

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Abstract

For one democratic society the elections are one of the most important phenomena. That is why the creation of the electoral system is one of the most important chains of the institutional engineering. Throughout the XX century, many theoreticians are thoroughly examining the influence of the electoral system on the political system. Having defined that one electoral system has been created in accordance with the deep and essential characteristics of one political order, it is emphasized that the electoral system in the end has a great role in the character and development of a certain political system. This paper attempts to prove that the electoral system influences the development and functioning of the overall political system but that there are also other factors which can influence the development of a political system. The main methods which are being used are the method of analysis, historical, comparative, normative and political method. The overall conclusion is that the electoral system influences the stability of the political system, consolidation or fragmentation of the party system, the stability of the government, the connection between the elected and the voters, voters turnout and citizens interest for the election process, the corruption of the election process, the conflicts management in one divided society, but during an analysis it is concluded that the historical development of the societal divisions in one society, also, needs to be taken into account.

Key words: *politics, political system, democracy, elections, electoral system, party system.*

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Introduction

During the XX century, the world witnessed the victory and strengthening of the peak of the ideas for the democratic society. Such position of ideas for the democratic society has also been noted by Robert Dahl, who in his considerations about democracy will write that democracy is becoming universal form of political legitimacy, which has triumphed over all others political values and opponents”.¹ In this respect, also, Andrew Heywood writing about democracy in his famous work *Politics* will emphasize that today everyone is a democrat. “Liberals, conservatives, socialists, communists, anarchists, even fascists are eager to proclaim the virtues of democracy and to demonstrate their own democratic credentials”². “The fall of communism and the triumph of capitalism have led democracy to be the most used and the most abused notion of the postmodern society”³. Indeed, a word so much used that one starts to suspect its meaning and the way it is being defined.

The basic definition of the term democracy comes from the ancient Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule) which literally would mean rule by the people. This basic definition of the term democracy, at the same time, tells everything and nothing about the term and the essence of democracy. If we would like to reach for substantive definition of the term democracy, we should more intensely analyze both of the words which compose the basic definition of the term democracy – rule and people. That would mean that during such an analysis, it is necessary to search for answers to three important questions. “Who are the people, in what sense should the people rule and how far should popular rule extend”⁴. For the subject of this paper, the most important are the answers of the second question, i.e. the answers of the question in what sense should the people rule. In theory and in practice there are two basic forms through which the people participate in the popular rule and decision making in one democratic society – directly (direct democracy) or, indirectly (representative democracy). In the first case, “the people themselves directly participate in the popular rule and decision making while in the second case the popular rule is executed by elected representatives of the people on behalf of the

¹ Milan Podunavac. „Država I Demokratija”, *Država I demokratija*. Beograd: Sluzbeni glasnik, 2010, 16.

² Endru Hejvud, *Politika*, Beograd: Clio, 2004, 132.

³ Светомир Шкарик, Гордана Силјановска, *Уставно право*, Скопје: Култура, 2009, 421.

⁴ Саво Климовски, Рената Дескоска, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички систем*, Скопје: Просветно дело, 2009, 119.

people.”⁵ In reality, it is impossible to locate pure direct democracy or representative democracy, in one society, without any form of indirect democracy. On the contrary, in one society there is always a mixture of both ways. Having that in mind, today in the world of democracy we can freely say that the representative democracy is the dominating one, but, in all representative democracies there is a possibility of using the main forms of direct democracy (referendum, citizens’ initiative etc.). Today, often the citizens do not participate directly in making the decisions, but participate in making the decisions of who would have the right to make the decisions on their behalf. Thus the question arises of which is the best way to decide about who will be entitled to making decisions on behalf of the people.

1. Defining the term elections

Thus, the question of which would be the best way to determine who in one society would have legitimacy to make decisions on behalf of the people is becoming one of the most basic questions of modern democracy. “The democratic version of legitimizing political authority consists in the fact that the authority would have to be executed by a legitimate titulus and not someone who is not entitled for that.”⁶ Having defined the “elections as a procedure through which the citizens elect representatives, who in a certain period should make decisions on their behalf”⁷ we can conclude that “the elections represent a basic form of democratic legitimizing of political authority.”⁸ Much better way of legitimizing political authority from legitimizing political authority as traditional, theocratic or charismatic authority. If we start from the famous sentence by the British statesman Winston Churchill that democracy is the worst form of government except all the other forms that have been tried from time to time, we can come to a conclusion that the elections as well, from that which the people have tried so far, represent the best way to select representatives on behalf of the people, and with that to decide who owns the legitimacy to make decisions on their behalf. “The elections themselves are not a sufficient condition for political representation and democracy, but there is no doubt of their necessity”.⁹ The elections are a necessity of the modern democracy and represent a bridge between those who

⁵ Димитар Бајалциев, *Вовед во правото – држава*, Кочани: Европа 92, 1999, 211.

⁶ Светомир Шкарик, *Уставно право – втора книга*, Скопје: Union Trade, 1995, 297.

