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RIVERSIDE

Electoral Reform in Presidential Systems

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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by

Hoju Cheong

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Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Indridi Indridason, Chairperson

Dr. Shaun Bowler

Dr. Noel Pereyra-Johnston

Dr. Diogo Ferrari

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The Dissertation of Hoju Cheong is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom, In Suk Moon, who bravely beat colon cancer.

Your bravery, love, and sacrifice made all this happen.



## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

### Electoral Reforms in Presidential Systems

by

Hoju Cheong

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Political Science  
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Dr. Indridi Indridason, Chairperson

This study focuses on changes in the electoral system in presidential democracies and examines presidential involvement in such changes and the resulting outcomes. As presidents need legislative support to advance their agenda, they are incentivized to shape the electoral systems used for legislative elections in favor of their parties. I argue that the president's political resources and context—presidential powers, forms of government, and public support—affect the process and outcomes of electoral reform. Specifically, I examine whether the reform is influenced by presidential power and, second, if the reform does happen, what kinds of reforms occur and how they are shaped by the political context, such as the forms of government or public support.

The existing literature concentrates on parliamentary system reforms and suggests reforms are primarily driven by parties. While parties are likely to be significant players in presidential systems, an executive who doesn't rely on the legislature's confidence represents an additional independent actor who wields crucial political powers. In fact,

presidents can leverage their vetoes, decrees, and the right to call a referendum to achieve desired reforms while countering competing reforms favorable to the opposition. If the parties acknowledge the president's possession of these political means to engage in electoral reform, they may align more with the president's agenda. This power asymmetry can influence the probability and trajectory of electoral reform. However, this is not always the case if there is a minority situation that is not conducive to the president's influence or if public disapproval toward the president is high. This is the very reason why the power resources that the president has and the political context that those lie in should be considered simultaneously.

The study of electoral reform is especially relevant today. The slide towards more autocratic forms of government these days was not suddenly caused by force but rather by subtle and incremental institutional reforms. This study places electoral reform within the context of democratic development and helps us understand a process that has undermined democracy.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

In 1994, the newly elected President of Mexico, Zedillo, used his inaugural speech to explain the reasons for his electoral reform proposal. By his logic, Mexico needed electoral reform to dispel “the suspicions, recriminations, and mistrusts that tarnish the electoral processes.”(Garrido de Sierra 2012). He strongly justified electoral reform by saying the “elections of 1997 should be unquestionable and that we all end satisfied, indistinctly of the results”. A few weeks after his speech, Zedillo obtained his desired electoral reform. Like in the example above, the president tends to be involved in the electoral reform process in presidential systems. The reason why the president tends to engage in electoral reform is simple. Electoral systems ultimately affect the allocations of seats in the legislature and can, therefore, alter the balance of power between the president and legislature or between parties. In presidential systems, legislative support is crucial for effective governing, thus incentivizing a president to participate in electoral reforms. Given that the policies that the executive branch wants to introduce are highly dependent on legislative passage, electoral reform can play a crucial role in deciding the direction of state affairs and presidential success or failure.

However, despite the significance of electoral reform, it is hard to find literature focusing on electoral reforms conducted in presidential systems. The mainstream electoral reform literature is focused on reforms in parliamentary systems, where parties are the main drivers of reform. This literature’s tendency goes back to the fact that neo-institutionalism, which focuses on how political and institutional differences make

different political and economic phenomena, mainly focuses on advanced democracies that currently have a parliamentary system, not a presidential system. In short, in this stream, the studies focusing on the electoral system in the presidential system have been excluded from consideration. Given that the new democracies brought by the third wave (late 1970 ~ late 1980) adopted the presidential system and are experiencing relatively more rapid political, economic, and social changes than the advanced democracies, this theoretical vacuum should be filled quickly. There are a few theoretical attempts to fill this gap (e.g., Benoit and Hayden 2004; Faure and Venter 2003; Fauvelle-Aymar, Lewis-Beck, and Nadeau 2011; Garrido de Sierra 2012; Kortukov 2020; Lehoucq and Molina 2002; Lehoucq 2000; Nikolenyi 2011; Remington and Smith 1996; Shugart, Moreno, and Fajardo 2007). They show that electoral reforms do not occur only at the behest of parties but are also influenced by other actors such as constitutional organizations—a president mainly in this case. Remarkably, these studies suggest that presidents have the power resources to be efficiently used for the electoral reform process, contributing to achieving the president's desired results in the electoral reform. These studies found that the president used veto power, decree, and the right to call on the referendum entailed in the presidency for electoral reform (Benoit and Hayden 2004; Fauvelle-Aymar, Lewis-Beck, and Nadeau 2011; Garrido de Sierra 2012; Lehoucq 2000; Nikolenyi 2011; Remington and Smith 1996; Shugart, Moreno, and Fajardo 2007) In particular, when calling a referendum, the president appealed to the people based on popular leadership (Lehoucq and Molina 2002; Shugart, Moreno, and Fajardo 2007). However, these research studies on reform in presidential systems are still far less rigorous and systematic than the

literature on reform in parliamentary systems since they only dealt with a few individual cases. Therefore, it must provide a solid theoretical framework to capture and analyze this phenomenon academically.

This dissertation wants to fill such a theoretical gap. This research also intends to look into the political conditions that affect presidential engagement in the electoral reform process, such as the forms of government and popular support. The reasons why this study wants to focus on the presidential system are based on some facts about presidential democracies.

First, the president usually tends to be a focal point in politics. In most presidential countries, the president is not only in charge of executive powers, distinct from legislative and judicial powers but also is endowed to wield several authorities as the head of state. Unlike the parliamentary cabinet system, in which legislative elections organize the executive branch, the president, in most cases, is elected by the direct national election, and the cabinet decided by her enjoys strong legitimacy from the people. Sometimes. This legitimacy from the people empowers the president in the confrontation with Congress. In addition, it is necessary to point out that most presidential countries are still at a stage of democratic consolidation or are relatively new democracies. Since each constitutional institution's institutionalization level is low in these countries, a conflict between institutional actors regarding who should take the lead in state affairs occurs often. In this situation, some political actors (typically the president and their followers in the presidential system) work hard to gain the upper hand in this conflict. Electoral reforms can be understood as one way of reshaping the political

landscape and altering the relative strength of different political actors. Thus, presidents often seek to change the political environment to make it more favorable to them via electoral reform and strengthen their hold on state affairs. Some presidential systems endow presidents with more extraordinary powers, allowing them to make this work much more manageable. Considering that the slide towards more autocratic forms of government these days, in countries such as Hungary, Tunisia, and some Latin American countries, is not taking place by force but rather by subtle institutional reforms, the study of electoral reforms is highly relevant. Arguments made for reform rarely focus on the desire of political actors to strengthen their position. They are, instead, generally couched in normative arguments about the qualities of different electoral systems. It is, therefore, essential to demonstrate that reforms are often not driven by a desire to adopt better or fairer institutions. These facts give us considerable reasons to focus on electoral reform in presidential democracies.

### **What are Electoral Reforms and their Current Status?**

Election laws are a set of rules that apply throughout the election process. In other words, these rules apply to election announcements, candidate selection process, election campaigns, and vote calculation and announcement of election results (Farrell 2011; Massicotte, Blais, and Yoshinaka 2004). These rules may include rules regarding election operations, such as regulations on voter qualifications, compulsory voting in Australia and Belgium, the candidate selection process within the parties, and the election campaign process. Sometimes, countries decide to change these rules. In a broad sense, electoral reforms are any attempt to change a set of electoral rules.

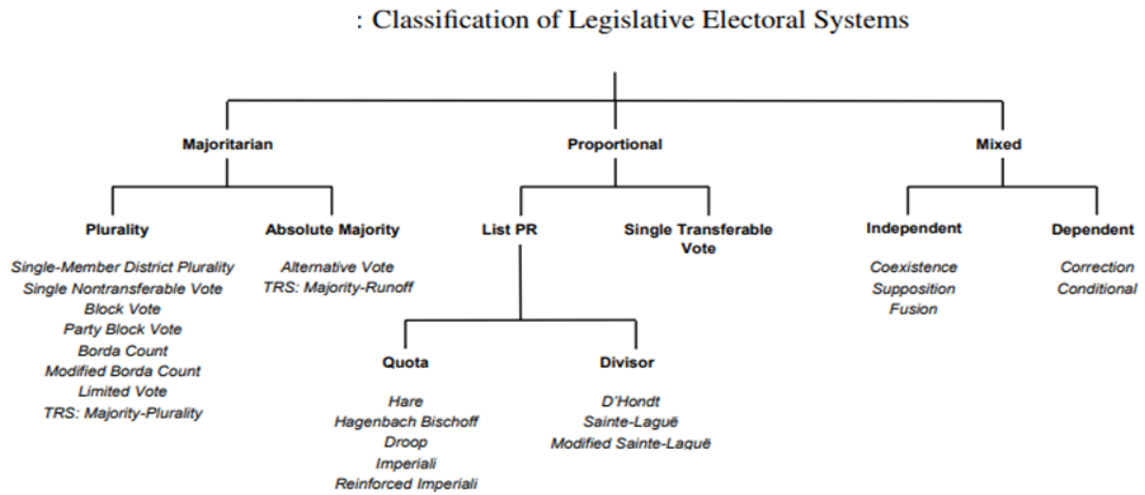
However, this study focuses on the rules related to the election process in the election law and their changes. These are the voting method, the shape of the ballot paper, the practice of calculating votes, and the method of deciding the winner. In a narrow sense, electoral reform means any change in these electoral rules that leads to a change in the operation of the electoral system (Celis, Krook, and Meier 2011; Renwick 2010).

According to Katz (2005), electoral reform is a change in the ‘electoral formulae’ of national electoral systems. Lijphart (1994) also specifies reforms as any changes containing the electoral formula or any change of at least 20 percent in district magnitude, legal threshold, or assembly size. Those components of the electoral system directly or indirectly affect the transfer of vote share to the seat share (Rae 1971). In other words, electoral systems ultimately affect the allocations of seats in the legislature and affect the power balance between the ruling party and the opposition and between the legislature and executive. If there is a change in the electoral system, changes in the power dynamic certainly follow. That is why the parties and presidents are actively involved in this game and seek a favorable outcome for them. This dissertation wants to talk about this power balance and the president’s influence on electoral reform; therefore, electoral reform in this research aligns with this narrow definition. In other words, the electoral reform here means any changes in the electoral system. Earlier, Rae (1971) classified district magnitude, electoral formula, and ballot structure into three components of the electoral system. The district magnitude is the number of legislative members elected in one constituency. The ballot structure decides how the electorate votes.

Depending on whether the voter only picks one candidate or provides preferences toward all the candidates, the former is the categorical type, while the latter is the ordinal type. Last, the electoral formula is the way of transferring the vote share to the seat shares. Although there are various types, majoritarian (including a majority rule), proportional, and mixed systems are typically considered the main categories, and under these three broad categories, more specific formulae exist. In Figure 1, Borman and Golder (2022) provide their details.

**Figure 1**

The world of Legislative Electoral Systems (Source: Borman and Golder, 2022)



When classifying the types of electoral systems, it is common to arrange them primarily based on the electoral formula rather than all three criteria together. That is partially because majoritarian, proportional, and mixed systems are usually seen as differing in terms of proportionality in converting votes into seats. According to Farrell (2011), the principle of proportional systems is to guarantee that “the number of seats each party wins reflects as closely as possible the number of votes it received,” while non-proportional systems such as plurality and absolute majority under the category of majoritarian assure “that one party has a clear majority of seats over its competitors, thereby increasing the prospect of strong and stable government.” Accordingly, election results using proportional systems tend to show high proportionality with no significant difference between the vote and seat share. In contrast, a majoritarian system produces low proportionality because majoritarian countries usually adopt a one-member constituency system and a simple plurality or majority rule, resulting in massive wasted votes in most cases. Mixed systems are a hybrid between those two systems designed to reflect the advantages of the two systems simultaneously. Mixed systems use a multi-tier district electoral system, and the majoritarian and proportional systems are adopted in the different tiers.

However, this distinction based on proportionality may be true on average, but it can easily ignore the variance within the types. For example, while proportional systems usually guarantee greater proportionality, legal thresholds and small district magnitudes easily distort that proportionality. The legal threshold is the condition for a political party to be allocated seats. The condition is related to the national constituency vote share in



some cases or the number of seats won in the local districts. It plays a role in preventing the proliferation of minor political parties in the legislature. Because of this threshold, the minor political parties' vote shares are not proportionally transferred to the seat share. In short, this threshold gives a more significant advantage to the major parties. Farrell (2011) states that the Greek reinforced proportional system set a high legal threshold of 17% of the national constituency vote share. It effectively blocked entries of the minor parties having less than 17% vote share to the legislature and allotted the seats which could have been given to the minor parties to the major parties only. The threshold significantly distorts the election results, favoring the major political parties. The district magnitude is another factor distorting the proportionality within the system. Generally, a larger district magnitude—a more significant number of representatives elected in each constituency—tends to secure high proportionality by allowing as many candidates as possible to be elected within the district and decreasing the number of wasted votes. In this sense, only one national constituency, in which all the legislative seats are allocated, is ideal, but that is a rare case. In most cases, the government divides the whole country into several districts and allocates a particular number of seats to each district. It results in many wasted votes, which cannot be used to elect someone finally. In mixed systems as well, there are significant variations. First, as aforementioned, the mixed system uses multi-tier districts, which allocate a certain number of seats to the upper tier, a wider region, or the whole country. The election system attached to each tier is also different. Commonly, a majoritarian system is applied to the lower tier. In contrast, a proportional system is applied to the upper tier, but in terms of specific electoral rules and formulas in

each system, there are many variations across the countries. This multi-tier districting method often resolves the discrepancy between the vote and seat share at the constituency level and increases proportionality. However, since the number of seats allocated to each tier also varies across the countries, and the number of seats each tier has and the district magnitude influenced by those assigned seats affect the level of proportionality seriously, the variations in the number of seats in each tier cause a considerable variation in the proportionality of election results in each country. As for the types of mixed systems, they are divided into mixed-member majoritarian representation (MMM) and mixed-member proportional representation (MMP) (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001). Mixed-member majoritarian representation is a system where the disproportional results of the majoritarian component prevail over the proportional component. Usually, this system uses parallel voting, in which voters separately cast a vote to the tiers attached to a different electoral system. This means that those votes are counted independently, and the vote cast for one tier is not used for the others. In contrast, mixed-member proportional representation (MMP) asks for more than one vote for each tier. However, based on the vote share from the upper tier—the national constituency district, the allocation of the seats is decided. For example, Germany, a representative MMP country, allocates legislative seats to each political party in proportion to the vote share that the party got through the proportional representation system in the second tier. This vote share decides the number of seats allocated to each party, and within that number of seats, the seats for the party's local district congress members (elected through the single-member district system) and for members from the national constituency. It has the characteristic of fully

inheriting the function of the proportional representation system, which ensures that the ratio of seats for each party in the legislature is proportional to the vote share for the party in the upper tier while enabling the parallel implementation of the single-member district system. Last, within the majoritarian systems, there is less variation. This is partially because this system does not aim for proportionality in the first place and adopts a simple plurality or majority rule.

Therefore, the cases of electoral reform that this study seeks to look at are the changes within and between these systems. In other words, any changes within each type or the switch from one of these types to the other is considered a typical electoral reform case. Accordingly, this study defines the changes in the electoral system, specific formulae, the number of tiers, the types of mixed electoral systems, and significant changes in average district magnitude as important electoral reform cases.

### **Electoral Reform within the Type**

Based on the dataset “Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World 1946-2020” (Bormann and Golder 2022), there have been 116 electoral reform cases in 51 presidential/semi-presidential democracies. Among 116 reforms, 61 were in presidential systems, while 55 were in semi-presidential systems. Also, regarding types of changes, 71 are reforms with direct changes in the electoral rules and/or formula. At the same time, 45 are the reforms with indirect modifications, such as changes in average district magnitudes and an electoral threshold. Table 1 includes the details of the former.

**Table 1**

The Reforms with Direct Changes in the Electoral Rules and/or Formula (Source: Borman and Golder, 2022)<sup>1</sup>

<b>Changed System</b> <b>Previous System</b>	Majoritarian	Mixed	Proportional
Majoritarian	6	5	2
Mixed	2	9	9
Proportional	3	9	26
<b>Total (71)</b>	11	23	37

<sup>1</sup> Bormann & Golder (2022) classified 12 types of electoral systems used in the election. 1. Single-Member-District-Plurality (SMDP) 2. Two-Round System (TRS) 3. Alternative Vote (AV) 4. Borda Count (BC) 5. Block Vote (BV) 6. Party Block Vote (PBV) 7. Limited Vote (LV) 8. Single Nontransferable Vote (SNTV) (Above, majoritarian system) 9. List Proportional Representation (List PR) 10. Single Transferable Vote (STV) (Above, proportional system) 11. Mixed Dependent (or Mixed Member Proportional) 12. Mixed Independent (or Mixed Parallel) (Mixed System). Regarding the electoral formula, 25 types were identified: 1. Single-Member-District-Plurality (SMDP) 2. Majority-Plurality Two-Round System 3. Qualified Two Round System 4. Majority Runoff Two Round System 5. Alternative Vote (AV) 6. Borda Count (BC) 7. Modified Borda Count (mBC) 8. Block Vote (BV) 9. Party Block Vote (PBV) 10. Limited Vote (LV) 11. Single Nontransferable Vote (SNTV) (Above, majoritarian system), 12. Hare quota 13. Hare quota with largest remainders 14. Hare quota with highest average remainders 15. Hagenbach-Bischoff quota 16. Hagenbach-Bischoff quota with largest remainders 17. Hagenbach-Bischoff quota with highest average remainders 18. Droop quota 19. Droop quota with largest remainders 20. Droop quota with highest average remainders 21. Imperiali quota 22. Imperiali quota with largest remainders 23. Imperiali quota with highest average remainders 24. Reinforced Imperiali quota 25. D’Hondt 26. Sainte-Laguë 27. Modified Sainte-Laguë 28. Single Transferable Vote (Above, proportional system). Last, they classified five types of mixed electoral system. 1. Coexistence 2. Superposition 3. Fusion 4. Correction 5. Conditional. The first three are classified as MMM, while the other two are MMP. I considered any value change in any of these categories in the dataset as electoral reform cases.

This table shows several characteristics of the changes. First, it shows that the changes to the majoritarian system are 11, the proportional system is 37, and the mixed system is 23. However, it does not mean the absolute popularity of the proportional system. Most of the reforms of proportional systems retained proportional representation. Likewise, the changes within the system are most popular in the reforms in two other types, too. This popularity of within-type change may be caused by convenience and less institutional resistance. However, since there is considerable variance even within-type, it is necessary to take a closer look. Below are the explanations of the within-type changes.

### ***Majoritarian to Majoritarian System***

First, in the majoritarian group, there are Single-Member-District-Plurality (SMDP), Two-Round System, Alternative Vote, Borda Count, Block Vote, Party Block Vote, Limited Vote, and Single Nontransferable Vote. I found thirteen electoral reform cases from eight countries that successfully changed from this majoritarian group. Among these thirteen cases, six changed the system within the same majoritarian groups, two of them to a proportional system and five to a mixed system. In other words, the countries using majoritarian systems most preferred sticking with a majoritarian system, followed by the mixed system, and preferred PR systems least.

The most preferred within-system reforms occur in three countries: Argentina (1951, 1958 legislative elections), Kenya (2013), and Mongolia (1996, 2008, 2020). Table 2 below shows the details of those reforms. Simply put, those changes do not hint

at the particular patterns within this group. Argentina first adopted a limited vote system<sup>2</sup>, a majoritarian system with a greater proportionality than SMDP, changed to a simple plurality rule, and then returned to the limited vote system. However, only six years later, Argentina changed this system to a proportional one. Mongolia is even more complicated to find any pattern. Like Argentina, Mongolia started with another type of majoritarian system—Block vote<sup>3</sup>—first but changed it to a two-round system, and before long, it returned to block vote. Later, Mongolia changed it to a mixed independent system, having a qualified two-round system in the first tier, and again changed that system to SMDP. Now, they returned to the block vote that they adopted very first again.

As for Kenya, it almost kept the current system except for adding a second tier, although a new constitution creating a reform had re-introduced the Senate, and the county governments. The new second tier is for these county governments, also decided by the SMDP rule. Those changes affected the effective number of parties—ENPP, as Table 2 below shows. In other words, these changes decided the system's level of proportionality. As a conventional classification, the block vote shows the least proportional level, followed by SMDP, a two-round system, and a limited vote.

