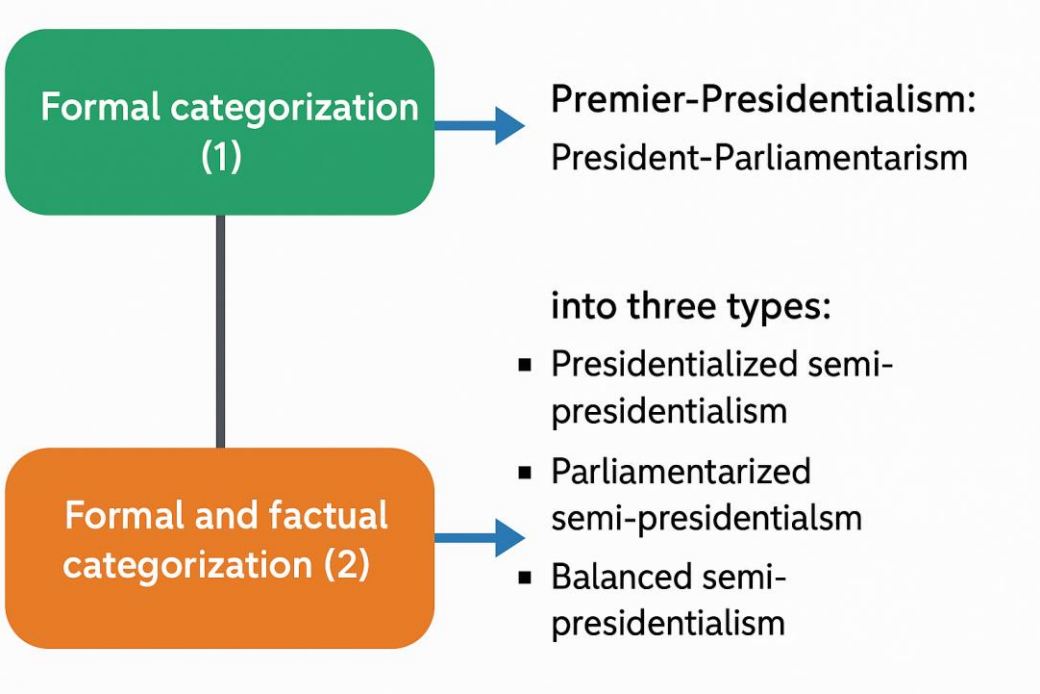
In general, our analysis includes **two categorizations of semi-presidentialism**:

1. **Formal categorization (1) into two types:**
   - Premier-Presidentialism;
   - President-Parliamentarism.

2. **Formal and factual categorization (2) into three types :**
   - Presidentialized semi-presidentialism;
   - Parliamentarized semi-presidentialism;
   - Balanced semi-presidentialism.

The analysis is carried out through the prism of the dynamics of democratic/autocratic (political) and socio-economic indicators. The relevant results are extrapolated to the current political processes in Ukraine in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war.

Theoretical framework and relevance



Why study semi-presidentialism under conditions of turbulence and wartime transitions?

Semi-presidentialism is a mixed system of government with internal variation. Its effects under democratic transitions are under-researched – especially in cases involving armed conflict and uncertainty.

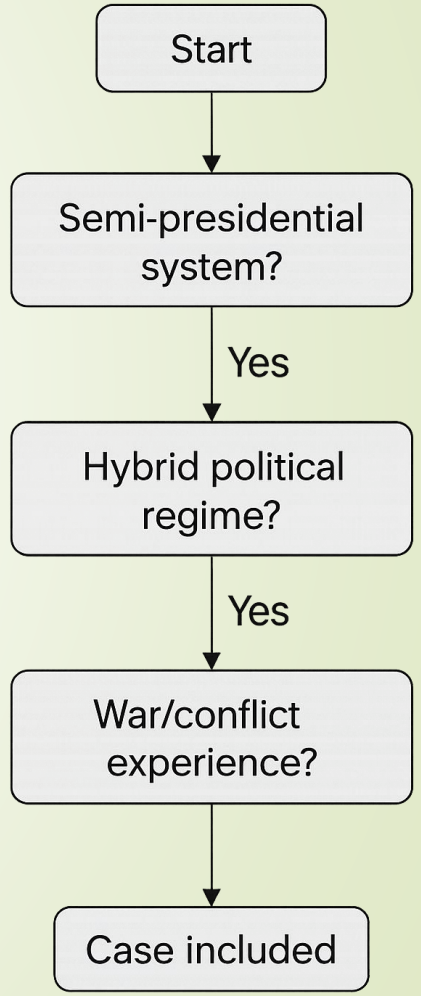
We study how different types of semi-presidentialism function in young democracies and hybrid political regimes under war, crisis, and instability.