⁷ Vladimir Goati, *Politicke partije I izbori u demokratskom poretku*, Beograd: Centar za slobodne izbore I demokratiju, 2001, 49.

⁸ Светомир Шкарик, *Уставно право – втора книга*, Скопје: Union Trade, 1995, 297.

⁹ Endru Hejvud, op cit., 431

rule and those who are being ruled. It is a mechanism, which enables the ones being ruled to influence those who rule; a mechanism, which provides an answer about the winner and the loser in the battle for government; a mechanism, which entitles those who rule, to rule.

Besides these functions, the elections in one democratic society also have a “protective function, preventive function, psychological and indicative function.”¹⁰ All this, makes the elections one of the most interesting and the most important phenomena in one democratic society.

2. Defining the term electoral system

The large number of functions that the elections have in one democratic society is the main reason for the whole society's big interest of the way the elections are conducted. For each electoral process to be conducted in reality, it is necessary to have a number of norms, rules and procedures, according to which the elections will be conducted in practice. Such set of norms, rules and procedures, in science, is known as electoral system. “In theory, there is a difference between electoral system in narrow and broader sense of the word.”¹¹ The electoral system in narrow sense of the word is defined as a system with whose help the electoral voting results are transferred or transmitted in parliamentary mandates. Unlike the defining of the electoral system in a narrow sense of the word, the defining of the electoral system in a broader sense of the word defines the electoral system as a set of rules and procedures, which refer to the electoral system as a whole, starting from its very beginning until its end.

No matter which definition of the electoral system we will connect with, the question about the connection between democracy and the electoral system always arises. For many theoreticians “the electoral system represents a central nerve of the democratic order.”¹² Why? Because the role of the elections in one society depends on the way they are conducted, and in this respect the electoral system gives the answer according to which rules the elections will be conducted in one society. The elections have a meaning in one democratic society only when the rules for their conduction are

¹⁰ Саво Климовски, Рената Дескоска, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички систем*, Скопје: Просветно дело, 2009, 371-372.

¹¹ Дитер Нолен, Мирјана Касаповиќ, *Изборни системи во Источна Европа*, Скопје: Фондација “Фридрих Еберт, 1997, 7.

¹² Vladimir Goati, op cit.,56.

accepted by all democratic forces in the society and when the rules enable maintaining equal, universal, secret, free, fair and direct elections. “Only then the elections can be an act which will influence complete and thorough acceptance of democratic political legitimacy of the elected.”¹³ On the contrary, the electoral process loses its own meaning. The lack of democratic elections will immediately downgrade the meaning of the elections; it will cast a doubt regarding the legitimacy of those who rule, and with that the basic function of the elections will be lost – legitimate function and power to select the people’s representatives. The elections are becoming redundant in one society unless they do not contribute to the democratic legitimacy of those who rule. Therefore, it can be concluded that the elections and the democracy are mutually dependent and consistent phenomena. “On the one hand, practicing free, secret, multiparty, fair, direct, universal and equal elections is considered to be a reliable indicator for the existence of democracy in one country, and on the other hand, the democracy is an attribute, i.e. criterion for qualifying and classifying the elections.”¹⁴

3. The influence of the electoral system on the political system

The existence of direct connection between the elections, the electoral system and democracy makes the creation of “the electoral system one of the key steps in the process of creating institutional design of one country.”¹⁵ It is true that the creation of “electoral system is done in accordance with the deep and essential characteristics of a political order, but it is also true that the electoral system has a great role in the character and development of certain political system.”¹⁶ Huge number of theoreticians during the XX century have been exploring and have been talking about the big influence of the electoral system over the stability of the political system, the consolidation or fragmentation of the party system, the stability of the government, the relationships between the elected and the voters, voters turnout and citizens interest for the election process, corruption of the election process, conflict management process in one divided society etc.

¹³ Milan Matic, Milan Podunavac, *Politicki sistem: Teoriji I Principe*, Beograd: Fakultet Politickih Nauka, 2007, 330.

¹⁴ Анета Јовевска, *Изборните концепти во теориите на демократијата*, Скопје: Институт за социолошки и политичко – правни истражувања, 1999, 13.

¹⁵ Renata Deskoska, “Proportional Electoral Model and Types of Candidate Lists”, *Iustinianus Primus Law Review* Vol.2 No.2, Скопје: Правен факултет Јустинијан Први, 2011, 1

¹⁶ Milan Matic, op cit.,335.