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<sup>2</sup> According to Farrell (2001), limited vote “is a candidate-centered system used in multi-member districts in which voters have multiple votes, but fewer votes than there are districts seats. The candidates with the most votes are elected.”

<sup>3</sup> According to Farrell (2001), “The block vote is essentially the same as the single nontransferable vote system except that individuals now have as many votes as there are seats in a district to be filled. When presented with a list of candidates from various parties, voters can use as many or as few of their votes as they wish; however, they can give only one vote to any one candidate. The candidates with the most votes are elected. This helps to explain why the block vote is sometimes referred to as plurality-at-large voting.”

Despite such inconsistent patterns, there is one thing in common. The countries with this type of reform were in their early democratic years or were still new democracies. Given this fact, the reason for choosing the majoritarian immediately after democratization and then promoting within-system change instead of between-system change is pretty understandable. The motivation for selecting the majoritarian system is usually to create a more robust and stable government by giving more votes to one party than the others. The reason why these countries adopted the majoritarian in the first place may be associated with this motivation. From the beginning, they wanted to create a more stable and strong government with a majoritarian system. Moreover, it seems they tried to stick with this principle after democratization. Even if they faced a situation where electoral reform was necessary, they remained within the majoritarian system. Still, they tried to find the best system matching their country's context within the majoritarian system.

**Table 2**

## Electoral Reform from Majoritarian to Majoritarian System

Country	Election Year with a New System	Previous Electoral System : Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers) <sup>4</sup>	New Electoral System: Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	Lower Tier Average District Magnitude (Change)	ENPP
Argentina	1951	Limited Vote (Modified Borda Count)	SMDP (SMDP)	1.07 (-4.2)	1.21 (▼-0.54)
Argentina	1958	SMDP (SMDP)	Limited Vote (Modified Borda Count)	8.13 (7.1)	1.72 (▲0.46)
Kenya	2013	SMDP (SMDP)	SMDP (SMDP, SMDP)	1 (0)	5.10 (▲1.58)
Mongolia	1996	Block Vote (Block Vote)	Two-Round System (Qualified Two Round System)	1 (-1.92)	1.85 (▲0.68)
Mongolia	2008	Two-Round System (Qualified Two Round System)	Block Vote (Block Vote)	2.92 (1.92)	2.05 (▼-0.17)
Mongolia	2020	SMDP (SMDP)	Block Vote (Block Vote)	2.62 (1.62)	1.46 (▲0.11)

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<sup>4</sup> In parentheses, in order: first tier, second tier, third tier.



### ***Proportional to Proportional System***

In the proportional systems, there is a List Proportional Representation (List PR) having sixteen different electoral formulas to transfer the vote shares to seat shares (Hare quota, Hare quota with largest remainders, Hare quota with highest average remainders, Hagenbach-Bischoff quota, Hagenbach-Bischoff quota with largest remainders, Hagenbach-Bischoff quota with highest average remainders, Droop quota, Droop quota with largest remainders, Droop quota with highest average remainders, Imperiali quota, Imperiali quota with largest remainders, Imperiali quota with highest average remainders, Reinforced Imperiali quota, D'Hondt, Sainte-Laguë, Modified Sainte-Laguë), and the Single Transferable Vote (STV). I found 38 electoral reforms in 27 countries changing from one of these proportional systems. Among these 38 cases, twenty-six changed the system within the same proportional groups, three to a majoritarian system, and nine to a mixed system. The countries employing proportional systems most preferred adopting a different variant of proportional representation, followed by the mixed system, and least preferred the majoritarian system.

Seventeen countries using proportional representation adopted a different proportional representation system: Austria (1994 legislative election), Benin (1995, 2015), Bolivia (1993), Bosnia (2002), Brazil (1950), Colombia (2006), Greek Cyprus (1985), Ecuador (1979, 2009, 2013), Guatemala (1966, 1990), Iceland (1987, 2003), Indonesia (2019), Nicaragua (1996, 2001), Peru (1963), Poland (1993, 2001, 2005), El Salvador (1991, 2018), Slovakia (2012), Slovenia (2014). Given the number of alternative formulas they can easily choose within the system, it is unsurprising that their

first choice is within-system change. Changing the formula only is the most convenient option given the fact that electoral reform sometimes requires amendment of the constitution. Also, the total changes in the types can bring quite uncertainties to the current political landscape, but this formula change within the same PR system gives some degree of predictability, bringing the least risk regarding the reform that may cause an intense backlash.

Many electoral reform cases are caused by the change in this formula and the addition of new tiers. Benin (1995, 2015), Bolivia (1993), Greek Cyprus (1985), Iceland (1987), Nicaragua (2001), Poland (1993, 2001), Slovakia (2012), and Slovenia (2014) are included in the former cases. In these cases, the proportionality difference between formulas generally known decides the proportionality of new systems. For example, if the country decided D'hondt, which is evaluated as the least proportional formula, as a new formula instead of the Hare quota, which has the highest proportionality, then the overall proportionality of the new electoral system would be lower. ENPPs shown in the table below reflect this fact. In addition, in some cases, changes in district magnitude and the number of districts in the first tier appear to fan this effect. When Greek Cyprus (1985) decided on a Hare quota with the largest remainders and increased the first tier's district magnitude from 8.33 to 9.33, the ENPP grew. Also, when Poland (1993) decided to increase the number of the first tier's districts from 37 to 52, ENPP got significantly lower. Austria (1994), Bosnia (2002), Guatemala (1990), Nicaragua (1996), Poland (2001), and El Salvador (1991) are the cases where the addition of new tiers—mostly a second-tier—changed the system's proportionality. The number of upper seats in these

countries except Poland was increased from as few as 12 to as many as 67, increasing the proportion of upper seats to at least 22% and up to 50%. This addition of the tier increased the ENPPs. Poland is a case where the upper tier was eliminated. However, in this case, a change to a highly proportional formula and increasing the district magnitude in the first tier increased the proportionality.

Aside from those cases, in the case of Colombia (2006), the change in the number of seats from 166 to 163 affected increased ENPP, while in Ecuador (2009), it switched to an open-list PR where voters could vote for candidates, resulting in the lower ENPPs. As for Iceland (2003), the reform in Iceland in 2003 involved reducing the number of districts from 8 to 6, and more people (previous: 50, after the reform: 54) started to be elected in the district while allocating 9 proportionally at the upper tier (previously, 13). The growing ENPP seems influenced by the reduction of the number of districts but the increase of the district magnitude in the lower tier. This fact may match the argument that if the system is PR, district magnitude can influence the ENPP more. Last, in Poland (2005), even if the formula changed from Modified Sainte-Laguë to D'Hondt, the ENPP grew. This is because the major coalition, the Democratic left alliance – Labor Union, was split, resulting in the benefits to other parties.

**Table 3**

## Electoral Reform from Proportional to Proportional System

Country	Election Year with a New System	Previous Electoral System : Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	New Electoral System : Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	Lower Tier Average District Magnitude (Change)	ENPP
Austria	1994	List PR (Hare quota, D'hondt)	List PR (Hare quota, Hare quota, D'hondt - New)	4.26 (-16.07)	3.73 (▲0.74)
Benin	1995	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	List PR (Hare quota with highest average remainders)	4.61 (-6.06)	6.69 (▼-2.07)
Benin	2015	List PR (Hare quota with highest average remainders)	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	3.46 (0)	4.66 (▲2.02)
Bolivia	1993	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	List PR (Sainte-Lague)	14.44 (0)	3.74 (▼-0.18)
Bosnia	2002	List PR (Hare quota)	List PR (Sainte-Lague, Sainte-Lague - New)	5.25 (0)	9.09 (▲1.80)
Brazil	1950	List PR (Hare quota)	List PR (Hare quota with highest average remainders)	12.16 (-0.84)	4.11 <sup>5</sup>
Colombia	2006	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	List PR (D'Hondt)	4.88 (0)	7.19 (▲0.02)

<sup>5</sup> ENPP for Brazil in 1947 is not available; I could not calculate the difference.

Greek Cyprus	1985	List PR (Hare quota)	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	9.33 (1)	3.57 (▲0.18)
Ecuador	1979	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, Hare quota with largest remainders - New)	2.85 <sup>6</sup>	3.95
Ecuador	2009	List PR (D'hondt)	List PR (Sainte-Lague, Sainte-Lague - New)	4.29 (-0.21)	3.46 (▼-2.11)
Ecuador	2013	List PR (Sainte-Lague, Sainte-Lague)	List PR (D'Hondt, Sainte-Lague)	5.71 (1.42)	1.75 (▼-1.71)
Guatemala	1966	List PR (Hare quota)	List PR (D'Hondt)	2.5 (-0.5)	2.32 <sup>7</sup>
Guatemala	1990	List PR (D'Hondt)	List PR (D'Hondt , D'Hondt - New)	3.87 (0.87)	4.43 (▲1.62)
Iceland	1987	List PR (D'Hondt, D'Hondt)	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, D'Hondt)	6.25 (0.12)	5.35 (▲1.28)
Iceland	2003	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, D'Hondt)	List PR (D'Hondt , D'Hondt)	10.5 (4.25)	3.71 (▲0.26)
Indonesia	2019	List PR (Hare quota with the largest remainder)	List PR (Sainte-Lague)	7.19 (-0.08)	7.47 (▼-0.69)

<sup>6</sup> A district magnitude and Enpp for Ecuador in 1962 are missing in the dataset.

<sup>7</sup> ENPP for Guatemala in 1961 is missing in the dataset; I could not calculate the difference in ENPP.

Nicaragua	1996	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, Hare quota with largest remainders - New)	4.38 (-5.63)	2.7 (▲0.65)
Nicaragua	2001	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, Hare quota with largest remainders)	List PR (Hare quota with highest average remainders, Hare quota with highest average remainders)	4.12 (-0.26)	2.04 (▼-0.66)
Peru	1963	List PR (Hare quota with large remainders)	List PR (D'Hondt)	5.79 (-1.79)	3.54 <sup>8</sup>
Poland	1993	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, Modified Sainte-Laguë)	List PR (D'Hondt, Modified Sainte-Laguë)	7.52 (-3.05)	3.88 (▼-6.99)
Poland	2001	List PR (D'Hondt, Modified Sainte-Laguë)	List PR (Modified Sainte-Laguë, Tier removed)	11.22 (3.7)	3.6 (▲0.65)
Poland	2005	List PR (Modified Sainte-Laguë)	List PR (D'Hondt)	11.22 (0)	4.26 (▲0.66)
El Salvador	1991	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, Hare quota with largest remainders)	4.57 (0.28)	3.01 (▲0.6)

<sup>8</sup> ENPP for Peru in 1962 is missing in the dataset; I could not calculate the difference in ENPP.

			remainders - New)		
El Salvador	2018	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, Hare quota with largest remainders)	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, Tier removed)	6 (0)	4.02 (▲0.87)
Slovakia	2012	List PR (Droop quota with largest remainders)	List PR (Hagenbach-Bischoff quota with largest remainders)	150 (0)	2.88 (▼-1.13)
Slovenia	2014	List PR (Hare quota, D'Hondt)	List PR (Droop quota, D'Hondt)	11 (0)	4.15 (▼-0.37)

### *Mixed to Mixed System*

Mixed dependent (or Mixed Member Proportional) and Mixed independent (or Mixed Member Majoritarian, Mixed Parallel) systems are the main types of mixed electoral systems. There are five subcategories below these two categories: Coexistence, Superposition, Fusion, Correction, and Conditional. Among them, the cases where some districts have a majoritarian while others employ a proportional formula—Coexistence, where two are assigned to different tiers—Superposition, where two systems are utilized to a single district—Fusion are mixed independent system (MMM), while the cases where the proportional seats are used to “correct” the disproportionality produced by the majoritarian formula and where the application of one formula is dependent on the electoral outcome caused by another formula are mixed dependent system (MMP).

I found twenty-one electoral reforms in eighteen countries where one of these mixed systems was initially used. Among them, nine cases were stuck with a different form of a mixed-member system, two switched to a majoritarian system, and another nine switched to a proportional representation system. Similar to the case of the proportional systems, the countries that had a mixed system also most liked the changes within the mixed system and toward the proportional system, and least liked the majoritarian system. The within-system change occurred in seven countries: Armenia (1999 legislative election), Georgia (2016), Lithuania (2000, 2004), Niger (2004, 2011), South Korea (2020), Taiwan (2008), and Venezuela (2000). Most cases are the change from mixed independent to another mixed independent system or the ones modifying the majoritarian sides of the system, which is often the first tier (e.g., Armenia, Georgia,



Lithuania, 2000, 2004, Taiwan, 2008). As for the other cases, there is one case where the proportional side of the system is modified (Niger, 2004), another case changing the subcategory of the mixed system from coexistence to superposition (i.e., Niger, 2011), the other removing one tier (i.e., Venezuela<sup>9</sup>). Interestingly, there are even two cases where a new type combines two subcategories. This is a Korean case in 2020, in which seventeen seats for the proportional side (total: 47) were applicable by the superposition as previously, while 30 seats were now used to correct the distorted proportionality created by the majoritarian side.

In terms of the proportionality change after adopting a new system, differences could be seen in almost every case. In some cases, general proportionality differences within the majoritarian system used in one tier decide the post-reform proportionality, such as in Lithuania (2004) and Taiwan (2008).<sup>10</sup> Moreover, there is another case where the institutional changes in the proportional side, like tier removal (e.g., Venezuela, 2000) or an upper tier's portion, made a difference. In particular, in 1999, Armenia increased the portion of seats allocated in the upper tier from 21.05 to 42.72, dramatically expanding the proportionality of the electoral system. There is also a case where the change in the mixed system's subcategory made only a slight difference in proportionality. There is another where a percentage of the vote a candidate must obtain in the first round made a difference. Specifically, compared to the majority-plurality two-

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<sup>9</sup> The 2000 Venezuela reform changed the number of tiers in the system. Originally, the systems ran three tiers which the second and third tier used PR while the first only had SMDP. However, under a new system in 2000, the last tier run with a Hare quota, which tends to promote a better proportionality, was removed.

<sup>10</sup> In terms of the proportionality, a two-round system has higher proportionality than a simple majority system, and SNTV has higher proportionality than a two-round system

round system, which requires an absolute majority even in the first round, qualified two-round systems tend to require less than a majority in the first round. This means that there can be more parties in the second round in the qualified two-round systems than in the majority-plurality two-round system, implying that more diverse political parties are more likely to be elected in the final round. Accordingly, when Georgia 2016 changed from qualified to majority-plurality, the ENPP got lower. However, institutional differences do not clearly explain changes in proportionality in Lithuania (2000) and South Korea (2020). In the former case, it was difficult to understand the reason because all electoral system components were the same except for the changed formula in the lower tier, and in the latter case, it was because the two major parties created satellite parties to avoid the influence of the modified system.

**Table 4**

## Electoral Reform from Mixed to Mixed System

Country	Election Year with a New System	Previous Electoral System : Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	New Electoral System: Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	Lower tier average District magnitude (Change)	ENPP
Armenia	1999	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (Qualified Two-Round System, Hare quota with largest remainders)	Mixed Independent (Superposition) ( <b>SMDP</b> , Hare quota with largest remainders)	1 (0)	3.97 (▲1.45)
Georgia	2016	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (Qualified Two Round System, Hare quota with largest remainders)	Mixed Independent (Superposition) ( <b>Majority-Plurality Two Round System</b> , Hare quota with largest remainders)	1 (0)	1.61 (▼-0.36)
Lithuania	2000	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (Majority Runoff Two Round System, Hare quota with largest remainders)	Mixed Independent (Superposition) ( <b>SMDP</b> , Hare quota with largest remainders)	1 (0)	3.52 (▲0.19)
Lithuania	2004	Mixed Independent (Superposition) ( <b>SMDP</b> , Hare quota with largest remainders)	Mixed Independent (Superposition) ( <b>Majority Runoff Two Round System</b> , Hare quota with largest remainders)	1 (0)	5.49 (▲1.97)

			largest remainders)		
Niger <sup>11</sup>	2004	Mixed Independent (Coexistence) (Hare quota with largest remainders, SMDP)	Mixed Independent (Coexistence) ( <b>Hare quota with highest average remainders, SMDP</b> )	13.13	3.72
Niger	2011	Mixed Independent (Coexistence) (Hare quota with highest average remainders, SMDP)	Mixed Independent ( <b>Superposition</b> ) (Hare quota with highest average remainders, SMDP)	13.12 (-0.01)	4.51 ( <b>▲0.79</b> )
South Korea	2020	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (SMDP, Hare quota with largest remainders)	Mixed Independent ( <b>Superposition: 17 seats</b> ) and Dependent ( <b>Correction: 30 seats</b> )	1 (0)	2.09 ( <b>▼-0.76</b> )
Taiwan	2008	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (SNTV, Hare quota with largest remainders)	Mixed Independent (Superposition) ( <b>SMDP, Party Block Vote</b> )	1 (-4.79)	1.75 ( <b>▼-1.51</b> )
Venezuela <sup>12</sup>	2000	Mixed Dependent (Correction) (SMDP, D'Hondt, Hare quota)	Mixed Dependent (Correction) (SMDP, D'Hondt, <b>Tier removed</b> )		3.44 ( <b>▼-2.61</b> )

<sup>11</sup> The previous democratic election was an 1995 election; thus I did not calculate the differences in a district magnitude and ENPP

<sup>12</sup> A district magnitude data for Venezuela (2000) is missing.

## **Electoral Reform Between the Types**

### ***Change from Majoritarian to either PR or Mixed system***

I found seven cases that successfully changed these majoritarian electoral systems to either proportional or mixed systems. Among them, two cases—Argentina (1963 legislative elections) and France (1986)—changed its system to a proportional system while five cases—Macedonia (1998), Madagascar (2013), Mongolia (2012), Philippines (1998), Ukraine (1998)—to a mixed system. As we saw earlier, these countries prefer the within-type change the most. However, after this, the second choice is the mixed system, and the PR system comes in last.

These preferences may be relevant to Duverger's law (1954): Simple plurality rule (Majoritarian system) promotes a two-party system while the proportional system fosters a multi-party system. After adopting the majoritarian system, a robust two-party system usually follows. Because of the mechanical and psychological effects of the majoritarian rule, the two major parties always have electoral advantages. Indeed, those two parties rarely want to give up these advantages by changing the electoral rule, which can remove their electoral advantage. However, where dominant parties perceive their internal and external situation as threatening their electoral position. In such circumstances, they may modify the electoral system in self-defense. According to Boix (1999), in the process of democratic consolidation in early democratic countries similar to these cases, the non-proportional system, which could create a loss of power, was replaced with a proportional system that allows those still in power to maintain a certain amount of power. The motivation for the change from a majoritarian to a proportional

system can be understood in this sense. However, countries prefer the mixed system with more majoritarian features to a complete proportional system. The ENPPs (Effective Number of Parliament Parties) in the tables below suggest why this is the case. When a system changes from a majoritarian to a proportional system, the number of parties entering the parliament vastly increases. From the dominant party's perspective, more parties they had to deal with got seats in the parliament. However, in the case of the change from a majoritarian to a mixed system, it does not require a significant change in the district magnitude. In some cases, the ENPPs even decrease. It implies that the mixed system is not necessarily favorable to the minor parties but helps the dominant parties.

**Table 5**

## Electoral Reform from Majoritarian to Proportional System

Country	Election Year with a New System	Previous Electoral System : Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	New Electoral System: Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	Lower Tier Average District Magnitude (Change)	ENPP
Argentina	1963	Limited Vote (Modified Borda Count)	List PR (D'Hondt)	8.35 (4.18)	5.06 (▲2.94)
France	1986	Two-Round System (Majority-Plurality Two-Round System)	List PR (Hare quota with highest average remainders)	5.79 (4.79)	3.9 (▲1.22)

**Table 6**

## Electoral Reform from Majoritarian to Mixed System

Country	Election Year with a New System	Previous Electoral System : Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	New Electoral System: Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	Lower Tier Average District Magnitude (Change)	ENPP
Macedonia	1998	Two-Round System (Majority-Plurality Two-Round System)	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (Majority Runoff Two-Round System, D'Hondt - New tier)	1 (0)	2.93 (▼-0.3)
Madagascar <sup>13</sup>	2013	SMDP (Hare quota)	Mixed Independent (Coexistence) (Hare quota with highest average remainders)	1.23 (0.18)	
Mongolia	2012	Block Vote (Block Vote)	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (Qualified Two Round System, Hare quota with largest remainders - New)	1.85 (-1.07)	3.01 (▲0.96)
Philippines	1998	SMDP (SMDP)	Mixed Dependent (Correction) (SMDP, N/A)	1 (0)	3.08 (▼-0.54)
Ukraine	1998	Two Round system (Majority runoff )	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (SMDP, Hare quota with largest remainders - New)	1 (0)	9.73 (▼-3.48)

<sup>13</sup> ENPP for 2013 in Madagascar is missing in the dataset



### *Change from Proportional to either Majoritarian or Mixed system*

I found 12 electoral reforms where proportional representation was abandoned for a different type of electoral system. Among them, France (1988), Sierra Leone (2002), and Somalia (1960) adopted a majoritarian system. Bolivia (1997), Bulgaria (2009), Ecuador (1998), Madagascar (1998), Moldova (2019), Panama (1989), Romania (2008), Ukraine (2012), and Venezuela (1993) changed to a mixed system. As Table 1 shows, although the proportional countries' most popular choice was a change within the system, after this, the countries tended to prefer a mixed system to a majoritarian system. The reason why the mixed system is the second best is that the mixed system does not entirely give up the proportional system, pursuing the least vote-share disproportionality. In fact, in terms of proportionality, there is a difference between the proportional and the mixed system. The tables below show this distinct point.