Research design and case selection

The study focuses on semi-presidential systems in transitional countries with hybrid regimes that experienced armed conflict or turbulence.

Case selection criteria include:
– Semi-presidentialism: yes or no;
– Formal type of semi-presidentialism:
premier-presidential or president-parliamentary;
– Factual type of semi-presidentialism:
presidentialized, parliamentarized, or balanced;
– Hybrid political regime: Freedom House, Polity IV;
– Armed conflict or war: Correlates of War, Systemic Peace.

Selected cases: Armenia (1990–2018), Azerbaijan (1990–1995), Cameroon (2017–2024), Chad (2005–2010), Croatia (1991–1995), Georgia (2004–2024), Haiti (2020–2024), Mali (2012–2022), Moldova (1991/1994–2024), Mozambique (2017–2024), Russia (1994–1996; 1999–2000), Sri Lanka (1983–2009), Ukraine (2014–2024), Yemen (1995–2011)



Indicators and Data Sources

The analysis is based on political, socio-economic, and conflict **indicators** from comparative databases.

Indicator Area	Indicator / Index	Source
Political regime	Freedom Score	Freedom House (Freedom in the World)
	Polity Score	Polity V
Conflict intensity/level	Type of intra-executive conflict	Internal coding
Socio-economic development	GDP per capita, Gini Index	World Bank / Open Data
	HDI (Human Development Index)	UNDP
	Economic Freedom Index	Fraser Institute
	Government Effectiveness (WGI-GE)	World Bank – Worldwide Governance Indicators

Methodology

The research applies a **comparative quantitative design** combining case-oriented and variable-oriented strategies:

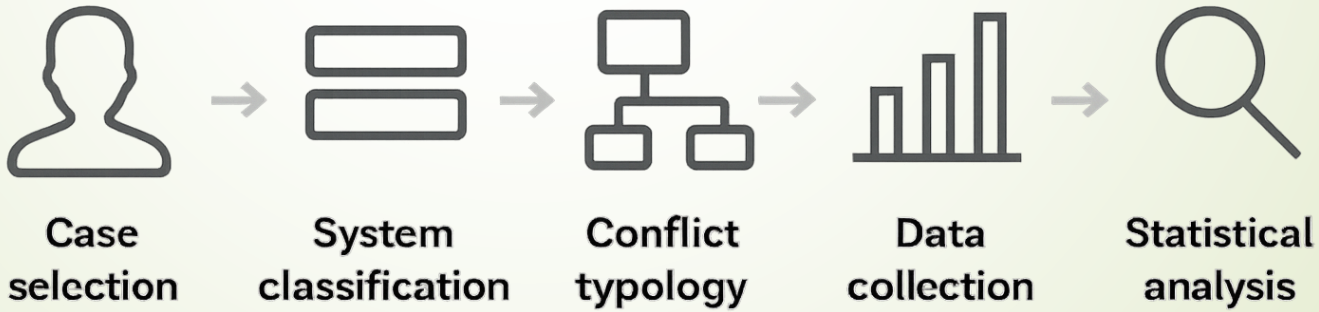
– **Classification of political systems**: based on Elgie, Shugart & Carey, Lytvyn et al.;

– **Key units of analysis**: 14 young transitional semi-presidential countries with hybrid regimes;

– **Conflict typology**: based on institutional alignment (Skach–Lytvyn–Romaniuk model);

– **Statistical tools**: descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank correlation, Mann–Whitney U-test, Kruskal–Wallis test;

– **Timeframe**: Before – During – After armed conflict or other exogenous shock.