In the beginning, when analyzing the influence of the electoral system on the development and functioning of the political system, we would like to emphasize that the use of the different electoral systems can influence the voters turnout and citizens' interest for the election process. "Turnout is usually higher at elections in countries with Proportional electoral system than in countries without"¹⁷. In addition, "higher turnout has been noticed in Proportional electoral systems where preferential voting is allowed and where open electoral lists are being used rather than in Proportional electoral systems in which the electoral lists are closed."¹⁸ The explanation is very simple. In Proportional electoral systems the voters have the feeling that their vote at the end of the electoral process will not be wasted and that it will be represented in the parliament. Moreover, where there is a possibility for preferential voting, the voter has the feeling that they directly influence and decide who will be the elected through the possibility for ranking the nominated candidates. All this makes the ordinary voter feel that their vote has weight and that it truly has a meaning and makes changes in the system. Hurt by such a feeling, the voters will be more interested in the electoral system and more motivated to give their vote on the day of the elections. However we should have in mind that also a low turnout and voters' interest is possible to happen in Proportional electoral systems with open electoral lists when the way of voting is overcomplicated and confusing for the ordinary people. Such situation can scare citizens or, even, result in a number of invalid ballots. Therefore, care must be taken in order to create an electoral system, that will enable easy of voting state for the voters.¹⁹

The analysis of the impact the electoral system has on the development and functioning of the political system will be continued with the positions of the great Giovanni Sartori and Maurice Duverger. In his famous work *Comparative Constitutional Engineering* Sartori will emphasize that "the electoral systems are not only the most manipulative instrument of politics but also they influence the shaping of the party system and the determination of representativeness."²⁰ In this regard, Maurice Duverger will create the famous Duverger's Law, according to which "the Proportional electoral system creates conditions for forming multiparty system, the

¹⁷Simon Hix , Ron Johnson and Iain McLean, *Choosing an Electoral System*, London: British Academy (Policy Centre), 2010, 16.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Andrew Reynolds, Ben Reilly and Andrew Ellis, *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, Stockholm: Trydells Tryckeri AB, 2008, 10.

²⁰ Џовани Сартори, *Компаративен уставен инженеринг*, Скопје: Табернакул, 2009, 14.

Majoritarian electoral systems creates not many political parties that are allied with each other and often are in coalition with each other and First-Past-The-Post system creates two-party system.”²¹ If we look at the information from the political systems all over the world, it can be noticed that in most cases the Plurality/Majority electoral systems contribute to reduction of the number of political parties and for stabilizing the party systems, while, on the other hand, the Proportional electoral systems contribute to an increase in the number of political parties and establishment of multiparty system. Maurice Duverger’s Law is explained with Mechanical and Psychological effects²². Considering that the Plurality/Majority electoral systems in the constituency most often elect only one candidate, the voters who want to vote for smaller parties usually face the dilemma whether to vote for the candidate of the smaller party, so their vote will be lost or, to vote for a candidate who has a big chance to be elected. Such dilemma is in favor of the big parties, whose candidates have greater chance to win in the single-member constituencies. On the other hand, taking into account that the calculation of the mandates in the Proportional electoral systems is taking place proportionally according to the votes gained, the voters have the feeling that their vote will not be lost and will be represented in the Parliament even if they vote for smaller parties. Such fact encourages the voters to vote for smaller parties and thus contribute to a greater number of parties to enter the parliament.

Starting from this Maurice Duverger’s Law, we come to the position that the Plurality/Majority electoral systems influence the stabilization of the party system, and with that stabilization of the position of the government in one country. Giving the dominant role to two big political parties (UK, USA) or to two big political tabors composed of more parties (France), often in such systems, the party which had won the elections can independently form a government. For the Plurality/Majority electoral systems “the coalition governments” are virtually unknown”.²³ This state of affairs is praised for providing cabinets which are not shackled by the restraints of having to bargain with a minority coalition partner.²⁴ “All that leads to easy formation and existence of stable and homogeneous government that enables the representatives

²¹ Саво Климовски, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички партии и интересни групи*, Скопје: Правен факултет Јустинијан Први, 2006, 190.

²² Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,6.

²³ David M. Farrel, *Electoral Systems: A comparative Introduction*, New York: Palgrave, 2001, 20.

²⁴ Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,36.

of the majority to have the power and to manage the system, which is in compliance with the principles of democracy”²⁵. At the same time, the theoreticians who recommend the Plurality/Majority electoral systems claim that besides the fact that this systems produces coherent and stable government, it, also,”produces coherent, strong and organized oppositions, which is always ready to control, criticize and to be an alternative for the current government.”²⁶

On the other hand, the Proportional electoral system usually results in many political parties becoming a part of the parliament, thereby contributing to creating coalition governments. That may lead to a situation where “minority parties to hold larger parties to ransom in coalition negotiations”²⁷ that will produce difficult formation and survival of the governments. Furthermore, such electoral system can lead to formation of unprincipled governments, composed of political parties that have completely different views as to how the country should develop. The mixture of oil and water in coalition government can lead to “legislative gridlock and consequent inability to carry out coherent policies.”²⁸ Weimar Germany, today Belgium and Italy, are examples of how a fragmented party system can lead to conditions in which it is almost impossible to create and maintain functional government. Belgium is a country which holds a record in a period without elected government (589 days), and if we make a comparison between the United Kingdom and Italy, we can notice that in the last 20 years the United Kingdom has had only four Prime Ministers, while Italy has had even nine Prime Ministers. Of all those, Silvio Berlusconi was a Prime Minister of Italy in three different periods.