First, when the proportional system changed to a majoritarian system, the ENPPs tended to decrease. The cases in France and Sierra Leone show this decrease. However, as in Somalia, there was an increase. To understand this exceptional case, it is necessary to consider that Somalia in 1960 was right after the independence and experienced unification between different regions governed by other foreign countries. When the proportional system changed to the mixed system, finding a consistent pattern of change in the ENPPs observed in every country was intricate. Generally, proportional systems have greater vote-seat "proportionality" and get a higher ENPP than mixed systems. Therefore, as Bulgaria, Madagascar, and Moldova show, there should decrease in ENPPs after a change from a proportional to a mixed system. However, following the other

reforms, an opposite pattern is captured. This is because these countries adopted the MMP, not the MMM, designed to correct the vote-seat disproportionality from the lower electoral tier or expand the sizes of the upper tier the Hare quota was chosen. Bolivia and Venezuela are representative of the former. They adopted the MMP and added new tiers, replacing the first tier's district magnitudes' losses. Those new tiers designed to correct the first tier's disproportionality eventually instead promoted the increases in ENPP even after the system change. Ecuador and Ukraine are included in the latter. These countries did not adopt MMP but decided to expand the sizes of the upper tiers where the Hare quota is used. Ecuador extended the size of the upper tier up to around 17% (previously 12%) of the total seats, and Ukraine enlarged it to 50% (once 0%). Because of this, these countries' ENPPs are as similar as or even higher than the previous one after the reform. Compared to the lower tier, where the majoritarian is usually applied, which gives advantages to the major parties, increasing the upper tier with the PR system can facilitate minor parties' elections.

**Table 7**

## Electoral Reform from Proportional to Majoritarian System

Country	Election Year with a New System	Previous Electoral System : Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	New Electoral System: Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	Lower Tier Average District Magnitude (Change)	ENPP
France	1988	List PR (Hare quota with highest average remainders)	TRS (Majority-Plurality Two-Round System)	1 (-4.79)	3.07 (▼-0.83)
Sierra Leone	2002	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	SMDP (SMDP)	1 (-67)	1.65 (▼-2.17)
Somalia	1960	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	SMDP (SMDP)	2.75 (0.18)	2.00 (▲0.83)

**Table 8**

## Electoral Reform from Proportional to Mixed System

Country	Election Year with a New System	Previous Electoral System : Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	New Electoral System: Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	Lower Tier Average District Magnitude (Change)	ENPP
Bolivia	1997	List PR (Sanite-Lague)	Mixed dependent (Correction) (SMDP, D'Hondt - New, SMDP - New)	1 (-13.44)	5.36 (▲1.62)
Bulgaria	2009	List PR (D'Hondt)	Mixed independent (Superposition) (SMDP, Hare quota with highest average remainders - New)	9 (-6.74)	3.34 (▼-1.46)
Ecuador	1998	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, Hare quota with largest remainders)	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (Block Vote, Hare quota with largest remainders)	4.76 (1.43)	5.66 (▲0.55)
Madagascar	1998	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	Mixed Independent (Coexistence) (Hare quota with highest average remainders)	1.24 (-1.1)	4.88 (▼-1.65)
Moldova	2019	List PR (D'Hondt)	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (SMDP, Party	50 (-51)	3.58 (▼-1.22)

			Block Vote - New)		
Panama <sup>14</sup>	1989	List PR (Hare quota)	Mixed Independent (Coexistence) (Hare quota with largest remainders)		
Romania <sup>15</sup>	2008	List PR (Hare quota, D'Hondt)	Mixed Dependent (Conditional) (N/A, N/A)		3.62 (▲0.24)
Ukraine	2012	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders)	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (SMDP, Hare quota with largest remainders - New)	1 (-449)	3.90 (▲0.6)
Venezuela	1993	List PR (D'Hondt, Hare quota)	Mixed Dependent (Correction) (SMDP, D'Hondt, Hare quota - New)	4 (-6.91)	4.74 (▲1.91)

<sup>14</sup> As for Panama (1989), the previous democratic election before 1989 was in 1968; thus, I did not calculate the differences in the district magnitude and ENPP.

<sup>15</sup> As for Romania (2008), the data indicating the district magnitude in 2008 was missing.

### *Change from a Mixed System to either a Majoritarian or Proportional System*

I found eleven cases of electoral reforms that changed a mixed system to either a majoritarian or a proportional system. Madagascar (2007) and Mongolia (2016) changed their system to a majoritarian system, while Bulgaria (2013), Croatia (2000), Ecuador (2002), Guatemala (1950), Iceland (1959), Macedonia (2002), Paraguay (1993), Romania (2016), Ukraine (2006) changed to a proportional system. Like other types, although these countries' most popular choice was a change within the system, which is from a mixed to a mixed system, after this top choice, the countries tend to prefer a proportional system to a majoritarian system. This ordering of choices might be related to the level of proportionality that mixed systems previously allowed. Once the existing mixed system allows minor political parties to enter parliament, it becomes difficult to introduce a new system like a majoritarian system that significantly regresses their entry. Despite this, there were cases where the existing mixed system was successfully changed to a majoritarian one in Madagascar and Mongolia. However, these changes are somewhat transitional. Only some years later, Madagascar again changed the majoritarian system to a mixed independent system while Mongolia changed it to a more relaxed version of majoritarian rule—Block vote.

The mixed system tends to change toward a proportional representation system. The proportional system is likely to increase proportionality. The cases in Ecuador, Paraguay, Romania, and Ukraine in Table 10 show that the proportionality of the electoral system in those countries improved after changing the system. However, there

are opposite cases, as Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, and Iceland indicate. Despite the system changes toward a proportional system, these countries' proportionality decreased. This is because of high electoral thresholds. In fact, parties had to receive at least 4% of the national vote to win any proportional seats in Bulgaria and 5% in Croatia and Macedonia, as asked in Germany. The case in Iceland required parties to win one constituency seat to be eligible for the compensatory seats. Additionally, a new reform cut the size of the second tier of compensatory seats and increased the number of seats for Reykjavík—the capital—from the prior elections. That caused the overall proportionality of the system to be lowered.

**Table 9**

## Electoral Reform from Mixed to Majoritarian System

Country	Election Year with a New System	Previous Electoral System : Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	New Electoral System: Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	Lower Tier Average District Magnitude (Change)	ENPP
Madagascar	2007	Mixed Independent (Coexistence) (Hare quota with highest average remainders)	SMDP (Hare quota)	1.05 (-0.27)	1.48 (▼-0.87)
Mongolia	2016	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (Qualified Two Round System, Hare quota with largest remainders)	SMDP (SMDP)	1 (-0.85)	1.34 (▼-1.67)



**Table 10**

## Electoral Reform from Mixed to Proportional System

Country	Election Year with a New System	Previous Electoral System : Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	New Electoral System: Electoral rule (Electoral Formular of the tiers)	Lower Tier Average District Magnitude (Change)	ENPP
Bulgaria	2013	Mixed independent (Superposition) (SMDP, Hare quota with highest average remainders)	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, Tier removed)	7.74 (6.74)	3.15 (▼-0.19)
Croatia	2000	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (SMDP, D'Hondt)	List PR (D'Hondt, Tier removed)	14 (13)	2.71 (▼-0.07)
Ecuador	2002	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (Block Vote, Hare quota with largest remainders)	List PR (D'hondt, Tier removed)	4.5 (-0.26)	7.19 (▲1.53)
Guatemala <sup>16</sup>	1950	Mixed Independent (Coexistence) (Hare quota)	List PR (Hare quota)	3.09 (0)	
Iceland	1959	Mixed Independent (Coexistence) (D'Hondt, D'Hondt)	List PR (D'Hondt, D'Hondt)	6.13 (4.63)	3.2 (▼-0.24)
Macedonia	2002	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (Majority Runoff Two-Round System, D'Hondt)	List PR (D'hondt, Tier removed)	20 (19)	2.81 (▼-0.12)
Paraguay	1993	Mixed Independent (Fusion)	List PR (D'Hondt)	4.44 (-67.56)	2.45 (▲0.56)

<sup>16</sup> ENPP for Guatemala (1950) was not available in the dataset

Romania <sup>17</sup>	2016	Mixed Dependent (Conditional)	List PR (Hare quota, D'Hondt)		3.51 (▲ 1.40)
Ukraine	2006	Mixed Independent (Superposition) (SMDP, Hare quota with largest remainders)	List PR (Hare quota with largest remainders, Tier removed)	450 (449)	3.41 (▲ 3.58)

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<sup>17</sup> District magnitude for Romania (2012) was unavailable; thus, I cannot calculate the difference in the district magnitude.

## **Reforms with indirect changes, such as changes in average district magnitudes, an electoral threshold**

The average district magnitude means how many seats were allocated to a district. If there is more than a one-seat change, this study counts it as electoral reform. The average district magnitude is crucial because it directly affects an electoral threshold. Suppose there is a change in the magnitude from 2 to 3. The electoral threshold decreases enormously from 33% to 25%. Eventually, this change of magnitude decides who and how many are elected. Accordingly, the average district magnitude change can be considered a case of electoral reforms, even if there is no direct change in the electoral system or formula. Below are the details of the type of reform organized by the country.

**Table 11**Reforms with indirect changes<sup>18</sup>

Country	Date	Seats	Lower Tier Average District Magnitude	Differences from the previous magnitude	Electoral threshold	Change in an Electoral threshold
Argentina	1948	158	5.27	-5.26	19%	9%
Argentina	1960	192	4.17	-3.96	24%	12%
Argentina	1965	192	4.17	-4.18	24%	12%
Argentina	1973	243	10.13	5.96	10%	-14%
Argentina	1985	254	5.29	-5.29	19%	9%
Argentina	2017	257	10.71	5.29	9%	-9%
Austria	2017	183	1.84	-2.42	54%	31%
Benin	1999	83	3.46	-1.15	29%	7%
Bosnia	1998	42	21	15.75	5%	-14%
Bosnia	2000	42	5.25	-15.75	19%	14%
Brazil	1962	409	16.36	3.32	6%	-2%
Cape Verde	1995	72	3.79	0.63	26%	-5%
Cape Verde	2011	72	5.54	1.94	18%	-10%
Chile	1993	120	2	-3.36	50%	31%
Colombia	1962	184	10.22	1.78	10%	-2%
Colombia	1966	190	8.26	-1.42	12%	2%
Colombia	1991	161	4.88	-3.08	20%	8%
Comoros	2020	33	1.38	0.38	72%	-28%
Costa Rica	1962	57	8.14	1.71	12%	-3%
Dominican Republic	1982	120	4.44	1.07	23%	-7%
Dominican Republic	1998	150	5	1	20%	-5%
Ecuador	2017	137	3.74	-1.97	27%	9%
Finland	2015	200	15.38	2.38	7%	-1%

<sup>18</sup> Even if there was a small difference below 1, if there is a significant change in electoral threshold, I included them. (Cape Verde : 32% -> 26%, Comoros : 100% -> 72%, Ireland : 29% -> 25%, Mali : 47% -> 37%, Panama : 60% -> 56%, Senegal (2007) : 46% -> 33%, Senegal (2017) : 33% -> 29%, Venezuela : 100% ->82%) The cases that do not have anything in the “Difference” are the average magnitude in the previous year is unknown.

Guatemala	1994	80	2.78	-1.09	36%	10%
Guatemala	1999	113	3.96	1.18	25%	-11%
Guatemala	2003	158	5.77	1.81	17%	-8%
Guyana	2001	65	2.5	-50.5	40%	38%
Honduras	1985	134	7.44		13%	
Iceland	2016	63	9	-1.5	11%	2%
Indonesia	2004	550	7.97	-9.14	13%	7%
Ireland	1981	166	4	0.5	25%	-4%
Mali	1997	160	2.67	0.56	37%	-10%
Mali	2002	160	1.18	-1.49	85%	47%
Niger	2016	171	19.75	6.63	5%	-3%
Panama	1994	72	1.8	0.12	56%	-4%
Peru	1980	180	7.2	1.41	14%	-3%
Peru	2001	120	4.8	-2.4	21%	7%
Romania	1992	341	7.81	1.63	13%	2%
El Salvador	2006	84	6	1.43	17%	-5%
Senegal	2007	150	3	0.83	33%	-13%
Senegal	2017	165	3.5	0.5	29%	-5%
Venezuela	1963	179	7.26	2.48	14%	-7%
Venezuela	1968	214	8.52	1.26	12%	-2%
Venezuela	1998	207	1.22	0.22	82%	-18%
Venezuela	2005	167	1.26		79%	

## **Roadmap of the Dissertation**

My dissertation examines electoral reforms in presidential systems. I argue that the president's political resources and context—presidential powers, types of government such as single-majority government, minority government, and coalition government, and public support—shape electoral reform. It consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 (this chapter) is a short introduction presenting this dissertation and providing basic information about electoral reforms. Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4 are substantive chapters that give the central arguments of this dissertation regarding the relationship between three main factors and electoral reforms, along with empirical analyses of the hypotheses derived from the theoretical argument, and each chapter is structured as a journal article. Chapter 5 reviews the arguments presented, organizes the findings from the empirical analyses, and discusses the implications of the findings.

The chapter above provides an overview of the development of electoral reform studies and defines the main terms and concepts used in my research. The study defines electoral reform as changes in the specific formulae, the number of tiers, the types of mixed electoral systems, average district magnitude, and an electoral threshold. Based on this definition, I classify electoral reforms in presidential systems into two types—reforms involving changes in the main electoral system types (e.g., PR or majority) and reforms where the primary type stays the same but there are significant changes in, for example, average district magnitudes or electoral threshold. The chapter provides an overview of electoral reforms in presidential systems, whether there were substantial

changes in district magnitude, and the effective number of parliamentary parties resulting from those reforms.

In the following chapter, Chapter 2, I present in what way presidential powers, such as the veto, budgetary power, and referendum power, shape the outcome of electoral reform and whether it is favorable to the president. Some presidential systems endow presidents with more extraordinary powers. The president has employed these powers to take the initiative in reform more easily. For example, a strong veto could prevent any reform attempt unfavorable to the president's party. Strong decree power and strong referendum power with fewer restrictions could provide a way to circumvent the legislature. Undoubtedly, this presidential involvement often created the outcome of reform favorable to the president and the ruling party. In this chapter, I examine whether electoral reform occurs is influenced by the power resources that the president has with a statistical analysis (logistic regression, mainly)

In Chapter 3, I argue that types of government in the presidential system matter regarding the president's decision to use the presidential powers and, thereby, the outcome of electoral reforms. This chapter focuses on how the interaction between presidential powers and each type of government influences the proportionality of the electoral systems. Genuinely, how the president's incentives to engage in reform depend on such powers. Specifically, while presidents need legislative majorities to advance their governing agenda, they often face a minority situation. To overcome it, they may try to build and maintain coalitions while also attempting to engineer a more long-term solution via electoral reform. When the parties think the president has the means of engaging in

electoral reform, they may comply more with the president's agenda. In sum, my theoretical analysis focuses on how the president's political resources affect the bargaining between the president and the legislature and emphasizes that the effects of these resources on electoral reform are not necessarily monotonic. Statistical analysis with logistic regression will follow with this theoretical analysis.

In Chapter 4, I argue that the occurrence of reforms differs for the interaction between three political actors—the President, the parties, and the people. In the presidential system, an executive who can claim legitimacy from being directly elected by the people represents an additional independent actor who wields significant political powers in electoral reform. However, the use of the powers that come with the presidential office is conditioned by the relationship between the president and the parties on the one hand and between the president and the people on the other. Based on this theory, I present two hypotheses: First, the people factor, that is, voters' dissatisfaction with the current political and/or economic situation, facilitates electoral reforms. Second, the presidential powers and the types of governments at the given instance of the reforms also interact with this reform occurrence. Based on the panel-logit model, I will examine these two hypotheses empirically.

In Chapter 5, the dissertation concludes with a short discussion of the study's findings, contributions to the study of electoral reforms, and insights for future work. Regarding the implication, it is necessary to look into the fact that in some countries, such as Turkey, Poland, and Russia, electoral reform has functioned as a legal mechanism to prolong the authoritarian regimes of politicians. These examples show that



contemporary democracies are not free from the challenge of this kind of “stealth authoritarianism” with electoral reform. Therefore, it is crucial to examine whether reforms are genuinely driven by a desire to adopt better or fairer institutions or by someone’s desire to reinforce their powers. This study places the study of electoral reform within the context of democratic development and helps us understand a process that has undermined democracy in some countries.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Electoral Reform and Presidential Power**

#### **Introduction**

Electoral reforms for legislative elections in presidential democracies are important as they affect the composition of the legislature. This is not only true for parties and legislators but also for presidents. Since the president needs legislative support for effective governing, they have an incentive to influence electoral reform. In fact, as various scholars have noted, presidents have used their vetoes, decrees, and the right to call a referendum in the process of electoral reform and succeeded in getting the results that they desired while beating competing reforms favorable to the opposition (Benoit and Hayden, 2004; Fauvelle-Aymar et al., 2011; Lehoucq, 2000; Nikolenyi, 2011; Remington and Smith, 1996; Shugart and Taagepera, 2017)

Given this distinct feature of the reform process of presidential countries, we are interested in how electoral reforms are shaped in presidential systems. While both the president and the parties may share the same goal—more seats in the legislature—the ability to achieve that goal may not be the same when they have different political and institutional resources. This disparity in power may affect the direction of electoral reform. However, since fewer studies have been conducted on changes in the electoral system itself, and the current literature on presidential systems has only dealt with a few individual cases of reform, it is unclear what the political conditions that affect presidential engagement in electoral reform are.

This theoretical vacuum should be addressed. Furthermore, most presidential countries are relatively new democracies or still at a stage of democratic consolidation. Since the system's institutionalization level is low, an inter-branch conflict, like who should take the lead in state affairs, often occurs between actors. Unsurprisingly, political actors will work hard to gain the upper hand in this conflict. Electoral reforms can be understood as a way of reshaping the political landscape to alter the relative strength of different political actors. The president, one such political actor, will often seek to change the political environment to make it more favorable to them via electoral reform to strengthen their political influence over the legislature. Some presidential systems make this task easier for the president, giving her more extraordinary powers and placing her in more favorable political conditions. In fact, these extraordinary presidential powers have been used to affect electoral reform, and it has resulted in electoral reforms to favor the president (Benoit and Hayden, 2004; Fauvelle-Aymar et al., 2011; Lehoucq, 2000; Nikolenyi, 2011; Remington and Smith, 1996; Shugart and Taagepera, 2017).

Considering that the slide towards more autocratic forms of government in countries such as Hungary, Tunisia, and some Latin American countries is not induced by force but rather by subtle institutional reforms, the study of electoral reforms is highly relevant. This study's focus will be on two related questions. First, to examine whether reforms occur or not is influenced by the presidential powers. Second, when reform does happen, what kinds of reforms occur? Answering such questions provides an opportunity to see whether reforms in the presidential system are driven by a pure desire to create a better institution or for partisan advantage.