Results: The average outcomes of semi-presidentialism in nascent transition countries with hybrid political regimes before and after war, armed conflict, or other exogenous shocks: Generalization view

Indicators* (averaged data)	Semi-presidentialism		
	Outbreak of war/shock	End of war/shock	In total
WGI (GE)	-0,75	-0,72	-0,50
Gini index	37,4	34,7	34,5
GDP (per capita)	$1426	$2890	$1848
Economic Freedom	5,73	5,86	6,18
HDI	0,565	0,621	0,625
FiW score	4,53	4,84	4,32
Polity score	2,00	3,00	3,16
Conflict level/type	Partially unified majority system	Partially unified majority system	Fully unified majority system

Results: The average outcomes of different types of semi-presidentialism in nascent transition countries with hybrid political regimes and under conditions of turbulence, war, armed conflict, or other exogenous shocks: Categorization view

Indicators (averaged data)*	Types of semi-presidentialism		
	Categorization 1		
	President-parliamentarism		Premier-presidentialism
WGI (GE)	-0,50		-0,50
Gini index	37,4		32,4
GDP (per capita)	$1230		$2732
Economic Freedom	5,88		6,47
HDI	0,610		0,645
FiW score	4,76		4,40
Polity score	2,34		4,17
Conflict level/type	Fully unified majority system		Partially unified majority system
Indicators (averaged data)	Categorization 2		
	Presidentialized	Balanced	Parliamentarized
WGI (GE)	0,41	-0,02	-0,92
Gini index	35,4	33,0	-
GDP (per capita)	$1737	$2197	$1282
Economic Freedom	5,98	6,81	6,27
HDI	0,590	0,706	0,668
FiW score	4,52	3,85	3,93
Polity score	2,34	4,75	5,40
Conflict level/type	Fully unified majority system	Partially unified majority system	Partially unified majority system

Results: The dynamics of political regimes in different types of semi-presidentialism in nascent transition countries with hybrid political regimes and under conditions of turbulence, war, armed conflict, or other exogenous shocks: Indicator view

Type of semi-presidentialism	Political regime dynamics and indicators of democracy, as %					
	Democratic dynamics		Uncertain dynamics		Autocratic dynamics	
	Inter-type	Intra-type	Inter-type	Intra-type	Inter-type	Intra-type
Categorization 1	According to the FiW project					
President-parliamentarism	47,5	43,8	66,1	27,4	67,4	28,8
Premier-presidentialism	52,5	29,3	33,9	39,4	32,6	31,3
	According to the Polity project					
President-parliamentarism	61,6	58,9	60,0	6,7	83,8	34,4
Premier-presidentialism	38,4	76,1	40,0	10,9	16,2	13,0
Categorization 2	According to the FiW project					
Presidentialized	45,9	24,1	78,0	39,7	80,8	36,2
Balanced	45,9	58,3	20,3	25,0	15,4	16,7
Parliamentarized	8,2	62,5	1,7	12,5	3,8	25,0
	According to the Polity project					
Presidentialized	61,6	58,2	83,3	5,5	89,2	36,3
Balanced	32,6	75,0	16,7	15,0	10,8	10,0
Parliamentarized	5,8	100,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0

Results: Spearman's rank correlation between different types (categorizations) of semi-presidentialism (SP), different levels of conflict, and different socio-economic and political/democratic indicators

Spearman Rank Order Correlations (Data++) MD pairwise deleted Marked correlations are significant at p <,05000							
Variables	WGI (GE)	HDI	FiW score	Polity score	Gini Index	GDP (per capita)	Economic Freedom
Conflict	-0,186805	0,178538	-0,153206	0,151993	-0,124692	-0,039541	0,013483
Categorization SP 1 (Shugart & Carey)	-0,039311	-0,221614	0,150821	-0,226999	0,451870	-0,403819	-0,219262
Categorization SP 2 (Elgie)	0,146188	-0,344047	0,320466	-0,312669	0,182097	-0,036046	-0,254277