However, we should bear in mind that there are examples where even the Plurality/Majority electoral systems influenced the creation of multiparty systems, while, the Proportional electoral systems lead towards stabilization of the party system and reduction of the number of political parties in the political system. Quite often, India is taken as an example where, although First-Past-The-Post is applied, still the ultimate effect is existence of multiparty system. Republic of Macedonia is, also, an example where in the course of the 90s, although the Majority two round electoral system was applied, still even nine political parties secured their seat in the

²⁵ Саво Климовски, Рената Дескоска, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички систем*, Скопје: Просветно дело, 2009, 385.

²⁶ Анета Јовевска, *op cit.*, 207

²⁷ Andrew Reynolds, *op cit.*, 59.

²⁸ *Ibid*

Macedonian Assembly. On the other hand, South African Republic is known as an example of country that applies Proportional electoral system; yet, often in this country we witness creation of homogeneous single-party government. Such exceptions tell us that despite the electoral system, the development of the party system in one political system is also influenced by the historical development of the societal divisions in one society.”²⁹ Moreover, it should be taken into account that when creating the Proportional electoral systems the introduction of the electoral threshold plays a major role over the party system. Almost every country, that has implemented the Proportional electoral system with the aim not to allow too big fragmentation of the party system, they introduce electoral threshold. The electoral threshold effectively eliminates smaller parties thus at the end of the electoral process starts producing three or four effective political parties. All that leads to easy establishment and existence of a stable government in that political system. Germany’s example can be used in this respect, where the introduction of 5% electoral threshold leads to a situation in which only three or four political parties pass the threshold and become part of the German Bundestag. An additional data for this argument is also the fact that in the last 20 years Germany has had only three chancellors. (Bigger stability of the government even from United Kingdom) Apart from Germany, we also have the following examples Netherland (0,67%), Sweden (4%), Norway (4%), Poland (5%), Turkey (10%) etc.

In order for the political system to gain stability, the creators of the electoral systems often have to do such sacrificing the representativeness. In this regard, the Plurality/Majority electoral systems often can “create a number of lost/wasted votes and mirror the field of play in the parliament which does not correspond with the citizens’ mood”³⁰ The Plurality/Majority electoral systems often is conducted in single-member constituency that in the end leads to “large number of voters who do not support the winning candidate”.³¹ Due to the fact that only one candidate is elected, all votes which were not cast for the winning candidate, in this case, are lost/wasted. All that, in the end, when the total votes will be counted, can lead a lot of votes to be lost and great difference between the votes gained and gained mandates. In

²⁹ Саво Климовски, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички партии и интересни групи*, Скопје: Правен факултет Јустинијан Први, 2006, 197.

³⁰ Саво Климовски, Рената Дескоска, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички систем*, Скопје: Просветно дело, 2009, 385.

³¹ David M. Farrel, op cit.,21.

example, during the Macedonian parliamentary elections in 1994, the Alliance for Macedonia with gained 30% of the voters votes earned even 80% of the seats in the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia. These unreal images of the citizens' mood are real for almost all the parliamentary elections in the United Kingdom. In 1983, the Conservative Party of the United Kingdom with gained 42,4% votes from the voters had earned 61,1% of the seats in the House of Commons, and in 1997, the Labour Party with gained 43,2 percent of the votes had earned even 63,4% of the seats in the parliament. This electoral system can lead to such unreal image for the citizens' mood in one country, and it may even happen that a certain party may gain, in total, the largest number of votes from the voters, thus not to transform in most won mandates. That is, the winner of the elections is a party which did not gain the most number of the voters' votes, in total. In 1951, the Conservative Party of the UK with gained 48% of the voters votes, had earned 51.4% of the mandates in the parliament, while, the Labour Party with gained 48,8% of the voters votes, earned 47,2% of the parliament seats. That indicates that the winner of the 1951 elections in the United Kingdom had been the party, which did not enjoy the confidence of the British citizens. This situation was repeated once again in 1974, but this time in favor of the Labour Party. The disproportion of the Plurality/Majority electoral systems can be seen also in the fact that "plurality/majority electoral systems eliminate the smaller parties from the fight for the place in the parliament."³² Again, if we analyze the UK we will come to the conclusion that the third party was almost always unfairly treated by the British electoral system. On the 1983 elections, the UK Labour Party was the second one, according to the number of votes, with 27.6% of the votes, which have transformed in 32.2% of parliamentary seats. On the same elections, the UK Liberal Party which was third according to the number of votes, managed to make great progress and won even 25,4% of the votes, but gained only 3.5% of the parliamentary seats in the House of Commons. The supporters of the Plurality/Majority electoral systems say that eliminating the smaller political parties apart from forming stable and homogeneous government, also contributes for "protection of the system from the extreme political parties."³³ A number of theoreticians believe that the Proportional electoral system is one of the reasons for the success of Hitler's political party during Weimar Germany

³² Саво Климовски, Рената Дескоска, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички систем*, Скопје: Просветно дело, 2009, 385.