## Theory

Electoral reforms in presidential systems are not uncommon. In fact, electoral reforms in presidential regimes have occurred more frequently than in parliamentary regimes. Bormann and Golder's data (2022) includes 784 democratic legislative elections from 73 parliamentary countries, with only 390 elections from 41 presidential countries.<sup>19</sup> Since most parliamentary countries are advanced democracies, these countries have longer democratic experience than presidential countries. Despite this fact, in terms of electoral reforms, Figure 2 shows that in parliamentary countries, 71 electoral reforms were made, while in presidential countries, 61 electoral reforms occurred. The prevalence of electoral reform in presidential systems shows that electoral reform is not the exclusive domain of party elites in parliamentary systems. Electoral reforms have been pursued more actively in presidential countries than in parliamentary systems. Figure 3 displays the number of reforms per year in each system, showing this trend. On average, reforms occur once a decade in a parliamentary system, while in a presidential system, they occur every six years. Thus, reforms in presidential systems are twice as frequent as in parliamentary systems. This may be because some presidential countries are new democracies where electoral institutions have not yet been consolidated in the political system, allowing the countries to try several different electoral institutions. Competition between political elites with different interests is inevitable when introducing any new

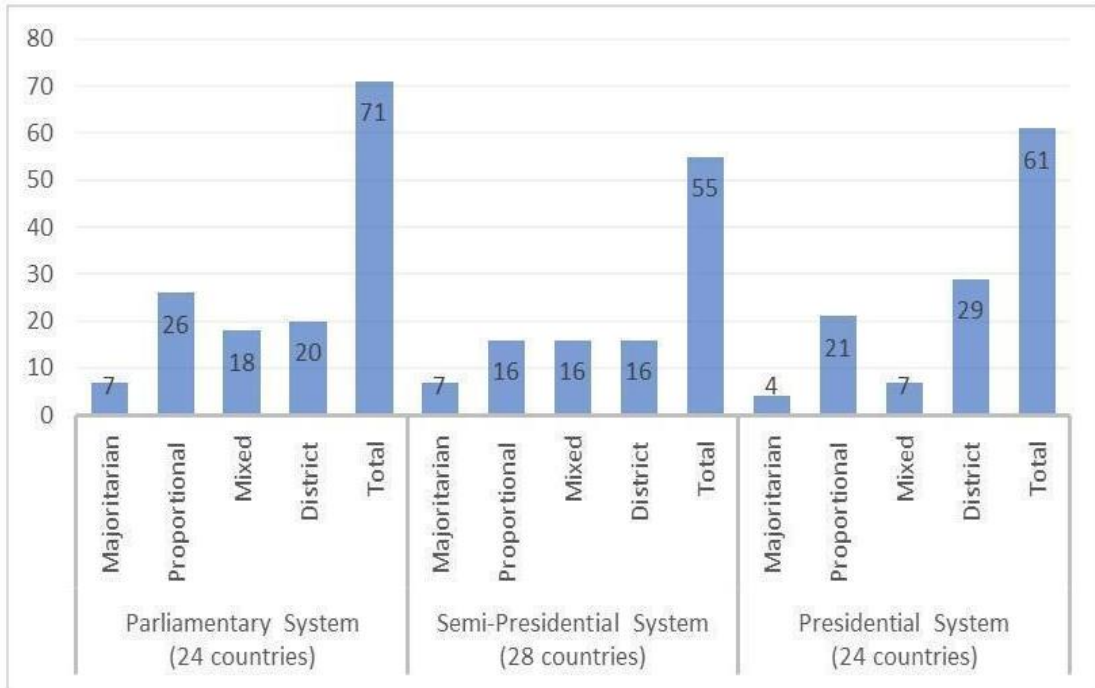
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<sup>19</sup> 300 democratic elections from 40 semi-presidential countries

system. Under this circumstance, presidents can be expected to use their political resources to achieve favorable reforms.

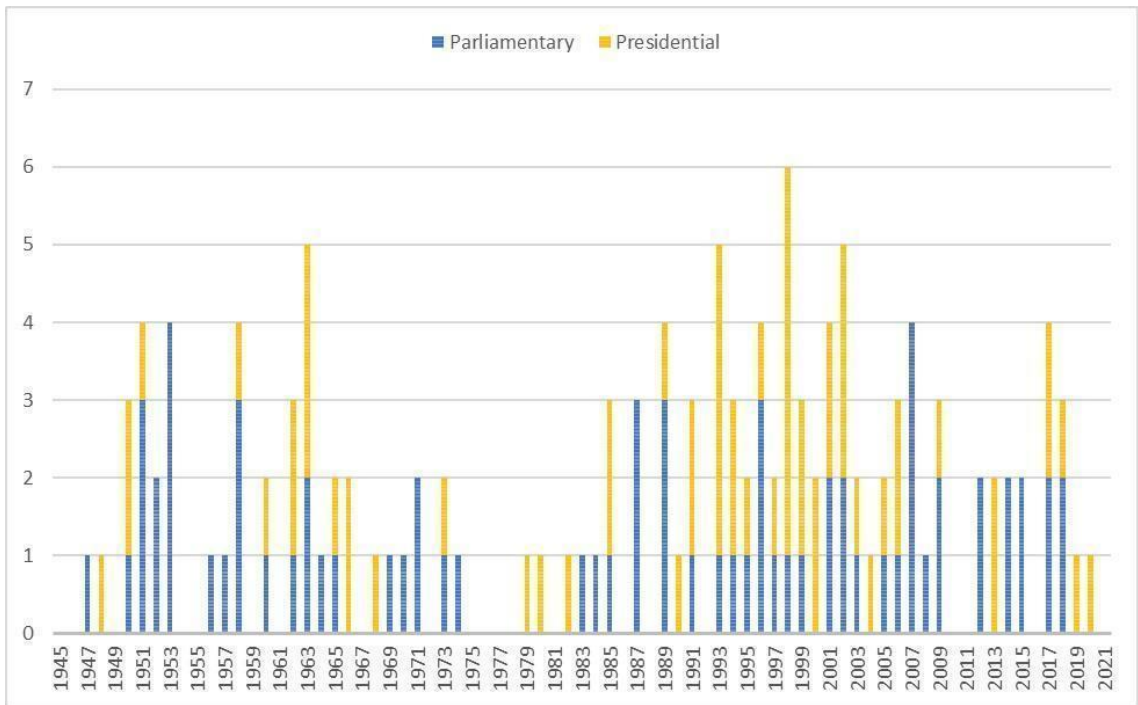
**Figure 2**

Electoral Reforms Toward Each Type of Electoral System or Changes in the District Magnitudes by Different Constitutional Systems



**Figure 3**

Electoral Reform Per Year in Each System Since 1945



Presidential powers can be divided into legislative powers and non-legislative powers. According to Metcalf (2000: 333–344), “Legislative powers refer to presidential power in the legislative process provided for in the constitution. Nonlegislative powers refer to constitutional limits placed on the separate origin and survival of the president and the assembly.” Legislative powers include veto powers, presidential authority to legislate by decree, the exclusive right to initiate specific legislative proposals, budgetary initiative, and power to propose referenda, while nonlegislative powers include cabinet formation and dismissal, lack of assembly censure and dissolution of the assembly (Shugart and Carey, 1992). The stronger the president’s legislative powers are, the more leverage the president should have over Congress.

In this study, when it comes to electoral reform as well, the presence and level of such powers can decide a reform’s success or failure and even shape the outcome of the reform. Among the presidential powers, presidential veto powers may have the most direct effect. This is a presidential authority to veto legislation. Its influence on the legislation shapes the legislative actions of Congress. Shugart and Carey (1992: 149) state, “If this veto were absolute, no piece of legislation objected to by the president could ever pass, hence, the president would be extremely powerful.”

Generally, there is a provision to override the veto. Some countries require a majority of 2/3 of Congress (or more) to override a veto, making overriding a veto almost impossible. Thus, the higher the proportion of the vote required to override a veto, the stronger the president’s veto power is. If Congress is considering proposing a bill that is



expected to be vetoed by the president, and it realizes its override is virtually impossible, it may have little incentive to propose it. The same logic applies to electoral reform bills. If presidents dislike an electoral reform bill proposed by Congress, they may veto it in an attempt to block the electoral reform. Alternatively, they can pressure Congress by just signaling they will use their veto powers. If Congress cannot easily override the veto, the president's will regarding electoral reform will prevail.

According to Shugart and Mainwaring (1997: 41), "Powers that allow either one of the two branches to challenge the legislative status quo are termed proactive, whereas those that merely allow a defense of the status quo are described as reactive." The veto power certainly functions as a reactive power. In the reform process, presidents have used their veto powers effectively. Their veto powers have thwarted the legislation of reform itself, and their mere existence has prevented attempts at reform. The 2000 Czech electoral reform, which tried to change the electoral rule from a single-member district majoritarian system to a PR system, is a representative case of this (Nikolenyi, 2011). During that time, President Havel used his veto power to prevent the electoral reform bill from passing because he thought the reform proposal did not reflect the principle of PR well. In another case, in the 1925 Costa Rica electoral reform attempt, the president vetoed a bill that filled electoral rolls and weakened the principle of a secret ballot (Lehoucq, 2000). Only after the legislators revised the bill, accepting most of his requests, did the president finally sign it. In the 2008 Romanian reform attempt, the legislature failed to pass its version of electoral reform, prompting a mixed system in the fear of the presidential veto. All these cases show the status and influence of the

presidential veto in the electoral reform process. In all cases, presidential vetoes significantly affected electoral reform. According to the examples, the primary reason is either the reforms are vetoed or the legislature does not propose reform since they know it would be vetoed.

We hypothesize that these veto powers have the same effect in other presidential countries. Furthermore, we argue that the stronger the presidential veto power, the greater the number of such obstructions from the president. More specifically, in terms of reform, the stronger the presidential veto power, the more the legislature may refrain from attempting reform or the more likely the president veto reform.

**Hypothesis 1** If the president's veto power is strong, electoral reform is less likely.

Another presidential power likely to influence electoral reform is the budgetary power. The budgetary power of the president is often described as the power of the purse. Budget planning authority establishes the broad framework and details of the national budget and grants the president discretion over releasing budgetary funds for public projects. This power of the executive branch is an important asset for the president, allowing him to influence lawmakers who prefer, e.g., government spending to benefit their constituencies (Carey, 2009). As presidential budgetary powers vary from country to country, the president's ability to pressure legislators via the power of "the purse" also varies. More specifically, the strength of the president's budgetary power is influenced by whether Congress can increase the budget. Given that members of Congress are

motivated to increase the budget for their constituencies rather than reduce the budget, a congressional increase is an institutional arrangement for the legislators to respond to specific political demands from their constituents via the budget (Carey, 2000).

Accordingly, the more the executive branch's budget planning power prevents Congress from increasing the budget, the more strongly Congress's authority is limited. Presidents have actively used their budgetary authority (Baldez and Carey, 1999; Carey, 2009; Hallerberg and Marier, 2004). First, presidential authority over budgets has been efficient in limiting overall spending, thereby influencing the legislators (Baldez and Carey, 1999). Furthermore, it is also effective in directly controlling legislators' votes. According to Carey (2009), presidents have used budgetary powers to pressure co-partisans and build legislative majorities to pass legislation. This study includes interviews with legislators saying that presidents mobilize institutional resources, like budgetary powers, to influence legislative votes. In particular, the president's ability to expedite or hold up the disbursement of funds budgeted for projects in deputies' districts has been employed as a source of influence.

The president's budgetary power may have significant implications for electoral reform. Suppose the legislature proposes a reform bill that the president dislikes. In this circumstance, although the president may immediately express their intention to reject the reform bill, before that, she is more likely to think about making a deal with the legislature. The presidential veto is the president's most powerful tool that can be used when there are conflicting opinions between the executive branch and the legislative branch. Frequent use of the veto not only opens the president up to criticism of abuse of

power but also worsens her relationship with the legislature. Accordingly, the president, who needs legislative support in executing various policies, may use the veto as a last resort. Thus, instead of the veto, the president is more likely to use another power to bargain with the legislature —budgetary power. When it comes to electoral reform, the president can either punish legislators who vote for reform unfavorable to the president by not distributing the funds for their districts or incentivize them not to pass it by creating budget items favored by the legislator. Reversely, it can be used to appeal to the legislators to pass the reform proposal that the president likes.

As a result, the president’s proposals are more likely to be enacted, whereas Congress’ proposals fail. The legislature may also choose to amend its proposals to make them agreeable to the president. Taking a cue from this logic, we hypothesize that when the president can wield strong budgetary power, reforms that favor the president’s party are more likely to occur.

**Hypothesis 2:** If the president’s budgetary power is strong, electoral reform is more likely to favor the president’s party

Another presidential power that may influence electoral reform is the power to call for a referendum. The president’s authority is to propose a referendum on a policy issue they care about, and the legislature has declined to take action on it. By asking for public opinion via referenda and getting direct support from the public, presidents seek to secure legitimacy and approval for what they want to do regarding specific political issues and bills. Two types of referenda support this goal of the president: Binding

referendum and consultative referendum. A binding referendum is a procedure for enacting a law with the approval of the majority in a public vote. In essence, in this type of referendum, the active citizenry replaces the legislative bodies. On the other hand, a consultative referendum does not involve a specific statutory proposal and does not necessarily lead to an alteration or confirmation of existing statutory law. Instead, it can be viewed as providing political recommendations based on the outcome of the popular vote for elected officials to consider (Accetti and Oskian, 2022).

However, public support for the referendum agenda is critical to its success, especially in cases where the referendum requires a voting process. Solid public support toward the president, shown with enough votes, empowers presidents who want to realize their policy agenda and threatens any legislators' attempts against the president's will. In short, the greater public support presidents secure, the more likely the calls for the referendum will be, and the more successful the presidents' agenda of the referenda will be.

Several electoral reform cases have been decided by referenda called by the president (e.g., Colombia, France, Romania). In France, electoral reform serves as a political instrument by which the democratic rulers—the president—modify the election rules to favor them by influencing voting behavior. According to Fauvelle-Aymar et al. (2011), in 1962 and 2000, the president of France launched referenda for electoral reform, appealing directly to the people while circumventing the parliament. Both were quite successful. In 1962, de Gaulle initiated a referendum on the direct presidential election and succeeded in amending a constitution. However, this amendment negatively

affected the final turnout of the upcoming legislative elections, making it less popular than a presidential direct election. People showed up at the polling place for the presidential election while not going to vote in the general elections, which were held close to the presidential elections. The 2000 referendum, which reduced the presidential term from seven to five years, like the deputies' term, increased the president's dominance over the deputies. This is because this reduced term required executive and legislative elections to be held at about the same time, requiring coordination of the election date. This coordination allows the presidential election to come first, weakening the importance of the legislative election. Fauvelle-Aymar et al. (2011: 57) call this phenomenon a 'presidentialisation' via electoral reform and state it "has lessened the value of National Assembly elections, rendering them second order, increasingly a pawn in the presidential power struggle." In this sense, the president's call for referenda is at the center of this presidentialisation.

The 2008 Romania electoral reform shows that even if the president's referendum is inconclusive because of low turnout, it can still affect the outcome of electoral reform. The 2008 Romania electoral reform exemplifies how the president's referendum, despite yielding an incomplete decision due to low turnout, still managed to impact the outcome of electoral reform. Romanian President Basescu aimed to transition the national electoral system to a majority run-off model already in place at the local level. Despite facing strong opposition from other political parties, including the prime minister's party in cohabitation, he called for a referendum on this change. Although an overwhelming majority of voters supported the president's proposal for an electoral system, a low

turnout of 26 percent made the result of the referendum indecisive (Nikolenyi, 2011). Therefore, it returned the reform to parliament, hammering out the compromise that changed the electoral system from proportional to mixed, accepting part of the president's initiative. This is because overwhelming public support for the president's agenda through the referendum pressured the legislature not to ignore the request from the president and finally considered it in negotiations. Under a new system, voters could vote for individual candidates who could win the district with a majority of the votes cast, while in the districts where no candidate won a majority, seats were redistributed among the parties to which the parties could assign the seats. Ultimately, this example underscores how referenda can significantly influence electoral reform outcomes.

These cases show how influential the president's authority in calling for referenda is in given instances of electoral reforms. In most cases, the call for referenda has favored the president, regardless of actual turnout in the referendum. However, since the scope and the procedure to call for a referenda vary from country to country, their influence on electoral reform may also vary by country. In fact, according to Shugart and Carey (1992), there are cases where the call for referenda power is either unrestricted or restricted. For example, in Guatemala, the legislature also has the power to call for a referendum, thus circumventing a presidential veto. In France, a proposal calling for a referendum must be made jointly with the cabinet or by a concurrent resolution of the two houses of the assembly, creating an institutional hurdle for the president to wield this power. In short, the fewer restrictions on the call for referenda power, the more discretion the presidents can enjoy, and the easier the president can pressure the legislature via this

power. The strong referendum power would signal the legislature to decide what to do. In particular, the strong referendum power by which the presidents could submit any matter to a referendum at any time blunts the legislature's ability to propose a bill against the president's will or to amend the bill they desire. When it comes to electoral reform, a strong president's referendum power makes the legislature reluctant to propose the reform bill that the president dislikes or pass the legislation of the reform that the president likes. We hypothesize that electoral reform under a presidential system with a strong referendum power tend to benefit the president's party.

**Hypothesis 3** If the president's referendum power is strong, electoral reform is more likely to favor the president.

All of the hypotheses above argue that electoral reforms in presidential systems, in which a specific type of presidential power is strong, occur only when the reform advantages the president and the president's party. It suggests that other presidential powers may also matter in the electoral reform. In fact, in addition to the veto, budgetary powers, and the ability to call for referenda, other presidential powers, such as presidential authority to legislate by decree, the exclusive right to initiate specific legislative proposals, cabinet formation, and dismissal, lack of assembly censure, and dissolution of the assembly, are resources for the president pressure them in negotiations over electoral reform. For example, the president used executive decrees and often replaced the parliamentary route in several East European electoral reform processes (e.g., Russia, Romania) (Nikolenyi, 2011). As for the non-legislative powers, although



they do not affect the legislation directly, they indirectly affect it while determining the stability of the democratic system. In particular, non-legislative powers are associated with the question of separation of powers as well as substantially shape the legislative landscape to influence the president's decisions. For example, according to Shugart and Carey (1992), systems with the most extensive presidential powers in both aspects and considerable powers for the cabinet with reduced separation of powers may face significant challenges in maintaining a stable democracy. This presidential power composition might cause severe conflict between the executive and legislative branches by giving substantial power to one branch but also being checked by the other frequently. In this condition, the legislature can occasionally overturn the executive branch's decisions, seriously restricting the president's decision over the legislation. In contrast, systems with a strong separation of powers but limited presidential legislative authority and those with a low separation of powers and reduced presidential control over the cabinet can contribute to the system's stability, resulting in less inter-branch conflict. This implies that different compositions of presidential powers can provide a different legislative context by organizing the relationship with the legislature and deciding the president's move toward her agenda. In terms of electoral reform, this context is still valid.

However, even when the presidents have somewhat strong power and are in a favorable context, promoting and leveraging electoral reform to their advantage is not always simple. Often, the procedure for implementing electoral reform prevents the presidents from pushing for the desired reform. An example of such a procedure would

be when the country's constitution stipulates aspects of the electoral system, requiring a constitutional amendment. This represents a higher threshold for electoral reform as it cannot be achieved via regular law. The amendment procedure may require constitutional constraints such as a supermajority in the legislature, the formation of a constituent assembly, a referendum requiring public support, or even a judgment of the Constitutional Court, depending on the country. These constraints might work to hinder the electoral reforms that presidents want to pursue. In particular, the case above tends to accompany the involvement of the Court, which is relatively less influenced by the presidential power compared to the legislature. This implies that a good relationship between the executive and the judicial branches is crucial to implementing reforms that favor the president. In fact, these constitutional constraints make it necessary for the president to obtain the judiciary's support to implement the reform because citizens or political actors may activate a judicial review process to determine whether the formal and material requirements of the amendment process have been observed. If the judicial power or independence is strong enough and presidents cannot expect that support, the implementation of reform requiring the amendment will be more challenging. There are often cases where the judiciary's rules overturn reforms led by the president or the ruling party. For example, in 2010, the Colombian Constitutional Court ruled that Congress could not amend the constitution to allow the incumbent president to run for a third time. In the Court's view, such a reform would be a substitution of the existing constitution, not a mere amendment, because it would eliminate the checks and balances system created in the 1991 constitution (Calvo and Negretto, 2020). In Hungary as well,

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who succeeded in winning a fourth consecutive term, tried to revise the election law, reducing the number of seats in the National Assembly from 386 to 199 and adjusting electoral districts to favor the ruling party in 2011 (Schackow, 2014). At first, he could not achieve it because the Constitutional Court disapproved of revising the election law and even abolished it. Only after the ruling party changed the appointment process for Constitutional Court judges and allowed judges for pro-ruling party judges to occupy the majority could the Constitution be amended. These examples indicate that a strong judiciary limits what the president can do.