Results: The Mann-Whitney U-criterion between president-parliamentary and premier-presidential systems

Variables	Rank Sum Pres.-Parl.	Rank Sum Prem.-Pres.	U	p-value
WGI (GE)	3455,0	3926,0	1744,0	0,669
HDI	5736,5	5739,5	2081,5	0,007
FiW Score	9192,5	5685,5	2984,5	0,052
Polity Score	5614,0	3702,0	1519,0	0,011
Gini Index	1592,5	1182,5	321,5	0,000
GDP (per capita)	6892,0	7643,0	1842,0	0,000
Economic Freedom	2751,5	3803,5	1211,5	0,020

Results: The Kruskal-Wallis criterion between presidentialized, balanced and parliamentarized systems

Variables	Mean Rank Parliamentarized	Mean Rank Balanced	Mean Rank Presidentialized	H	p-value
WGI (GE)	61,83	50,25	64,40	3,45	0,1780
HDI	81,75	101,26	65,36	20,21	0,0000
FiW Score	66,31	63,06	97,59	18,13	0,0001
Polity Score	86,80	85,18	60,16	13,34	0,0013
Gini Index	67,00	31,10	41,05	5,64	0,0595
GDP (per capita)	90,57	87,59	84,32	0,23	0,8924
Economic Freedom	62,17	74,12	52,16	8,61	0,0135

Key Findings: Semi-presidentialism during and after wars and turbulence

– Presidentialized and president-parliamentary options of semi-presidentialism are more prone to autocratic drift or democratic and socio-economic decline under conditions of war or turbulence.

– Parliamentarized and premier-presidential options demonstrate relatively better performance in sustaining or improving democratic and socio-economic indicators.

– Balanced semi-presidentialism shows paradoxically mixed results – sometimes outperforming both extremes.

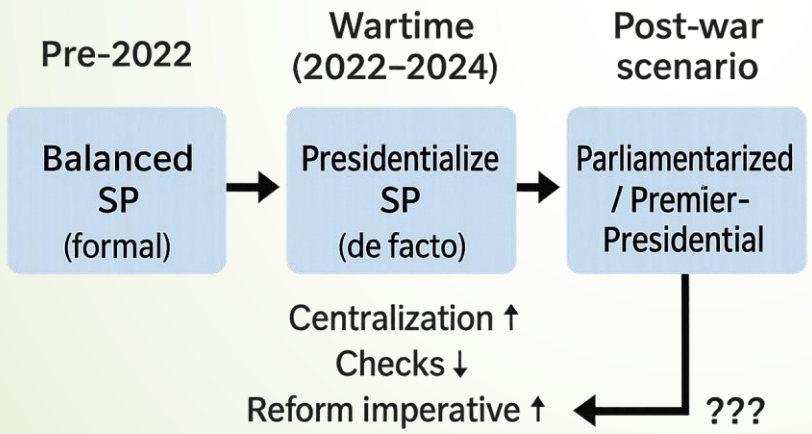
– The institutional subtype of semi-presidentialism matters more than the general category under war and crisis conditions.

– The intensity of intra-executive conflict is not always a predictor of regime failure – but its combination with war and weak institutions increases systemic fragility.

Instead of Conclusion: Ukrainian Context and Post-War Choices

Ukraine entered the full-scale war (2022) with a *formally balanced semi-presidential system*, but in practice it leaned toward a *presidentialized model* with increasing centralization.

Wartime conditions intensified informal concentration of power in the presidency, weakening institutional checks and parliamentary oversight. The risk: erosion of democratic accountability and long-term drift toward executive dominance.



Research implication: Should post-war institutional reform avoid presidentialization and prioritize:

– Strengthening parliamentary principles of government formation and oversight;

– Clarifying intra-executive accountability;

– Building systemic resilience through balance and parliamentary anchoring?

➤ *The most appropriate institutional choice for Ukraine after the war is a shift toward a more parliamentarized (parliamentary or premier-presidential system with ceremonial president), is not it?*

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Thank you for your time.

We would like to invite you to a discussion about Ukraine's future.