³³ Саво Климовски, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички партии и интересни групи*, Скопје: Правен факултет Јустинијан Први, 2006, 243.

and “that such success could have been avoided by using the British electoral system.”³⁴

However, the question is to what extent the representativeness should be sacrificed to ensure stability of the political system. The excessive sacrifice of the representativeness can produce a counter effect, i.e. instability of the political system. “The feeling that the electoral system is unfair and the political framework does not allow the opposition to feel that they have a chance to win next time around losers may feel compelled to work outside the system, using non – democratic and even violent tactics.”³⁵ Additionally, without such feeling the question is whether the big disproportion between the votes gained and the seats gained in the parliament, as well as the great number of votes wasted that produce Plurality/Majority electoral systems are in compliance with the idea of the representative democracy? Motivated by these dilemmas, theoreticians, who were dealing with the electoral design in XIX century, are forming the Proportional electoral system. The name of the electoral system itself indicates that the goal of this electoral system retains the proportionality between the votes gained and the gained mandates. Using different formulas for calculating the votes in parliamentary seats, the Proportional electoral system is creating much more faithful image for the citizens’ mood in the country towards the political subjects who take part in the electoral race³⁶. It is believed that this system “prevents creation of artificial, constructed political majorities, which do not have real support by the voters”³⁷. In such electoral systems it is impossible for the winner of the elections to be a party that had not gained the highest number of votes in total. “The Proportional electoral system enables representation of all political parties depending on the total number of gained votes”³⁸, and with that it leaves the opportunity for success of the smaller political parties. This is especially important for divided societies in which we encounter political parties of certain minorities. Paying more attention to representativeness rather than stability, the Proportional electoral systems generate less wasted votes, thus even if the citizens would vote for a party that has gained less

³⁴ Slavisa Orlovic, *Izborni sistem I Institucionalni dizajn*, 9. available at <http://izbornareforma.rs/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/zbornik/Slavisa%20Orlovic%20-%20Izborni%20sistem%20i%20institucionalni%20dizajn.pdf>

³⁵ Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,6.

³⁶ Саво Климовски, Рената Дескоска, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички систем*, Скопје: Просветно дело, 2009, 385.

³⁷ Анета Јовевска, op cit.,205

³⁸ Уставно право – Шкарик и Силјановска – стр 478

votes in its electoral district, still there is a great chance for their votes not to be lost and to be represented in the parliament. It should be taken into account that using different formulas to calculate votes into mandates can offer different degree of proportionality. It is believed that the Hare quota produces the most proportional, while, the use of the Imperiali quota and D'Hondt's method is considered to have contributed to smaller proportionality.³⁹ In this regard the Hare quota is more suitable for smaller parties, Droop's quota and Sainte-Lague are more suitable for medium political parties and the Imperiali quota and D'Hondt's method for bigger political parties. Having analyzed that also in the Proportional electoral systems certain factors can influence for bigger or smaller degree of proportionality, it should be mentioned that the play with the electoral threshold and the size of the constituencies may lead to a situation where the Proportional electoral systems will produce a lot of wasted votes and less proportional results in comparison even to the Plurality/Majority electoral systems. As we have already mentioned, in Proportional electoral systems, in order not to allow too big party system fragmentation, usually the electoral threshold is introduced. However, placing a high electoral threshold can cause a lot of votes to be wasted although the model that is being used is the Proportional one. "A striking example of this was the 2002 Turkish election, in which so many parties failed to clear the 10% threshold that 46% of all votes were lost."⁴⁰ These examples show that sometimes in the Proportional electoral systems the number of the lost votes is bigger than in the Plurality/Majority electoral systems. The size of the constituency also plays a big role over the degree of proportionality in the Proportional electoral systems. "The connection between proportionality and size of the electoral district is proportional."⁴¹ The big constituency will produce bigger proportionality and vice versa, smaller constituencies will produce smaller proportionality. Therefore, the best way to maximize proportionality is to have the entire country as one constituency⁴². However, such solutions are rare in practice. Very few countries decide the whole their territory to be one constituency (Israel, Moldova, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Ukraine). As far as the political parties are concerned, we can easily conclude that the big constituencies are more suitable for smaller political parties and small

³⁹ David M. Farrel, op cit.,78.

⁴⁰ Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,83.

⁴¹ Саво Климовски, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички партии и интересни групи*, Скопје: Правен факултет Јустинијан Први, 2006, 274.

⁴² David M. Farrel, op cit.,79.

constituencies are more suitable for the big political parties. Spain and Chile can serve as an example where although Proportional electoral system is applied playing with the size of constituencies usually produces effects of Plurality/Majority electoral systems.