To avoid potential confrontation with the judiciary, the president may attempt to find other options to circumvent a long and exhausting amendment process. One potential option would be to lower the district magnitude, which tends not to be specified in the constitution but has a similar effect as the changes in the electoral system since changing the district's size directly affects the electoral threshold—the minimum vote share necessary to be elected. Suppose the magnitude changes from two to three. The electoral threshold decreases significantly, from 33% to 25%, lowering the bar to being elected. If presidents were to influence the district magnitude, they would usually reduce it. As fewer seats are allocated to each district, the candidates from major parties, which the president tends to belong to, are more likely to be elected. Therefore, if electoral reform through changes in the electoral system or formula is impossible for practical reasons, the president, primarily from the larger parties, may attempt electoral reform, which is not subject to constitutional constraints.

However, even in the reform case having considerable constraints, presidential power can be a critical factor in implementing electoral reform. When presidents have weak presidential power, it is impossible to implement either district modifications or constitutional amendments; in such cases, the legislature may not even consider the reform. Only when the presidential power is somewhat strong can meaningful reforms be attempted and discussed between branches. Presidential power also plays a role in preventing challenges. Specifically, when the president pursues a reform to decrease the district magnitude, minor parties are unlikely to be willing to accept such reform. They may prevent that change from being adopted in Congress by forming a legislative coalition with other minor parties disadvantaged by the reform. This challenge can be beaten by strong presidential powers functioning as the measures of threat or pork barrel and cooperation from major opposition parties that would benefit small districts. Based on the above discussion, we can predict that reforms that reduce the district magnitude will likely occur when the presidential power is strong.

**Hypothesis 4:** If the presidential power is substantial, reforms will likely occur by lowering a district magnitude.

### **Data, Method, and Analysis**

To examine how presidential powers influence electoral reform, we constructed a dataset of 78 presidential and semi-presidential democracies. The unit of analysis is the country-legislative election. However, the period covered by our data varies by country and depends on each country's democratic history and data availability. Table 12 shows

the countries in our sample, the number of observations for the country, electoral reforms, and the elections included in our analysis.

**Table 12**

## Countries &amp; Number of Observations

<b>Country</b>	<b>Obs.</b>	<b>Reform.</b>	<b>Election Years</b>
Argentina	26	8	1946-2019
Armenia	4	1	1995-2012
Austria	21	3	1949-2019
Benin	7	3	1991-2019
Bolivia	10	2	1979-2020
Bosnia	7	3	1996-2018
Brazil	13	2	1947-1962, 1986-2018
Bulgaria	8	2	1991-2017
Burundi	4	0	1993-2020
Cape Verde	5	2	1991-2016
Central African Republic	1	0	1993-1998
Chile	12	1	1949-1969, 1993-2017
Colombia	20	4	1947-2018
Comoros	3	1	1992, 2015-2020
Congo	1	0	1992-1993
Costa Rica	16	1	1953-2018
Croatia	8	1	1992-2020
Czech Republic	1	0	2013-2017
Dominican Republic	13	2	1966-2020
East Timor	3	0	2007-2018
Ecuador	21	6	1950-1962, 1984-2021
El Salvador	11	3	1985-2018
Finland	19	1	1948-2019
France	12	2	1967-2017
Georgia	4	1	2004-2020
Ghana	6	0	1996-2020
Greek Cyprus	7	1	1981-2016
Guatemala	19	6	1947-1974, 1994-2019
Guinea Bissau	4	0	2000-2019
Honduras	10	1	1985-2017
Iceland	22	4	1946-2017
Indonesia	4	2	1999-2019
Ireland	19	1	1948-2020
Kenya	3	1	2002-2017
Kiribati	1	0	2015-2020
Kyrgyzstan	3	0	2007-2020

Liberia	1	0	2011-2018
Lithuania	7	2	1992-2020
Macedonia	8	2	1994-2020
Madagascar	5	3	1993-2019
Malawi	5	0	1994-2019
Maldives	2	0	2009-2019
Mali	5	2	1992-2020
Mexico	6	0	2000-2018
Micronesia, Federated States of	14	0	1991-2019
Moldova	2	1	1994-2019
Mongolia	7	5	1992-2020
Montenegro	4	0	2006-2020
Mozambique	1	0	1994-2006
Nicaragua	6	2	1984-2016
Niger	5	3	1995, 2004-2020
Nigeria	6	0	1992-2019
Palau	6	0	1996-2020
Panama	10	2	1952-1964, 1984-2019
Paraguay	6	1	1989-2018
Peru	8	3	1956, 1980-1990, 2000-2020
Philippines	15	1	1946-1965, 1985-2019
Poland	8	3	1991-2019
Portugal	14	0	1976-2019
Republic of the Gambia	4	0	1972-1992
Romania	8	3	1990-2020
Russia	1	0	1993-1995
Sao Tome and Principe	6	0	1991-2018
Senegal	3	2	2001-2017
Serbia	5	0	2007-2020
Sierra Leone	4	1	1996-2018
Slovakia	5	1	2002-2020
Slovenia	4	1	1992-2018
Somalia	1	1	1959-1960
South Korea	8	1	1988-2020
Sri Lanka	7	0	1989-2020
Suriname	6	0	1991-2020
Taiwan	6	1	1998-2020
Guyana	5	1	1992-2015
Ukraine	7	3	1994-2019
Uruguay	13	0	1946-1971, 1989-2019
Venezuela	12	6	1959-2015

Zambia	1	0	2011-2016
Total	605	116	



Our dependent variables are whether electoral reform occurs or not, district magnitude, and the changes in the seat share of the president's party. The first two variables come from a dataset of “Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946-2020” (Bormann and Golder, 2022). In particular, as for the reform variable, we create data on electoral reform by capturing changes in the electoral system per legislative election on this dataset. This study defines electoral reform as changes in the specific electoral formulae, the number of tiers, the type of mixed electoral systems, average district magnitude, or electoral threshold. Based on this definition, we classify electoral reforms in presidential systems into two types—reforms involving changes in the main electoral system types (e.g., PR or majority) and reforms where the primary type stays the same but there are significant changes in, for example, average district magnitudes or electoral threshold. Chapter 1 provides an overview of electoral reforms in presidential systems, whether there were substantial changes in district magnitude, and the effective number of parliamentary parties resulting from those reforms. In the case of district magnitude, we use a variable for average district magnitude in this dataset. For changes in the president’s party's seat share, we create a seat share variable by dividing the number of seats of the president's party by the total seats of the legislature and calculating the difference in seat share from the previous election.

As for the independent variables, we obtain information on presidential powers from several sources, including Hicken and Stoll’s (2008) and Doyle and Elgie’s (2016) measures of presidential power. First, Hicken and Stoll’s measure uses Shugart and Carey’s (1992) presidential power coding scheme. In this scheme, the presidential powers

consist of legislative and non-legislative powers. The president's legislative powers are the executive veto (package and partial veto), decrees, the exclusive right to introduce specific legislation, a budget bill, and the right to call referenda. The president's non-legislative powers are the presidential authority of cabinet formation, dismissal of public officials, dismissal of the legislature, and the legislature's ability to propose a vote of no confidence in the cabinet. Each item, except the legislature's authority to censure the cabinet, was coded from 0 to 4 depending on the powers guaranteed by a country's constitution. Regarding coding, veto, budget, and referenda power are particularly important for the hypotheses. Specifically, package veto varies from veto with no override (coded with 4) to veto with override requiring a majority greater than 2/3 (3), to veto with override requiring 2/3 (2), to veto with override requiring the absolute majority of assembly or extraordinary majority less than 2/3 (1), to no veto or veto required only simple majority override (0). Partial veto varies from veto with no override (4), to veto with override by the extraordinary majority (3), to veto with override by an absolute majority of the whole membership (2), to veto with override by a simple majority of the quorum (1), to no partial veto (0). We created total veto power, summing these two veto items. The range for total veto is from 0 to 5. Also, budget power varies from no amendment to the president's budget permitted (4) to prohibition on the congressional increase in the amounts of budgetary items (3) to an upper limit on total spending set by the president, within which Congress may amend (2) to permission on the congressional increase only if Congress can designate the revenue source of new expenditures (1), to the unrestricted authority of Congress to prepare or amend budget (0). Referenda power

is divided into unrestricted referenda (4), restricted referenda (2), and no president's authority to propose referenda (0). The legislature's authority to censure the presidential cabinet was coded reversely to reflect that the presidents are stronger when they do not have to be concerned about the legislature's authority to censure the president's cabinet. The scores are added to create indices for both subcategories and a total score. The theoretical range of the legislative powers index is from 0 to 20, but the actual range for the countries in our sample is from 0 to 10. The non-legislative powers index can take values from 0 to 16, but the range in our data is from 0 to 15. Finally, the total presidential power ranges from 0 to 22. We also consider Doyle and Elgie's (2016) measures of presidential powers to explore the robustness of our findings. The presidential power scores in this dataset are the mean normalized scores of the 28 different datasets of the presidential powers that various scholars have developed to score them, including Shugart and Carey's measures. A set of mean normalized scores is generated in a range from 0–1. The empirical range of Doyle and Elgie's (2016) measure in our sample runs from .018 to 1. However, there are still some countries where the data for itemized presidential powers is unavailable. For these cases, we coded the itemized presidential powers following Shugart and Carey's (1992) scheme based on each country's constitution from the Comparative Constitutions Project (Elkins et al., 2009).

In each model, we include several variables that might be expected to affect the presidents' political status and their relative power over the other two branches. Most of the measures of these variables, including the seat shares and vote shares of the president's party at the elections before and after the reform, the president's remaining

term, and the types of government come from “The Database of Political Institutions 2020” (Scartascini et al., 2021). The vote shares of the president’s party come from records of election results of all government parties in this dataset. The president’s remaining term is measured by the number of years left in the current term. As for the types of government, whether the current government has a majority, a minority, or a coalition government is measured by the information on the government parties<sup>20</sup> and election results.

In addition, we include the public support for the president as a variable and employ “Executive Approval Database 3.0” (Carlin et al., 2023) for the president's approval rate. We incorporate the monthly and yearly versions. When we can identify a specific date, such as an election or electoral reform date, we employ the monthly approval data; otherwise, it is a yearly one. The variables above are the president’s other political resources not listed in the constitution but highly influence the implementation of the president’s initiated policy.

Furthermore, measures of judicial independence from Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton’s (2009) Cross-National Historical Dataset of Written Constitutions are also included. This variable examines Hypothesis 4, which specifies the influence of the judicial branch on the executive branch. When judicial independence is strong, it is hard

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<sup>20</sup> Coding book of DPI (2021) indicates, “The following characteristics are listed as government parties: 1) they are listed in the DPI sources as in the government or represented in the cabinet; 2) are supportive of the president on substantial issues, or 3) take seats in the legislature but do not run a candidate for the presidency. The parties who oppose the presidential platform (as indicated in the sources) or who run candidates for the presidency are listed in the opposition.”

for presidents to gain support from judiciaries for the reform accompanying the Constitutional amendment. It challenges the reform with this path, and the presidents pursue the reform in another way—changes in the district magnitude. The empirical range of measures of judicial independence in our sample runs from 0 to 1.

Last, we include the duration of the democratic regime as a variable and get the data from DPI again. With a briefer democratic background, electoral institutions have not yet been consolidated in the political system, and there is still room to discuss adopting different electoral systems.

For the analysis, we conduct a series of logistic regressions to analyze the presence of electoral reform as the dependent variable when analyzing the impact of the president's veto power. For the rest of our hypotheses, we run linear regressions with the changes in seat share of the president's party as the dependent variable.

In Table 13, we start with a simple logistic regression model that focuses solely on the impact of the president's veto power on the likelihood of electoral reform occurring. The results in Table 13 show that, as the president's veto power increases by one unit, the probability of reform occurring decreases (in the second column). Figure 4, showing the probability of the reform conditional on the strength of the veto power, displays this result graphically. As the veto power gets stronger from 0 to 5, the probability of implementing electoral reform significantly decreases. The probability difference between zero veto and 5-scored veto power is over 10%, implying that the most substantial veto power can hinder electoral reform by over 10%.

**Table 13**

## Veto Power &amp; Electoral Reform

VARIABLES	Model 1 Reform	Model 2 Reform	Model 3 Reform
Veto Power	0.00854 (0.0650)	-0.212* (0.126)	-0.270 (0.170)
Approval Rate		0.0198* (0.0118)	0.0258* (0.0135)
Majority		0.613 (0.629)	0.942 (0.770)
Minority		0.477 (0.413)	0.0913 (0.518)
President's Remaining Terms		-0.00219 (0.00155)	0.00422 (0.0280)
Democratic History		-0.00335 (0.00997)	-0.00191 (0.0107)
Seat Shares of the President's Party (Pre-Reform)		-1.423 (1.300)	
Vote Shares of the President's Party (Pre-Reform)			-0.0223 (0.0191)
Constant	-1.454*** (0.154)	-1.753** (0.875)	-1.742* (1.025)
Observations	579	258	192

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

**Figure 4**

Probability of occurring reform conditional on the veto power

(Table 2, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals )

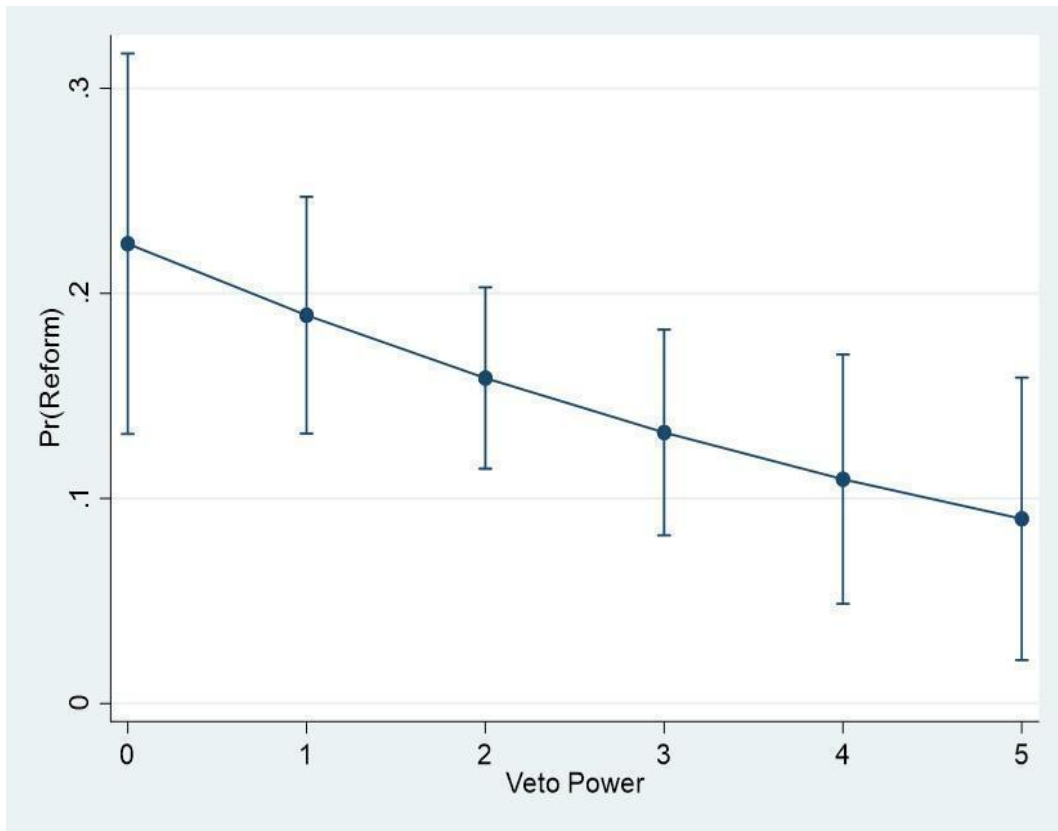


Table 14 presents the impact of budget power on the president's party's post-reform performance. It includes our budget power variable and its interaction with the reform variable, which presents the effect of electoral reform conditional on the level of budget power. Following the results, there is strong evidence to suggest that when electoral reform is made under the presence of stronger budget powers, it positively affects the president's party's post-reform election results. More specifically, the statistically significant coefficients of interaction between the reform and budget power variable in all three models in Table 14 suggest that the changes in the president's party's seat share increase by nearly 0.1. Suppose there are 500 seats in the legislature, and when a party wins 20% at election time  $t-1$ , it gets 100 seats. However, in the next election, where an electoral reform is made, seat share becomes 20.1%, giving the party 101 seats. Figure 5, graphing the marginal effect of reform conditional on the budget power as well, shows that reform has a more significant impact when the presidents have greater budget powers.



**Table 14**

## Budget Power &amp; President Party's Advantages from Reform

VARIABLES	Model 1 $\Delta$ Seat Share	Model 2 $\Delta$ Seat Share	Model 3 $\Delta$ Seat Share
Reform	-0.0555* (0.0307)	-0.0457 (0.0289)	-0.0137 (0.0338)
Budget	0.00638 (0.0139)	-0.00479 (0.0135)	-0.00242 (0.0181)
Reform x Budget	0.103*** (0.0307)	0.0940*** (0.0289)	0.148*** (0.0416)
Approval Rate		0.0481 (0.0400)	-0.0234 (0.0549)
Majority		0.0305 (0.0237)	0.000668 (0.0290)
Minority		-0.000168 (0.000521)	-0.000387 (0.000586)
President's Remaining Terms		-0.000238* (0.000143)	
Democratic History		0.00169** (0.000674)	
Seat Share of the President's Party (Pre-Reform)		-0.664*** (0.0828)	
Vote Share of the President's Party (Pre-Reform)			-0.00356*** (0.00129)
Constant	-0.0727*** (0.0133)	0.115** (0.0525)	0.0209 (0.0660)
Observations	240	186	149
R-squared	0.068	0.382	0.316

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Figure 5**

Effect of Electoral Reform Conditional on Budget Power

(Table 3, Model 3, 95% Confidence Intervals )

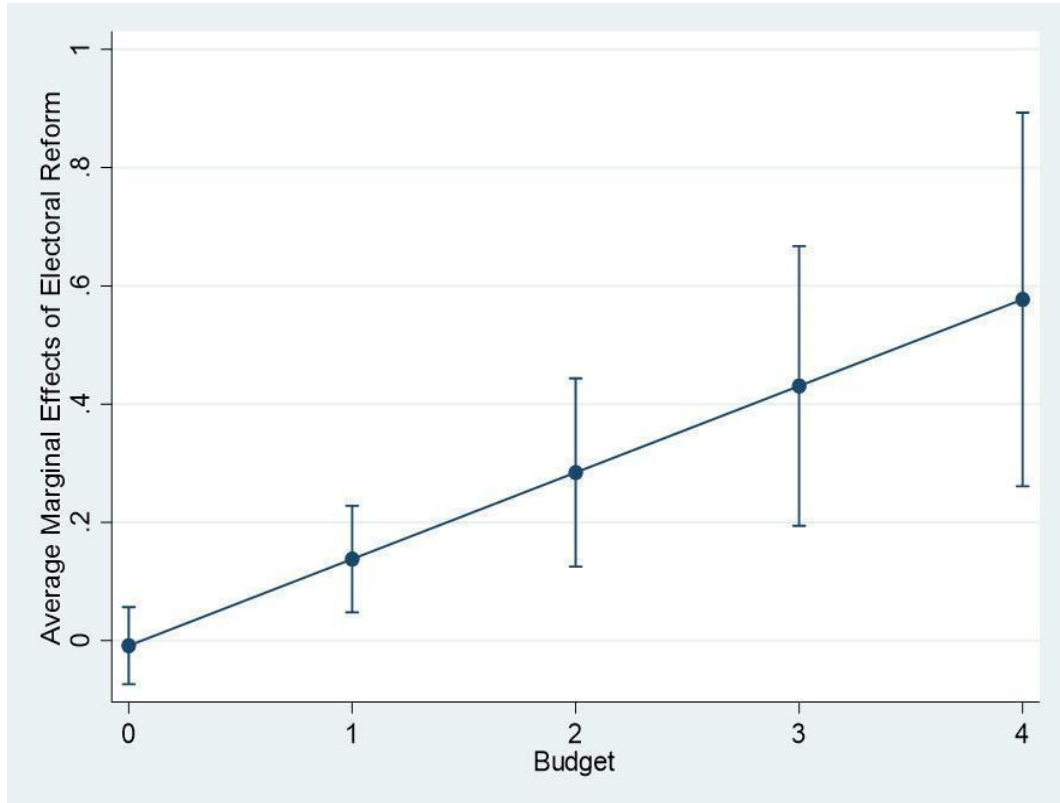


Table 15 includes the referenda power variable and interaction with the reform variable. In model 2, we find some suggestions that when electoral reform is made under the presence of strong referenda power, the president's party's seat shares change in a positive direction, similar to what we found with the budget power. When we graph the marginal effect of reform conditional on the referenda power in Figure 6 as well, it certainly shows that reform has a more significant impact when the presidents have more considerable referenda power. However, although the direction of impact is what we expected, the estimates are not statistically significant at conventional levels.