Already previously, we have mentioned that the Proportional electoral systems enable far greater representativeness rather than the Plurality/Majority electoral systems. In this regard, “the Proportional electoral systems are almost always more friendly to the election of women than Plurality/Majority systems.”⁴³ However, this conclusion applies to Proportional electoral systems with closed electoral lists. The closed electoral lists allow use of electoral quotas in order to increase the presence of women in the parliament. By inserting the mandatory places for women, thus having no opportunity to influence the ballots, the closed electoral lists guarantee that certain number of women will be present in the parliament. In theory and practice there are examples of where each second or third candidate from the electoral list has to be a woman. Such societies can boast about their high percentage of women in the parliament. In the Proportional electoral systems that use open electoral lists it is almost impossible to insist on application of quotas because the electoral lists are open for the influence of the ordinary voters. Thus in a particular society dominated by the patriarchal spirit, it is very probable that the voters will change the order of candidates, despite the fact that the party list has women candidates, and to place the women at the bottom of the electoral lists. Having positioned them on the last places of the electoral lists, it is very difficult to believe that someone placed there will succeed to secure its place in the Parliament. All this, in the end of the electoral process could result in parliament with modest number of female representatives.

We continue our analysis of the electoral system’s influence on the political system with the influence the electoral system has on conflict management. The possibility to create unrealistic image for the citizens’ mood, the loss of many votes and the elimination of the small parties, makes most of the Plurality/Majority electoral systems not so attractive for the divided societies. “Sir Arthur Louis, in his book *Politics in West Africa* will highlight that the introduction of the Anglo-American Majoritarian electoral system is the most secure way to kill the idea of democracy in

⁴³ Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,61.

one plural society.”⁴⁴ “In societies where deep societal division exists, the inclusion of all significant groups in the legislature can be a near – essential condition for democratic consolidation.”⁴⁵ Therefore, in almost all divided societies, the Proportional electoral system is always applied. However, whether the application of the Proportional electoral system foresees application of open or closed electoral lists is of crucial meaning for the conflict management process in one society. Although the open electoral lists seem much more democratic, they still can be a factor that will contribute fuel passion in one society. Driven by the fact that in the open lists the final decision for election depends on the decision of the ordinary citizen, the candidates willing to get closer to the ordinary voters might be inclined towards promoting a populist and nationalistic policy. “In Kosovo a switch from closed to open lists actually enhanced the presence of more extremist candidates⁴⁶”. Many theoreticians believe that closed electoral lists, but accompanied by “pre-electoral coalitions between parties of different segments lead to the development of moderate political forces.”⁴⁷ If the political parties of the different segments are creating pre-electoral coalition and come out before the citizens with mutual closed list, then those listed candidates in their own performances will have to be more careful not to hurt the feelings of those from the other segment and with that to lose the citizens’ votes from that segment. All that can lead to moderate candidates, who will contribute for normalizing and stabilization of the relationship between the different segments in one divided society.

The decision about which electoral system will be applied in one society may have a great influence on the accountability of the elected and the relationship between the voters and the elected. “The biggest degree of closeness between the elected and the voters and the accountability of the elected is realized in First-Past-The-Post system, while the lowest degree is in the Proportional electoral systems with closed lists.”⁴⁸ This is so, because the Plurality/Majority electoral systems are usually conducted in single-member constituencies in which the voting is for a candidate, and not for a

⁴⁴ Мајкл Галагер и Пол Мичел, *Политика на изборни системи*, Скопје: Академски печат, 2009, 380.

⁴⁵ Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,57.

⁴⁶ Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,90.

⁴⁷ Мајкл Галагер и Пол Мичел, *Политика на изборни системи*, Скопје: Академски печат, 2009, 381.

⁴⁸ Slavisa Orlovic, op cit.,7.

political party⁴⁹. The quality of the candidate, and not the belonging and his loyalty towards certain political party, plays a major role for success and the choice of the candidate. Single-member constituencies presuppose existence of great number of small constituencies⁵⁰, and the small constituencies enable to make immediate and bigger contact between the candidates and the voters. Allowing immediate and bigger contact, the combination of single-member and small constituencies will give the voters some space to better get to know the candidate and according to that to decide whether the candidate deserves or does not deserve their vote. The Plurality/Majority electoral systems do not allow the shortcomings of certain candidate to be hidden in closed party list composed of larger number of candidates. Due to all this, in these constituencies, “the elected representative is feeling more accountable to the electoral body and less accountable to the political party behind his candidacy”⁵¹. Since only one representative is elected from each constituency, the candidates elected in the parliament act as representatives of their constituency, who represent the interests of their constituencies. Each voter has a constituency MP who can be approached.⁵² Hence, it can be concluded that the Plurality/Majority electoral systems converge much more to the imperative mandate. However, the insisting of large accountability and direct contact between the elected and the voters can be a negative influence on the development of the political system. Representing the interests of their constituencies, the elected candidates are increasingly turning to partial interests of their voters and less towards the general interests.⁵³ So, when deciding on matters of importance for the whole country those elected with these electoral rules can be prisoners to the local interests. In this direction we can use the example of the House of Representatives in USA where in its work one can feel the spirit of so called provincialism. Additionally, the application of such electoral systems can contribute to creating greater dependence of the elected by the voters. For example, it had been reported that one MP from Japan attended twenty-five to thirty funerals and about ten weddings a month in his constituency⁵⁴. A fundamental question arises and that is whether attending weddings and funerals is part of the job description of member of parliament? On the other hand, the proportional electoral systems contribute to bigger

⁴⁹ Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,37.

⁵⁰ Светомир Шкарик, Гордана Силјановска, *Уставно право*, Скопје: Култура, 2009, 475.

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² David M. Farrel, op cit.,20.

⁵³ Светомир Шкарик, Гордана Силјановска, *Уставно право*, Скопје: Култура, 2009, 475.

⁵⁴ Renata Deskoska, op cit.,8.

independence of the elected candidates by the voters and representing the general over the partial interests. The Proportional electoral systems are getting much closer to the theory for representative mandate. However, “the establishment of weak connection between the voters and the elected is prescribed to the Proportional electoral system”⁵⁵ because the voting is done in multi-member constituencies for party candidates list. In the Proportional electoral systems, the country is divided into “fewer constituencies with a bigger territory and greater number of voters.”⁵⁶ In the bigger constituencies, establishing direct contact between the voters and the candidates will be much harder, and with that the candidates will be more distant from their voters and the voters are not able to get to know better the suggested candidates. Additionally, the application of multi-member constituencies prevents concentrating on accountability on one point and identification of the voters with their representative. Usually, in the Proportional electoral systems the term constituency politician is completely unknown. “The lack of the representative’s local identification, and also lack of the identification with the voters interests is considered to be one of the main disadvantages of the Proportional electoral systems.”⁵⁷

When we are talking about the Proportional electoral systems and their influence on the accountability and the link between the elected and the voters we should have in mind that there is a big difference between the Proportional electoral systems with closed lists and the open lists. The weak relationship between the voters and the elected is characteristic for the Proportional electoral systems that use closed electoral lists. In these electoral systems “the list is drawn up by the parties and all the voters can do is select one list for one party”⁵⁸, which means that “voters have no influence over the decision about who shall represent the party of their choice.”⁵⁹ The voters may not agree with the way the ranking of the candidates on the party list had been done, but still do not have an option to influence the party list. The Proportional electoral systems with closed lists allowed some candidates to be elected due to their loyalty to the political party for which they run, and not because the fact that the citizens believe that those candidates own qualities and can best represent their interests. The closed political lists allow election of incompetent candidates, who have

⁵⁵ Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,71.

⁵⁶ Светомир Шкарик, Гордана Силјановска, *Уставно право*, Скопје: Култура, 2009, 476.

⁵⁷ Саво Климовски, Тања Каракамишева, *Политички партии и интересни групи*, Скопје: Правен факултет Јустинијан Први, 2006, 259.

⁵⁸ David M. Farrel, op cit.,83.

⁵⁹ Renata Deskoska, op cit.,4.

been put on the list only because of their loyalty to the political party. Therefore, the Proportional electoral systems with closed electoral lists “prevent voters from holding individual politicians to account for their actions.”⁶⁰

However, in the countries where the Proportional electoral system is used, but with open lists “voters can indicate not just their favored party but their favored candidate within that party.”⁶¹ In such electoral systems the success of the candidates once again depends on the voters and not on the political party. This fact can affect the establishment of strong link between the voters and elected and high degree of accountability of the elected candidates. Certain authors believe that even “constituency link seems to be stronger under Open-List PR in Denmark or STV in Ireland than under the British FPTP system.”⁶²

Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that the Plurality/Majority electoral systems and the Proportional electoral systems which use open electoral lists, although they contribute to establishing strong link between the elected and the voters, also, can contribute to a greater degree of political corruption and clientelism. Such a condition is possible due to the existence of direct link between the electoral body and the nominated candidate for MP.⁶³ The direct contact between the electoral body and the nominated candidate opens up the door so the nominated candidates can lobby for gaining votes by offering constituency services and personal favors.⁶⁴

The last aspect which will be discussed in this paper and is about the influence of the electoral system over the political system is connected to party cohesion. Proportional electoral systems with closed list in particular enable parties to control their politicians, because under these system parties control on which position each candidate is placed on the list.⁶⁵ In these systems, whether the candidates will be put on the list and which position will that be on the electoral list depends on the party leadership. Such electoral systems reinforce the position of the party leaders and affect the establishment of strong party discipline within the political parties. The members of political parties, in order to find themselves on the winning position on the electoral lists, will aim to get closer to the party leadership rather than to enter into conflict with them. On the other hand, the Proportional electoral systems with open

⁶⁰ Simon Hix, op cit.,23.

⁶¹ Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,84.

⁶² Simon Hix, op cit.,23.

⁶³ Светомир Шкарик, Гордана Силјановска, *Уставно право*, Скопје: Култура, 2009, 476.