**Table 15**

## Referenda Power &amp; President's Party's Advantages from Reform

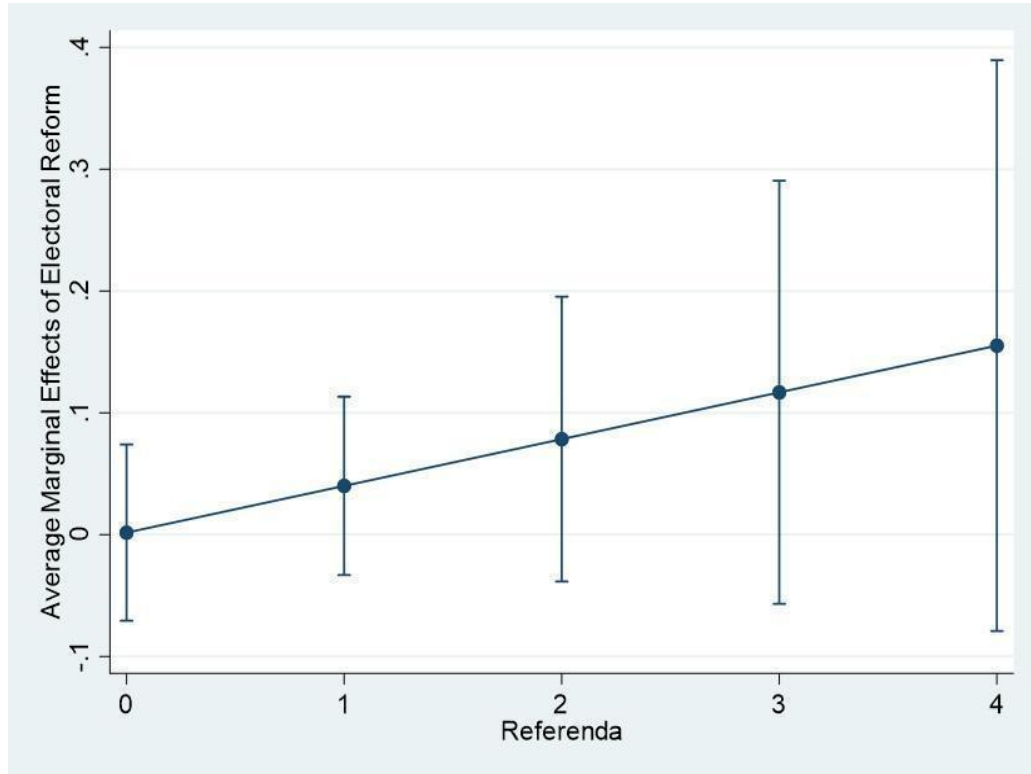
VARIABLES	Model 1 △Seat Share	Model 2 △Seat Share
Reform	-0.00671 (0.0314)	0.00375 (0.0373)
Referenda	-0.00617 (0.0107)	-0.0212 (0.0135)
Reform x Referenda	-0.0269 (0.0285)	0.0300 (0.0442)
Approval Rate	0.0500 (0.0411)	-0.00913 (0.0572)
Majority	0.0378 (0.0245)	0.00779 (0.0307)
Minority	-0.000182 (0.000534)	-0.000543 (0.000606)
President's Remaining Terms	-0.000248* (0.000147)	-0.0243** (0.0107)
Democratic History	0.00193*** (0.000690)	0.00308*** (0.000823)
Seat Shares of the President's Party (Pre-Reform)	-0.694*** (0.0847)	
Vote Shares of the President's Party (Pre-Reform)		-0.00447*** (0.00132)
Constant	0.116** (0.0537)	0.0465 (0.0693)
Observations	186	149
R-squared	0.346	0.255

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Figure 6**

Effect of Electoral Reform Conditional on Referendum Power

(Table 4, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals )



We also argued that reforms through lowering a district magnitude occur more likely where strong presidential power exists. In Table 16, we show the results of models where we examine the effect of presidential power with two different measures on the occurrence of reforms that lower district magnitude. The first two columns in Table 16 employ Hicken and Stoll's (2008) measure of presidential power, while the last two use Doyle and Elgie's (2016) measure of presidential power. The thing to note is that in all the models, presidential power appears to have an effect on lowering the district magnitude (by nearly 1 in models 1 & 2). As a practical example, when the magnitude changes from three to two, the electoral threshold—the minimum vote share to be elected—increases significantly, from 25% to 33%. Suppose a candidate gets 26% in an election. Under the pre-reform rule, she would be elected, while under the post-reform rule, she would not get the seat at all. Figure 7 presents the same results, showing significant reductions in the district magnitude conditional on the strength of presidential power.

**Table 16**

## Presidential Power &amp; District Magnitude

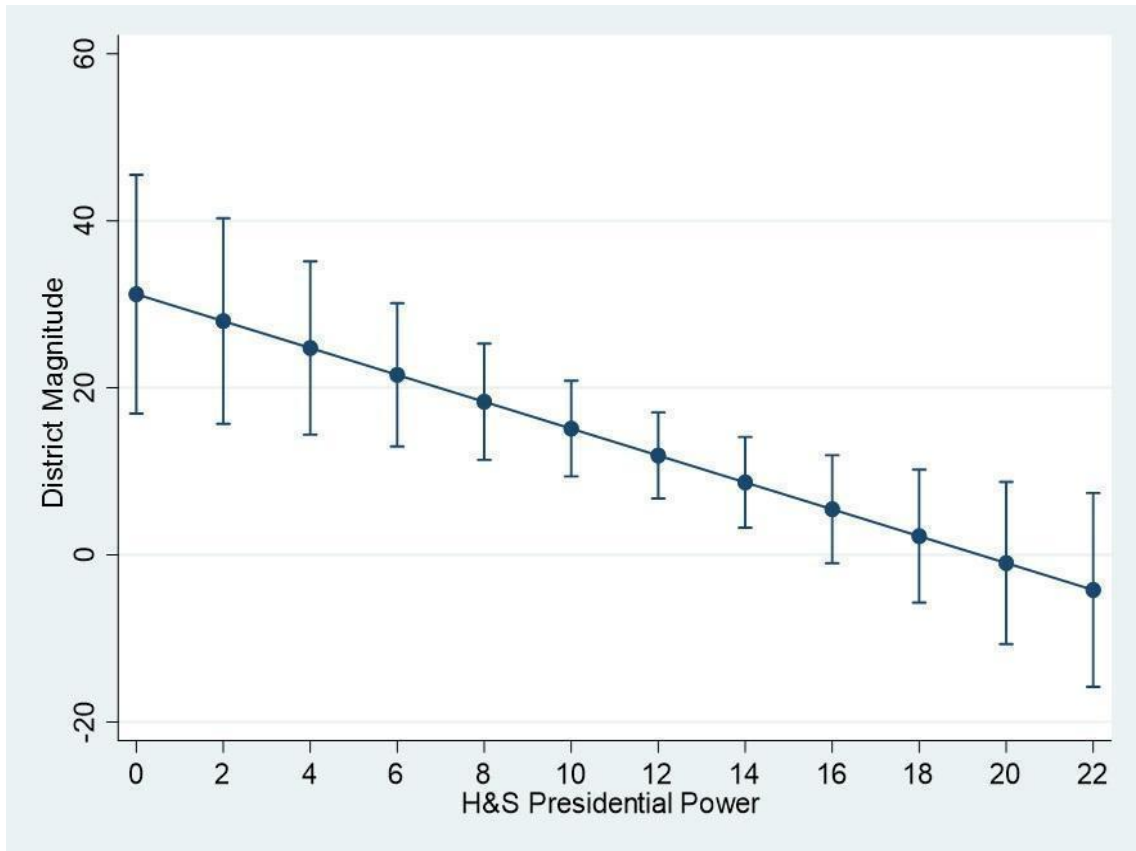
VARIABLES	Model 1 District Magnitude	Model 2 District Magnitude	Model 3 District Magnitude	Model 4 District Magnitude
H&S Presidential Power	-0.907*** (0.331)	-1.660*** (0.551)		
D&E Presidential Power			-17.15* (9.462)	-29.06* (16.38)
Judicial Independence	15.11** (6.797)	30.96*** (10.76)	14.28** (6.023)	26.84** (10.90)
Approval Rate		0.0635 (0.180)		0.0192 (0.197)
Majority		47.66*** (10.98)		44.12*** (11.04)
Minority		3.201 (6.759)		-0.377 (6.757)
President's Remaining Terms		0.00104 (0.0380)		0.0212 (0.0378)
Democratic History		-0.135 (0.149)		0.111 (0.150)
Seat Shares of the President's Party (Pre-Reform)		34.25 (43.92)		50.43 (47.29)
Vote Shares of the President's Party (Pre-Reform)		-1.734*** (0.513)		-1.778*** (0.555)
Constant	15.20*** (5.186)	59.77*** (16.68)	10.85* (5.540)	45.89*** (17.13)
Observations	568	192	471	181
R-squared	0.019	0.184	0.020	0.155

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Figure 7**

Effect of reform of lowering district magnitude conditional on presidential power

(Table 5, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals )





## Conclusion

In this paper, we present a theory on whether presidential power influences electoral reform and how presidential power shapes the outcome of reform. Specifically, we expect reform to be made to favor the president's party through the use of presidential powers.

Our results indicate that presidential involvement in the reform led to outcomes favoring the president and the ruling party. In particular, we find that the stronger the presidential power, the more likely its impact on the reform. First, we can see that as the veto power gets stronger, the probability of implementing electoral reform significantly decreases. We also find that the president's budget power correlates with the better electoral performance of the president's party in the post-reform phase. Specifically, changes in the president's party's seat share increased by nearly 0.1 after the reform. The result of reform using the district magnitude shows that as presidential power gets stronger, the district magnitude lowers significantly. The thing to note is that this lowered magnitude system is primarily advantageous to the larger party, which is where the president mostly comes from. However, our analysis revealed limited evidence for referenda power. Still, the direction of effect is what we expected, showing the positive relationship between the reform and the president's party's better electoral performance under the presence of strong referenda power.

Despite this limitation, the implications of this study are important. The president's engagement in electoral reform aligns with her preferences and serves to

enhance her authority, while this involvement is also connected to the dominance of one branch over another with powerful authorities that are not subject to checks. Furthermore, it can erode democratic institutions. Actually, in countries like Hungary, Poland, Turkey, and several Latin American nations, electoral reform has been used as a legal mechanism to prolong the authoritarian rule of politicians. These examples demonstrate that contemporary democracies are not immune to the challenge of "stealth authoritarianism" through electoral reform. Therefore, it is crucial to examine whether reforms are driven by genuine intentions to adopt better or fairer institutions or by someone's desire to reinforce their powers. This study places the analysis of electoral reform within the context of democratic development and helps us understand a process that has undermined democracy in some countries.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Does Electoral Reform Create a Fairer Game?**

#### **Presidential Powers and Forms of Government**

##### **Introduction**

Does electoral reform always lead to fairer or better representation? Even in the presence of someone powerful, can a reform result in an electoral system that properly represents voters? The answer from the current scholarship based on parliamentary systems suggests that that may not be true. According to Benoit (2004, 373–374), when parties or party coalitions support an alternative system that is expected to bring better electoral outcomes than the current one and wield political power, they can achieve change. In parliamentary systems, overwhelming legislative seat shares can be powerful resources for reform implementation.

A similar argument can be applied in a presidential system but with notable differences. While parties are likely significant players in presidential systems, the president, who doesn't rely on the legislature's confidence, represents an additional independent actor. Presidents can leverage their vetoes, decrees, and the right to call a referendum to achieve desired reforms. There are examples of electoral reforms where presidents have used these powers and succeeded in obtaining the reform that they wanted while fending off competing reform proposals (Benoit and Hayden 2004; Fauvelle-Aymar, Lewis-Beck, and Nadeau 2011; Lehoucq 2000; Nikolenyi 2011; Remington and Smith 1996; Shugart and Taagepera 2017). Thus, reforms in presidential systems are likely to follow a different process than parliamentary systems. A president

and a political party may share the goal of increasing legislative seats through electoral reform, but the ability to achieve that goal may not be the same when the powers vested in one person—the president—are stronger than the other. These imbalanced powers influence whether the reform happens or not and the shape of electoral reform, underscoring the significant role of the president in the reform process.

However, the impact of the presidential powers on electoral reform is only part of the story. The size of the ruling party in the legislature can influence whether the president uses her powers or not. The president's choice of which powers to use under a minority government will also differ from when she heads a majority government. Suppose the president's party has a majority in the legislature and the president wants to pursue an electoral reform. The reform bill may easily pass Congress without invoking any presidential powers. In this case, reform can be achieved easily even when the bill favors the president and her party and disadvantages other parties. Things are different for a president in a minority or a coalition government. Even if the president wants a reform, she may decide not to propose it because she knows that the lack of a majority in Congress may make reform impossible. If a reform is implemented under this condition, it may be the reform proposed by other parties consisting of the majority in the legislature, not the president and her party. The reform will likely be more favorable to them than the president's party.

However, even when the president's party does not command a majority, other parties may comply with the president's reform agenda. The president's powers may

include the power to veto the bill, implement policy, budget the national expenses, and appoint high-ranking officials who are attractable to other parties in need. With these powers, the president can bargain with the parties and persuade some of them to support the reform. This may require a compromise between the president and legislature in terms of the specifics of the reform. The president may make concessions to reflect the parties' preferences in the legislative coalitions in exchange for the parties' support for the reform bill. However, when the president has more political resources, the compromise will be more favorable to the president than the legislature.

This study's focus will be on two related questions. First, to examine whether an electoral reform in presidential systems is influenced by the presidential powers and types of government and, second, if so, what reform was implemented. The latter question is mainly related to electoral reforms under minority or coalition governments in presidential systems, which are becoming more frequent today. Answering such questions can show whether reforms in presidential systems contribute to creating a fairer system of better representation and not advantaging only a few people, including the president herself.

## **Theory**

Presidential powers are important assets for effective governing. Some presidential systems endow presidents with more extraordinary powers. Presidents have employed these powers to take the initiative in reform. For example, a strong veto can be used to prevent reform unfavorable to the president's party. Strong decree power and

strong referendum power with fewer restrictions could provide a way to circumvent the legislature. Presidential involvement has often resulted in reforms favorable to the president and the ruling party. According to Table 17, based on Shugart and Carey (1992), presidents have various powers at their disposal. Their powers are divided into two types: legislative powers and non-legislative powers. Legislative powers are the president's authority regarding the legislative process endowed by the Constitution. Non-legislative powers are the restrictions that the Constitution imposes to secure the independent existence of the President's cabinet and Congress. They specify the president's discretion over the cabinet formation or dismissal, the president's authority to dissolve the Congress, and Congress' cabinet dismissal authority. Table 17 shows details of each power. Presidential powers vary across countries. The range of powers and restrictions on them decide how powerful the president is. The stronger the president's power, the more influence she can exert over Congress.

**Table 17**

Types of Presidential Powers (Shugart and Carey 1992)

Legislative Powers	Veto	a presidential authority with a veto over legislation to shape the legislative outcome of Congress, blocking the legislation of a particular bill
	Decree	Presidential authority to legislate by decree. The authority to make new laws or suspend old ones.
	Exclusive right to initiate a specific proposal	The assembly is barred from considering legislation in specific policy areas unless the president first introduces a bill. It will not be discussed if she does not want a matter discussed—a mighty agenda-setting power.
	Budgetary power	A budget planning authority establishes the broad framework and details of the national budget and grants a president discretion over releasing budgetary funds for public projects.
	Call for referenda	the president's authority to propose referenda on political matters.
Non-Legislative Powers	Cabinet formation and Cabinet dismissal	cabinet formation and dismissal depend entirely on the president's choices in some countries. In contrast, in other cases, the president is barred from nominating anyone to a cabinet post in some places.

	Lack of assembly censure	In some countries, the assembly can censure and dismiss the ministers, while the president cannot defend this action with any of her authority.
	Dissolution of the assembly	The president's authority to dissolve the assembly. Some presidents can dissolve it anytime, while others have dissolution powers with restrictions.



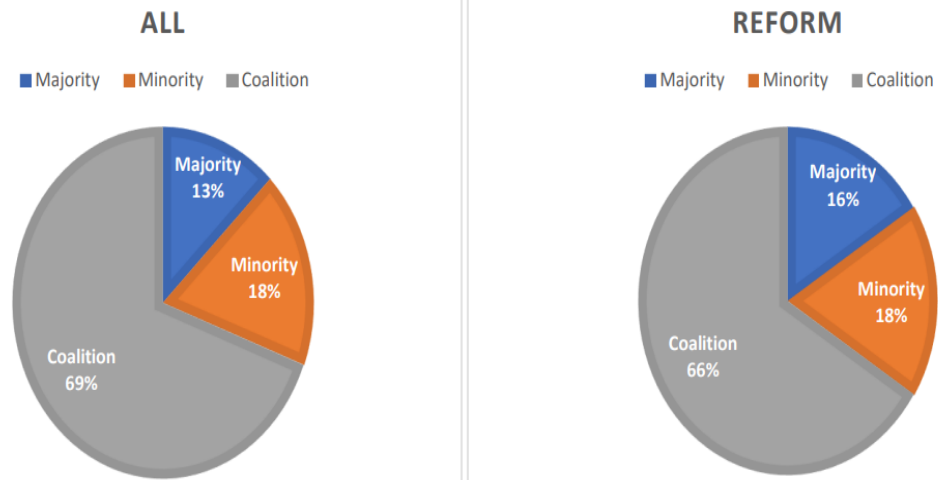
However, presidents depend not only on their presidential powers but also on other power sources to rule a country. Regarding legislation, the size of the parties in the legislature may matter more than presidential powers for legislative success. If the president's party in Congress takes a majority able to pass the president's legislation alone, it may pass easily; otherwise, it may not pass without challenges. In the latter case, the president may seek to persuade the legislators or to threaten them with her authority—her presidential powers. Thus, the size of the ruling party in Congress may affect the president's decision to use presidential powers. The size of the ruling party in the legislature determines the form of government: majority government, minority (or divided) government, and coalition government. A majority government is a case where the ruling party commands a majority in the legislature, and the president only recruits her party members (or technocrats) for her cabinet. A minority government is formed when, despite the lack of a majority in the legislature, the president decides not to find any governing partners but to be alone with her party members in the cabinet. A coalition government is formed when the ruling party doesn't hold a majority, much like in a minority government, but the president recruits coalition partners into the cabinet in order to improve the cabinet's legislative support. Each form of government provides the president with a different political environment and political resources.

The type of government has implications for electoral reform. Figure 8 shows the distribution of the types of government in all given periods and specifically at the phases of electoral reforms in presidential countries. The latter indicates that in presidential systems, electoral reform happened most frequently under coalition governments (66%),

followed by minority governments (18%) and majority governments (16%). Compared to the former having all the periods, there is 3% more majority and 3% less coalition government in the latter case, meaning more variations in the distribution. This variation might suggest that how presidents pursue electoral reform differs across government types.