⁶⁴ Renata Deskoska, op cit.,8.

⁶⁵ Simon Hix, op cit.,23.

party lists affect the decreased role of the party leaders⁶⁶. The candidates' performance in these systems depends on their qualities to convince the voters and not the party leaders why they should be chosen. It should be taken into account that the open lists hide great danger of violating the party cohesion and war between each other in the framework of one party, in a condition when candidates from within the same party are effectively competing with each other for votes⁶⁷ (*Bellum omnium contra omnes*). The Plurality/Majority electoral systems are somewhere between these two extremes⁶⁸ because the candidates do not compete against candidates from their own party but against candidates from other political party, and at the same time, the decisive factor for their election are their relations with the voters in that constituency and the relations with the party leadership. Nevertheless, we have to bear in mind that, in the countries where Plurality/Majority electoral systems and Proportional electoral system with open electoral lists are applied, the party discipline and cohesion can also be great (UK, Ireland). Usually in such systems there are special party whips that are responsible for establishing party cohesion and voting discipline in the parliament.

Conclusion

The analysis of the influence of the electoral system over the development and functioning of the political system tells us that one of the most important steps in creating the institutional design is also the electoral engineering. Various electoral solutions are contributing to the appearance and development of various phenomena in the political system. In most cases, the different electoral systems and ways for calculating the mandates can have a great impact on the stability of the political system, consolidation or fragmentation of the party system, the stability of the government, the relations between the elected and the voters, the voters turnout and citizens' interest for the electoral process, the corruption of the electoral process, the conflicts management in one divided society. However, it has to be taken into account that apart from the electoral system, the historical development of the societal division in one society has also a great role in the development of a political system.

⁶⁶ Simon Hix, op cit.,.24.

⁶⁷ Andrew Reynolds, op cit.,84.

⁶⁸ Simon Hix, op cit.,.24.

In most of the cases, Plurality/Majority electoral systems can contribute to the stabilization of the party system and establishment of two-party system, while, the Proportional electoral systems can contribute to the emergence of large number of political parties, i.e. multi-party system. However, the theory and practice tell us that there are exceptions to this rule. The electoral threshold game, the size of the constituency, as well as special social, ethnic, religious and economic divisions can lead to situations in which the Proportional electoral systems will stabilize the party system and vice versa, the Plurality/Majority electoral systems will contribute to their fragmentation. The Plurality/Majority electoral systems allow easy formation of stable government, in order to achieve that, they sacrifice representativeness and proportionality. On the other hand, the Proportional electoral systems insisting the representativeness and proportionality allow formation of coalition governments, which in certain situations can establish themselves as a big problem for the formation and maintaining stability of the government. Once again, we should bear in mind that the play with the electoral threshold and the size of the constituency can lead to major disproportion and lost votes in the Proportional electoral systems. The Plurality/Majority electoral systems are not so attractive for the divided societies because they can give unrealistic image for the citizens' mood which can, thus, lead to many lost votes. The divided societies, in which representativeness is extremely important, are connected to Proportional electoral systems. Still, it has to be noted that the Proportional electoral systems with open electoral lists can contribute to the development of populism and nationalism which will have a negative impact on the stability of a divided society. As for the conflicts management between different segments in one divided society, the use of closed electoral lists is recommended, but closed electoral lists accompanied with pre-electoral coalitions between political parties of different segments. Pre-electoral coalitions between political parties on different segments will allow emerging of moderate politicians, who will be careful not to harm the interests of those belonging to other segments. The Plurality/Majority electoral systems and the Proportional electoral systems with open lists for candidates result with bigger accountability, as well as strong and direct connection between the voters and the elected while, the Proportional electoral systems with closed electoral lists result in weak connection between the electoral body and the elected. Therefore, the Plurality/Majority electoral systems and the Proportional electoral systems allow the voters to have a big impact on who will be elected, while, the Proportional

electoral systems with closed electoral lists minimize the influence on the decision about who will be elected. The little impact on the decision about who will be elected in the Proportional electoral systems with closed lists opens up the possibility to use quotas and promote categories which are under-represented in society (women and members of minority communities). The Proportional electoral systems with closed electoral lists usually contribute to strong party hierarchy and strong position of the party leader. Unlike them, the Proportional electoral systems with open electoral lists reduce the power of the party leaders and in certain situations can lead to fragmentation and conflicts within the political parties.

Having all those exceptions in mind, it is still inevitable to say that the electoral systems are of great importance to the development and functioning of the political system. Thus, the creators when creating the electoral system have to be careful and knowledgeable of the electoral issue and to know exactly what kind of effects they want to achieve or avoid by creating the electoral system. The insufficient knowledge of issues related to the effects of the electoral systems may have large consequences over the development and functioning of the political system. The well-known political scientist Joseph LaPalombara will emphasize that “the constitution and the setting of the organization of the government provides a framework of democracy, but the political parties and the elections are the heart and souls of democracy”; or said differently, it is difficult to have healthy democracy with a corrupt soul.

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