**Figure 8**

Distributions of the types of government during the reform period compared to all the periods (DPI, 2021)



For example, presidential powers may not need to be mobilized under a majority government due to the president's legislative majority. In contrast, under a minority or a coalition government, presidential powers may be more likely to be used to influence electoral reform. In short, the form of government provides a political context for the president to decide how to achieve her desired electoral reform. In particular, veto powers (e.g., Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Romania, Russia), decree powers (e.g., Russia and Romania), and referenda powers (e.g., France, Romania) have been used by presidents to achieve electoral reform. In each case, the presidents achieved the electoral reform they desired. For example, in the 1925 Costa Rica electoral reform, the president vetoed a bill that could violate the principle of a secret ballot (Lehoucq 2000), and only after the Congress member amended the bill, reflecting most of the president's requests, did he finally sign it. In the 2008 Romanian reform attempt, the fear of the presidential veto was sufficient to thwart the electoral reform that would have adopted a mixed system as proposed by the legislature. In addition, presidents have frequently used the decree to replace the parliamentary route in several East European electoral reforms. For example, in Russia's 1993 electoral reform, the president achieved the reform through a decree to adopt the mixed-member majoritarian (MMP), which allocated an equal number of seats to the SMDP and PR tiers of the electoral system. This measure was intended to maximize the representation of the pro-presidential political forces among the Duma deputies (Turchenko and Shevchuk 2015). As for referenda, they contributed to the presidential dominance over the legislative election in France while also helping the presidential agenda on a new electoral system—a candidate-centered system—partially

reflected in a new electoral reform. Last, similar to the veto power, there is a case where even the mere threat of a referendum was sufficient. According to Shugart et al. (2007, 1), in the 2003 Colombian electoral reform, "the threat of the referendum—which included a less reform of the electoral system but significant reforms in other areas that many in Congress feared—was critical to motivating Congress to approve a reform of its own." These examples of the electoral reforms influenced by presidential powers suggest the effectiveness of the presidential powers on electoral reform. In particular, presidential powers allow the president to achieve what she wants throughout the electoral reform. Based on the literature above, it is reasonable to think that the stronger the presidential powers are, the more likely the president will achieve what she wants as the outcome of a reform.

Then, what does the president usually want as the outcome of electoral reform? According to rational choice theory and institutional approaches to electoral reform, political elites' pursuit of self-interest and power maximization are great motivations to engage in electoral reform (Farrell 2011). For the president, self-interest may mean governing without many political obstacles and being able to realize much of her agenda during her term. Solid support from the legislative majority is efficient for advancing these goals. Therefore, when electoral reform is discussed, the president will want the reform to increase their party's legislative representation. As the president often comes from one of the major parties, she will typically favor less proportional electoral systems—a majoritarian or PR system with a low district magnitude. In terms of the PR system, the smaller a district magnitude is, the more advantageous it is to larger parties

since fewer candidates are elected in each district. When the ruling party secures a majority in Congress, legislation for these kinds of reforms can be passed without much resistance from the opposition parties.

In sum, a president who wants to maximize her political power will favor a less proportional system benefitting her party while penalizing other parties. If the president has many power resources, the situation is quite favorable to the president. Presidential powers are the president's typical power resources. If these powers are strong enough, they can influence the electoral reform bill. Its specifics are more likely to favor the president. Along with this condition, in a majority government, a somewhat disproportional system to favor the president's party will be made, while in an inverse situation, such as a coalition and minority, a more proportional system will result (Garrido de Sierra 2012; Lehoucq 2000; Turchenko and Shevchuk 2015).

**Hypothesis 1** When electoral reform occurs, it is more likely to result in a more disproportional system when the president wields strong powers.

**Hypothesis 2:** Electoral reform is more likely to result in a more disproportional system when the president is in a majority government than a minority and coalition government.

While presidents need legislative majorities to advance their governing agenda, they frequently find themselves in a legislative minority. To overcome them, they may try to build and maintain coalitions while also attempting to engineer a more long-term

solution via electoral reform. When the parties think the president has the political means to implement electoral reform, such as strong presidential power, they may be more likely to comply with the president's agenda. In contrast, when the parties believe the president has almost no means, they may not support the president's electoral reform agenda but pursue changing a reform agenda to favor their position.

Presidential powers are one such means that a president can use in the electoral reform process. When presidential power is strong, it can help the president to take the lead in bargaining for an electoral reform. Even when the president is in the legislative minority, including the coalition government, strong presidential power can be used as a carrot or a stick for the legislators. Presidential authorities, such as veto, budget power, decree, and the authority to appoint and dismiss ministers, can function as means to engage in patronage or deliver pork to Congress members. Giving important cabinet positions to other parties, promising funds to specific districts in exchange for votes for the reform bill, and subtly hinting at the possibility of exercising veto power on competing reforms are all examples of such actions. The more powers the president has, the greater her leverage will be. And greater leverage can lead to a more favorable reform outcome for the president. Even when there is a minority or coalition government in which the president has fewer supporters in the legislature, the role of presidential power is greater. Strong presidential power can draw those who are not favorable to the government to the supporter pool with the carrots. Presidential powers (mainly legislative powers in this case) even affect the formation of a coalition government. The power to implement policy vested in the presidential authorities incentivizes the parties who want

to carry out their policies to join the coalition (Alemán and Tsebelis 2011; AN 2020). In the electoral reform process, having governing partners may contribute to gaining majority support for the reform bill in the legislature.

Indeed, reforms that have taken place under minority and coalition governments support this claim. Those reforms show that presidential power, mainly the veto, affected the bargaining between the president and the legislature over electoral reform. Specifically, it has affected whether the reform occurs, the contents of the electoral reform, and the severity of conflict between the two branches. Commonly, the outcomes of these reforms tended to reflect the president's requests, while there was some compromise. For instance, in the 1994 Russian electoral reform, the president proposed an electoral law that decreased the number of PR deputies from 225 to 150 and increased the number of deputies elected in the single-member districts from 225 to 300 (see Turchenko and Shevchuk 2015). The Duma, where the ruling party did not have a majority, disagreed with his proposal and alternatively adopted an electoral law that kept an equal balance (225-225) between the deputies from the single-member districts and the national party lists. Since this bill substantially diverged from the president's proposal, the president vetoed the Duma's bill. However, his veto power was too strong, making the Duma unable to override it. Consequently, a conciliation commission was established, consisting of the members of the lower and upper houses of the Russian parliament and the presidential administration. The commission wrote the compromise law. The commission accepted Duma's proposal of keeping an equal balance between the deputies from the single-member districts and the national party lists (225-225) but asked



for some concessions to the president from the Duma in exchange. Accordingly, the Duma passed the president's law on presidential elections with a few amendments before considering the bill on parliamentary elections.

Another example is the Czech Republic's electoral reform in 2000, which was initiated in fulfillment of a promise of an electoral coalition in the previous election (see Nikolenyi 2011). In exchange for the support of the Havel minority government, the parties in a coalition agreed to discuss enacting a new electoral law favorable to their parties. They arrived at a compromise and passed legislation in 2000 increasing the number of electoral districts to 35, leaving the size of the Assembly intact but adopting the d'Hondt formula—the least proportional formula, and increasing the threshold for electoral alliances of two, three, four or more parties to 10 percent, 15 percent, and 20 percent, respectively. However, President Havel vetoed the electoral reform bill because he thought the proposed electoral system was PR in form, but it was highly likely to function in a different way. After this veto, the CSSD–ODS coalition succeeded in overturning the presidential veto, but the President of the Czech Republic had the authority to refer the bill to the Constitutional Court, and he actually did it. As a result, the legislature's proposal, except for the new threshold structure, was rejected in Court. This Court decision triggered a compromise upon the initiative of the CSSD. A new bill passed in both houses of parliament included adopting the d'Hondt formula in the original bill but increasing the number of districts only moderately from 8 to 14, reflecting the previous president's concerns about the mechanical operation of the proposed system. These examples show that in the case of the reforms occurring under a

minority or coalition government, a conflict between the president and legislature tended to be incited more than the ones under a majority government. However, even in this situation, if presidential powers are strong enough, they could put brakes on the reform process driven by the legislature only, make the legislative body aware of the president's will, and finally pull off a compromise reflecting the president's requests at some level.

Taking a cue from these examples, we expect that the stronger the presidential powers, the more the compromise reflects the president's requests. When it comes to the proportionality of the post-reform system as well, if a stronger president is present, it is likely that the proportionality is decided to a place where the president's party gets more electoral gains. As we argued above, since presidents usually come from the major parties, they may prefer a less proportional electoral system, such as a majoritarian system and PR system, but with a small district magnitude. This kind of system sets a higher threshold for minor parties to win seats while giving more advantages to large parties. Therefore, under a minority or coalition government, the stronger the presidential power, the more likely the reform reflects the president's preference; thereby, the outcome is more disproportional.

**Hypothesis 3:** Strong presidential power makes the outcome of reform more disproportional in the presence of a minority or coalition government than a majority government.

## **Data, Method, and Analysis**

To investigate whether the impact of electoral reform is affected by the nature of government and presidential authority, we compiled a dataset comprising 78 democracies with presidential or semi-presidential systems. The analysis unit encompasses country-legislative elections and considers whether electoral reforms occurred during the respective election years. The timeframe for our data collection varies across countries based on their democratic history and data availability. Table 18 displays the countries included, along with observations per country, instances of electoral reforms, and elections analyzed. Information on electoral reform is sourced from "Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946-2020". We establish data on electoral reform by capturing changes in the electoral system per legislative election within this dataset. This study defines an electoral reform as alterations in specific elements of the electoral system, such as basic electoral rules, electoral formulas, number of tiers, type of mixed systems, average district magnitude, or threshold requirements. Under this definition, reforms within presidential systems are categorized into two types - those involving changes to primary types (e.g., PR or majority) and those maintaining the same primary type but implementing significant adjustments like altering average district magnitudes or thresholds. Chapter 1 provides insights into these reforms relating to presidential systems, including substantial changes in district magnitude and the effective number of parliamentary parties.

**Table 18**

Number of Observations for the Countries and Electoral Reforms and Elections

<b>Country</b>	<b>Obs.</b>	<b>Reform.</b>	<b>Election Years</b>
Argentina	26	8	1946-2019
Armenia	4	1	1995-2012
Austria	21	3	1949-2019
Benin	7	3	1991-2019
Bolivia	10	2	1979-2020
Bosnia	7	3	1996-2018
Brazil	13	2	1947-1962, 1986-2018
Bulgaria	8	2	1991-2017
Burundi	4	0	1993-2020
Cape Verde	5	2	1991-2016
Central African Republic	1	0	1993-1998
Chile	12	1	1949-1969, 1993-2017
Colombia	20	4	1947-2018
Comoros	3	1	1992, 2015-2020
Congo	1	0	1992-1993
Costa Rica	16	1	1953-2018
Croatia	8	1	1992-2020
Czech Republic	1	0	2013-2017
Dominican Republic	13	2	1966-2020
East Timor	3	0	2007-2018
Ecuador	21	6	1950-1962, 1984-2021
El Salvador	11	3	1985-2018
Finland	19	1	1948-2019
France	12	2	1967-2017
Georgia	4	1	2004-2020
Ghana	6	0	1996-2020
Greek Cyprus	7	1	1981-2016
Guatemala	19	6	1947-1974, 1994-2019
Guinea Bissau	4	0	2000-2019
Honduras	10	1	1985-2017
Iceland	22	4	1946-2017
Indonesia	4	2	1999-2019
Ireland	19	1	1948-2020
Kenya	3	1	2002-2017
Kiribati	1	0	2015-2020
Kyrgyzstan	3	0	2007-2020

Liberia	1	0	2011-2018
Lithuania	7	2	1992-2020
Macedonia	8	2	1994-2020
Madagascar	5	3	1993-2019
Malawi	5	0	1994-2019
Maldives	2	0	2009-2019
Mali	5	2	1992-2020
Mexico	6	0	2000-2018
Micronesia, Federated States of	14	0	1991-2019
Moldova	2	1	1994-2019
Mongolia	7	5	1992-2020
Montenegro	4	0	2006-2020
Mozambique	1	0	1994-2006
Nicaragua	6	2	1984-2016
Niger	5	3	1995, 2004-2020
Nigeria	6	0	1992-2019
Palau	6	0	1996-2020
Panama	10	2	1952-1964, 1984-2019
Paraguay	6	1	1989-2018
Peru	8	3	1956, 1980-1990, 2000-2020
Philippines	15	1	1946-1965, 1985-2019
Poland	8	3	1991-2019
Portugal	14	0	1976-2019
Republic of the Gambia	4	0	1972-1992
Romania	8	3	1990-2020
Russia	1	0	1993-1995
Sao Tome and Principe	6	0	1991-2018
Senegal	3	2	2001-2017
Serbia	5	0	2007-2020
Sierra Leone	4	1	1996-2018
Slovakia	5	1	2002-2020
Slovenia	4	1	1992-2018
Somalia	1	1	1959-1960
South Korea	8	1	1988-2020
Sri Lanka	7	0	1989-2020
Suriname	6	0	1991-2020
Taiwan	6	1	1998-2020
Guyana	5	1	1992-2015
Ukraine	7	3	1994-2019
Uruguay	13	0	1946-1971, 1989-2019
Venezuela	12	6	1959-2015
Zambia	1	0	2011-2016

Total	605	116	
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Our dependent variable is the change in the seat share/vote share ratio of the president's party between elections. It comes from "The Database of Political Institutions 2020" (Scartascini, Cruz, and Keefer 2021). In particular, the vote share of the president's party comes from the election results of the government parties in this dataset. For the president party's seat share, we create a seat share variable by dividing the number of seats of the president's party by the total seats of the legislature. By dividing the seat share by the vote share each election, we create our dependent variable. This measure provides information on the electoral system's disproportionality. Suppose a party gets 50% of the vote share and 50% of the seat share in an election at t-1. In this case,  $\frac{\text{seat share}}{\text{vote share}}$  is 1, meaning that the vote and seat share correspond perfectly to 1:1. At t-1, the electoral system is perfectly proportional. However, in an election at time t, where electoral reform has occurred, the party gets 50% of the vote share and 100% of the seat share in an election. In this case,  $\frac{\text{seat share}}{\text{vote share}}$  is 2, meaning that the vote and seat share correspond to 1:2. It indicates the electoral system at t is highly disproportional. As a result, this party gets more than twice the number of seats in the 't' election than the t-1 election with the same vote share, which is 50%. It is reasonable to say that the post-reform electoral system is highly advantageous to this party. This study takes  $\Delta \frac{\text{seat share}}{\text{vote share}}$  as the measure showing the disproportionality of the electoral system and multiplies those by 100 to represent the percentage point change in the representation of the president's party.

The study obtains information on presidential powers from several sources, including Hicken and Stoll's (2008) and Doyle and Elgie's (2016) measures of presidential power. Hicken and Stoll's measure is based on Shugart and Carey's coding scheme (1992), which classifies presidential powers into legislative and non-legislative categories. The legislative powers include veto, decrees, the exclusive right to introduce specific legislation, a budget bill, and the right to call referenda. The non-legislative powers encompass the president's authority to form and dismiss the cabinet and the legislature's ability to propose a vote of no confidence in the cabinet. Each power, except the legislature's authority to censure the cabinet, is scored on a scale of 0 to 4, and the legislature's authority to censure the presidential cabinet was coded reversely to reflect that the presidents are stronger when they do not have to be concerned about the legislature's authority to censure the president's cabinet. The scores are summed to create indices for both subcategories and a total presidential power score. The theoretical range of the legislative powers index is from 0 to 20, but the actual range for the countries in our sample is from 0 to 10. The non-legislative powers index can take values from 0 to 16, but the range in our data is from 0 to 15. Finally, the total presidential power ranges from 0 to 22. The study also considers Doyle and Elgie's (2016) measure of presidential power, which is the mean normalized score of 28 different datasets developed by scholars, including Shugart and Carey's measure. A set of mean normalized scores is generated in a range from 0–1. The empirical range of Doyle and Elgie's measure in our sample runs from .018 to 1. However, the data for itemized presidential powers is unavailable for some countries. For these cases, we coded the itemized presidential



powers following Shugart and Carey's (1992) scheme based on each country's constitution from the Comparative Constitutions Project (Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton 2009).

In each model, we incorporate several variables that may be anticipated to affect the presidents' political status and their relative power over the legislature. These variables include the seat shares and vote shares of the president's party at the elections before and after the reform, the president's remaining term, and the types of government, all of which are obtained from "The Database of Political Institutions 2020" (Scartascini, Cruz, and Keefer 2021). The president's remaining term is measured by the number of years left in their current term, and the types of government are determined by whether the current government has a majority, a minority, or a coalition government, as indicated by the information on the government parties and election results. Additionally, we include the duration of the democratic regime as a variable obtained from the DPI, as countries with a shorter democratic history may have electoral institutions that have not yet been consolidated, leaving room for the discussion of adopting different electoral systems. Furthermore, based on the information from "Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946-2020" (Bormann and Golder 2022), we include whether a country has a presidential or semi-presidential system in the models, as the presidential authority tends to be highly influenced by the types of government in the semi-presidential system, which is a key factor in this study's examination of electoral reform.

We estimate a series of regression models, where the dependent variable is the measure of the change in the electoral system's proportionality across the elections—the changes in seat share/vote share.

First, we want to examine whether the presidential powers influence the outcome of reform—the proportionality of the electoral system. Accordingly, Table 19 includes two presidential power variables and their interaction with the reform variable. There is strong evidence to suggest that when electoral reform occurs in the presence of strong presidential power, the outcome of reform is more disproportional than under previous electoral rule, as we expected in our hypothesis. More specifically, the statistically significant coefficient of interaction between the reform and presidential power variable using Doyle and Elgie's (2016) measures of presidential powers<sup>21</sup> in model 2 suggests that the president's party's seat share/vote share increases by over 0.5 compared to previous elections where pre-reform rules were applied. This implies that a new system distributes more seats to the president's party conditional on the vote share than the old one, allowing us to predict the outcome of electoral reform as a less proportional system. Still, the coefficient of interaction between the reform and presidential power variable using Hicken and Stoll's measure (2008) is not statistically significant at conventional levels. Despite this result, the thing to note is that the direction of impact is what we expected and the same as in model 2 using Doyle and Elgie's (2016) measures. To make this relationship more straightforward, Figure 9 graphs the marginal effect of reform

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<sup>21</sup> Data unavailable in the Doyle and Elgie's measures of presidential powers: Burundi (2010), Finland (2015), France (2012), Gambia (1982), Guyana (1997, 2001, 2006, 2011), Indonesia (2009, 2014), Maldives (2014), Suriname (2005)

conditional on the presidential power, showing that reform harms the president's party when the presidential power is weak.

**Table 19**

## Presidential Power and Disproportionality of the Electoral System

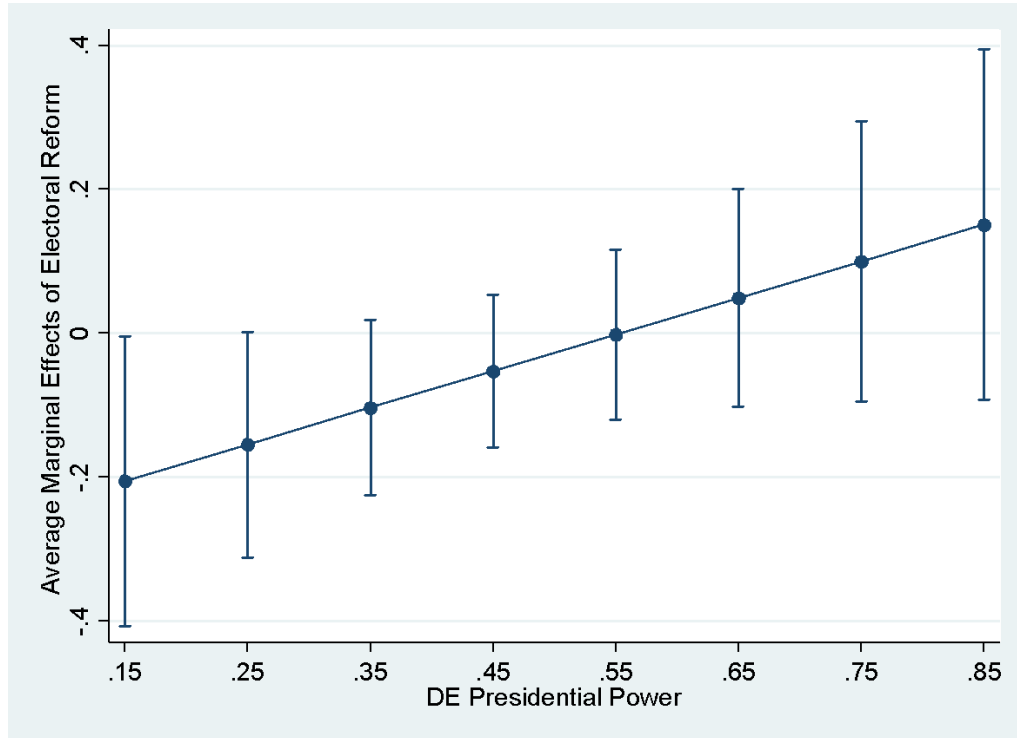
VARIABLES	Model 1 $\Delta$ Seat share /Vote share	Model 2 $\Delta$ Seat share /Vote share
Reform	-0.175 (0.129)	-0.285** (0.140)
HS Presidential Power	-0.00651 (0.00600)	
DE Presidential Power		-0.0649 (0.128)
Reform x HS Presidential Power	0.0146 (0.0106)	
Reform x DE Presidential Power		0.507* (0.283)
Presidential System (0: Semi-Presidential)	0.158** (0.0607)	0.0932** (0.0437)
President's remaining terms	-5.44e-05 (0.000265)	4.55e-05 (0.000229)
Democratic History	0.000599 (0.00108)	-0.000384 (0.000969)
Constant	-0.0222 (0.0759)	0.0119 (0.0748)
Observations	149	137
R-squared	0.065	0.077

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Figure 9**

Effect of Electoral Reform Conditional on the Presidential Power

(Table 3, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals)



Second, we examine whether majority government affects the proportionality of the newly adopted electoral system as an outcome of reform. Table 20 includes the majority variable and its interaction with the reform variable. From the two models, we find solid evidence that when electoral reform is made under the presence of a majority government, changes in the seat share/vote share ratio occur in a positive direction by over 0.3. Again, it shows that more seats are distributed to the president's party under a new electoral system than in the old system. This result also indicates that the presence of a majority government contributes to this disproportional reform outcome. For a more straightforward relationship, Figure 10 graphs the marginal effect of reform conditional on the presence of a majority government. It certainly shows that reform has a more significant impact when a majority government is present, and the difference in effects with and without the presence of the majority is also somewhat huge.

**Table 20**

## Majority Government and Disproportionality of the Electoral System

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2
	$\Delta$ Seat share /Vote share	$\Delta$ Seat share /Vote share
Reform	-0.0802 (0.0641)	-0.0636 (0.0636)
Majority	-0.191** (0.0733)	-0.188** (0.0745)
Reform x Majority	0.304* (0.160)	0.321** (0.158)
Presidential System		0.120** (0.0477)
President's remaining terms		1.44e-05 (0.000259)
Democratic History		0.000388 (0.00107)
Constant	0.0161 (0.0244)	-0.0507 (0.0514)
Observations	149	149
R-squared	0.051	0.098

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Figure 10**

Effect of Electoral Reform Conditional on the Type of the Government (Majority)

(Table 4, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals)





As an extension of this analysis, we examine the outcome of reform conditional on the types of government in more detail. In particular, we want to see if electoral reform results in a more proportional system in a minority or coalition government than a majority. The result in Table 21 indicates that when electoral reform occurs under the presence of the majority government, the changes in the president's party's seat share/vote share increase by over 0.3, and specifically, in model 2, the estimated coefficient is statistically significant. Substantively, it means that a party that previously got a 50% seat share with a 25% vote share gained the same seat share with a 24% vote share under a new system.<sup>22</sup> Under the coalition government's presence, the changes only increase by less than 0.1 in all models. They are not statistically significant (Baseline—Minority Government). However, despite this fact, there is a clear difference at the conventional level when the coefficient of the coalition government is tested against that of the majority government ( $F(1, 140) = 3.74$ ,  $\text{Prob} > F = 0.0552$ ). It shows that the proportionality of the post-reform electoral system of each government has a clear gap. Figure 11 presents the results graphically, indicating substantial differences in changes conditional on the types of government. It visually shows that the effect of reform on the proportionality of a new electoral system is varied by the government. The majority is the most disproportional, followed by coalition and then minority governments. Here, the difference between the majority and two non-majority categories is also prominent, implying a significant difference in reform's effect on proportionality.

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<sup>22</sup>  $50\%(\text{seat share})/25\%(\text{vote share}) = 2$ . In model 2, there is an increase of 0.00321 (previously multiplied by 100). Therefore,  $2.00321$  becomes the new ratio:  $50\%/x(\text{new vote share}) = 2.00321$ ,  $x = 24.95$ .

**Table 21**

Proportionality of the Electoral System Depending on the Types of Government

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2
	$\Delta$ Seat share /Vote share	$\Delta$ Seat share /Vote share
Reform	-0.0840 (0.125)	-0.0824 (0.123)
Coalition	-0.00868 (0.0544)	0.0567 (0.0585)
Majority	-0.197** (0.0834)	-0.151* (0.0844)
Reform x Coalition	0.00543 (0.146)	0.0283 (0.144)
Reform x Majority	0.308 (0.193)	0.344* (0.191)
Presidential System		0.141*** (0.0513)
President's Remaining Terms		2.41e-05 (0.000260)
Democratic History		0.000270 (0.00108)
Constant	0.0223 (0.0460)	-0.0973 (0.0695)
Observations	149	149
R-squared	0.052	0.105

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Figure 11**

Effect of Electoral Reform Conditional on the Type of Government (Minority, Coalition, Majority) (Table 5, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals)

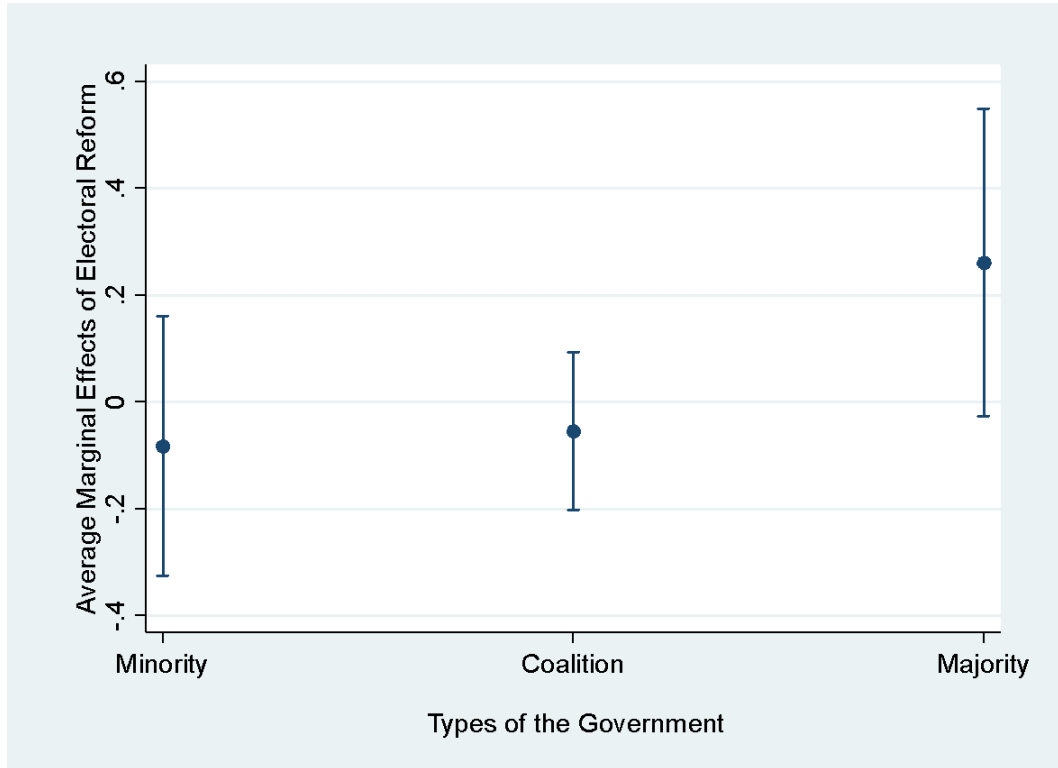


Table 22 includes a reform variable and its interaction with types of government and two presidential power variables. It suggests that when electoral reform occurs in the presence of strong presidential power and a majority government, a new electoral system as an outcome of reform is more disproportional than under previous electoral rule and gives more advantages to the president's party. The interaction between reform occurrence, presidential power, and majority government has a positive coefficient in all four models, meaning that the post-reform electoral system is more disproportional under this circumstance. Given a triple interaction among the reform occurrence, minority and coalition, and presidential power are excluded as a reference in these models, this result also means that the disproportionality of a post-reform system under this condition is more severe than the same condition but in the minority and coalition government.

However, these estimates are not statistically significant at conventional levels. Thus, we find limited evidence in support of these interactions. However, to see the relationship in triple interactions in more detail, we create Figure 12. It presents the differences in the proportionality of the post-reform electoral system conditional on the interaction between the types of government and presidential power. On the right side of Figure 12, only including the reform cases, we find that strong presidential power intensifies the disproportionality of a new electoral system under the presence of a minority or coalition government. The graph shows that in a minority or coalition government, the stronger the presidential power, the more changes in seat share/vote share in a positive direction in all the ranges of the presidential power, meaning a more disproportional system advantaging the president's party. Even at the score of 17 of the

presidential power, these changes overtake the ones in a majority government. It indicates that a newly adopted electoral system in a minority or coalition government with somewhat stronger presidential power is more disproportional than the system under the same condition in a majority government. As for the majority, we see that presidential power worsens the proportionality of a new electoral system up to a score of 17 the presidential power, while the effect decreases as the presidential power gets more significant. Although further studies are necessary for the causal mechanism behind this, we suspect that one reason would be that if the president is already in a majority position, then she does not really need reform. Therefore, the reforms that do take place may not be aimed at increasing her strength in the legislature. Alternatively, it could be that the system is already disproportional, creating no room for further changes (ceiling effect).

**Table 22**

Proportionality of the Electoral System Depending on the Interaction between the Types of Government and Presidential Power

VARIABLES	Model 1 △Seat share /Vote share	Model 2 △Seat share /Vote share	Model 3 △Seat share /Vote share	Model 4 △Seat share /Vote share
Reform	-0.179 (0.134)	-0.202 (0.133)	-0.353** (0.148)	-0.392*** (0.147)
Majority	0.395* (0.220)	0.354 (0.223)	-0.0236 (0.418)	0.182 (0.418)
Reform x Majority	-0.116 (0.423)	0.0409 (0.427)	0.274 (0.694)	-0.0855 (0.695)
HS Presidential power	0.00700 (0.00429)	-0.000392 (0.00614)		
Reform x HS Presidential Power	0.00905 (0.0107)	0.0126 (0.0108)		
Majority x HS Presidential Power	-0.0461*** (0.0161)	-0.0414** (0.0163)		
Reform x Majority x HS Presidential Power	0.0311 (0.0362)	0.0173 (0.0365)		
DE Presidential Power			-0.0592 (0.129)	-0.0877 (0.127)
Reform x DE Presidential Power			0.524* (0.288)	0.626** (0.285)
Majority x DE Presidential Power			-0.350 (0.992)	-0.911 (0.991)
Reform x Majority x DE Presidential Power			0.148 (1.779)	1.133 (1.788)

Presidential System		0.127** (0.0602)		0.103** (0.0446)
President's Remaining Terms		4.12e-06 (0.000257)		6.94e-05 (0.000224)
Democratic History		0.000592 (0.00111)		-0.000759 (0.00100)
Constant	-0.0612 (0.0529)	-0.0555 (0.0779)	0.0568 (0.0639)	0.0473 (0.0780)
Observations	149	149	137	137
R-squared	0.124	0.153	0.082	0.148

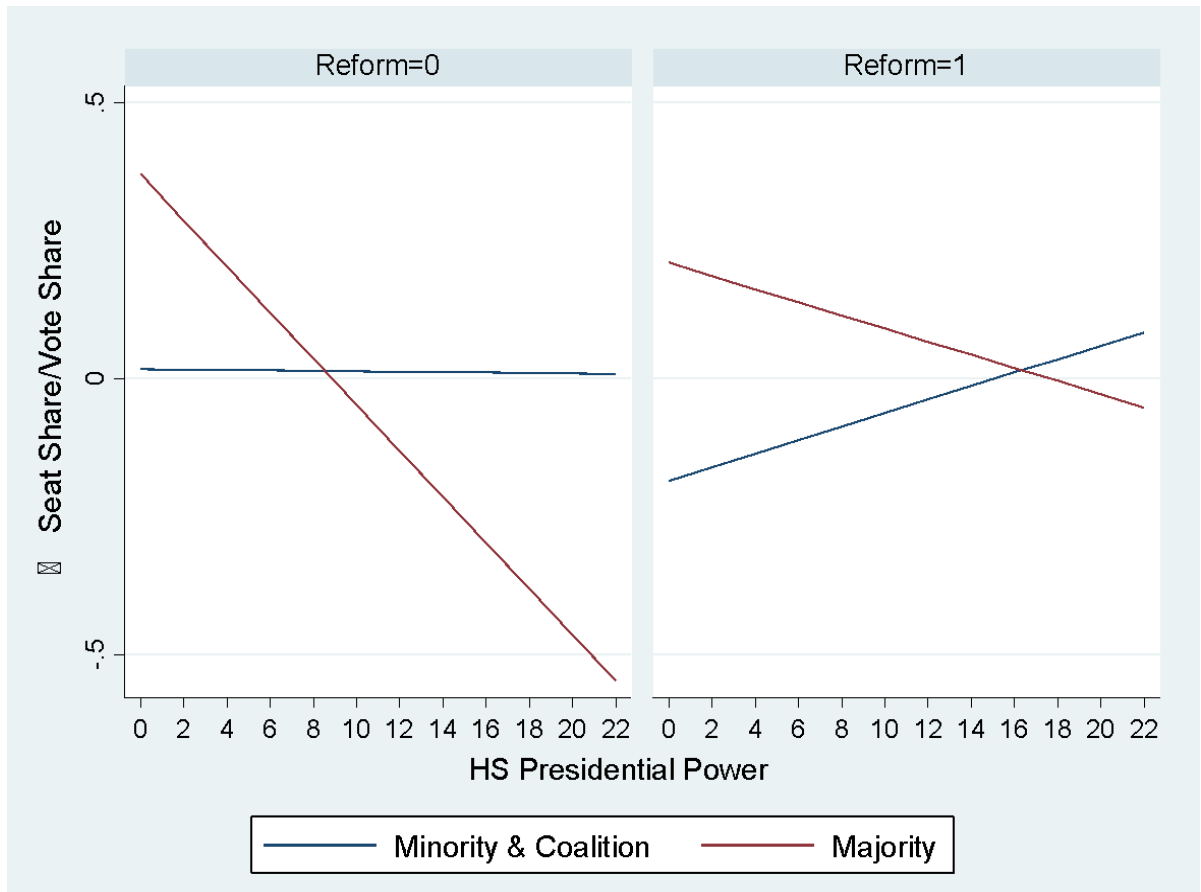
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Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Figure 12**

Proportionality of the Post-reform Electoral System Conditional on the Interaction between Type of Government and Presidential Power

(Table 6, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals)





## **Conclusion**

This paper examines whether presidential power, types of government, and even the interaction of both influence electoral reform and how they shape its outcome. Specifically, regarding the election outcome, we expect that either stronger presidential power or a majority government allowing a president a massive authority results in a more disproportional system. Also, we hypothesize that even under minority and coalition governments, strong presidential power also distorts the proportionality of the electoral system to favor the president.

Our results indicate that most of our expectations have empirical support. In particular, we find that under the presence of strong presidential power, the outcome of reform is more disproportional than under previous electoral rule. Specifically, the changes in the president's party's seat share/vote share increased by over 0.5. There is a similar result under the presence of the majority government, showing that changes in the seat share/vote share ratio occur in a positive direction by over 0.3. Again, it shows that the post-reform electoral system distributes more seats to the president's party than in a pre-reform system. However, our analysis examining the interaction between the forms of government and the presidential power reveals limited evidence with insignificant coefficients. However, the direction of effect is what we expected, showing that although a reform occurred under the minority and coalition government, the influence of strong presidential power is still valid, distorting the proportionality of the electoral system to favor the president. It is even more disproportional than the one in a majority government when the presidential power is much stronger.

A new electoral system, the outcome of reform, is largely favorable to the president. Even when the opposition has a numerical advantage in the legislature, and a minority or a coalition government is formed, if the constitution grants the president a strong presidential power, the outcome of reform is, on average, favorable to the president. These results open up the possibility that leaders with little regard for democracy may have an opportunity to take advantage. If this trend lasts, this president's advantage will accumulate; free and fair elections are institutionally impossible. The analysis of this result shows that current electoral reform has not genuinely been driven by a motivation to create a more equitable and better system.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Time for Electoral Reform: President, Party, and People**

#### **Introduction**

Electoral reforms occur more frequently in presidential systems than in parliamentary systems. According to Bormann and Golder's dataset (2022), in parliamentary countries, there is reform about once every ten years, while a reform takes place about once every five years in presidential systems, which means that reforms in the presidential system are about twice as frequent as in parliamentary systems. Electoral reforms in presidential systems were especially common between 1945 and early 1980 but have remained more frequent than in parliamentary systems to this day. In other words, electoral reforms are not rare events, especially not in presidential democracies.

The higher frequency of electoral reform in presidential countries raises questions about the determinants of reform in presidential systems and what is distinct within this presidential system. This study focuses on the interaction between three political actors—the people, the president, and the parties. In particular, we argue that voters' dissatisfaction with the current economic situation can facilitate reform. This is because such dissatisfaction incentivizes political entrepreneurs, especially the opposition, to propose changes to electoral rules by taking issue with the current system, eventually resulting in reforms (Calvo and Negretto 2020). At the same time, we emphasize the role of the president and her presidential power. In presidential systems, the executive does not rely on the legislature's confidence and represents an additional actor who can use her

political powers to influence electoral reform. With their powers, the president can attempt to shape the outcome of reform to provide her with electoral benefits. Specifically, according to rational choice theory and institutional approaches, political elites' pursuit of self-interest and power maximization are major motivations for engaging in electoral reform. (Farrell 2011). For the president, being able to advance her agenda during her term with fewer political obstacles can be one of such interests. Solid support from a legislative majority is an efficient means of achieving these goals. Therefore, when electoral reform is on the table, the president, who is more likely to benefit from the current system relative to the opposition proposal, may prefer to maintain the status quo or seek reforms that increase her party's legislative representation. In particular, if the opposition's reform proposal does not benefit her or includes clauses that reduce the electoral advantages of the president's party, she may work to thwart the reform.

Last, we consider the type of government to be an important factor. If the president's party controls a legislative majority and the cabinet only consists of a single party - a single-party majority government - the interests of the president and her party are more likely to influence the probability and trajectory of electoral reform than under minority and coalition governments.

To study changes in the rules of the electoral game, we focus on major electoral reforms in 78 presidential and semi-presidential countries. Our dataset includes significant reforms to national-level (lower house) legislative elections, including changes in the electoral system and formulas, significant alterations to district

magnitudes, and changes in electoral thresholds.

In all, our results show that poor economic conditions facilitate electoral reforms. However, the presence of a strong president and a majority government can effectively suppress the attempts for reform and thwart reform. According to our analysis, reform is less likely in presidential than in semi-presidential systems, in places where strong presidential power exists and where a majority government is in office.

The organization of this study is as follows. In the first part, we explain how voters' dissatisfaction links to the demand for reforms and how a strong president and majority situations influence reforms. Second, we provide an overview of electoral reforms in presidential systems. The third section estimates panel-logit models to examine the occurrence of reforms and their determinants. Last, we conclude with a discussion of the relationship between the three actors of electoral reforms and the mechanisms underlying patterns of electoral reforms.

## **Theory**

In democracies, public opinion can be crucial in driving electoral reform. Through empirical comparative analysis, Norris (2014) finds that mass aspiration for democracy is a driver to realize the agenda of successful reform movements and legislative initiatives. Benoit (2004) also suggests, "[c]hange of electoral institutions by popular demand may occur when the normal process for institutional reform is bypassed and placed before the public in the form of a plebiscite." These studies acknowledge the public's role in triggering reform. In fact, there are many examples of public pressures influencing

reforms. The 1994 electoral reform in Japan started from widespread public distrust in the political landscape triggered by the electoral recruit scandal (Shiratori 1995). Benoit (2004) investigates other cases, particularly those involving referenda. He states, “This may occur either through design, such as in the case of Ireland’s 1937 constitution requiring electoral law changes to be ratified by nationwide referendum; through unintended political consequences, such as New Zealand’s change to a mixed-member system in the 1990s; or through deliberate decision, such as Italy’s change of electoral rules in the 1990s.” These exemplify a ‘reform from below’ process that motivates politicians to promote electoral reform.

Then, what motivates the public to put pressure on reform in the political arena? To be sure, people do not usually care about the details of the electoral system. However, when the economy is bad or the current government poorly manages a country, it leads to higher public distrust in political institutions (Calvo and Negretto 2020). A call for alternative electoral institutions by opposition parties may garner citizen attention through public debates in the media and campaigns (Shugart 2001). In particular, the opposition may argue that the government’s policies are bad; thereby, the current president and her party should be punished in the next election, and to do so, the current electoral system must be changed to secure a better representation. It may be argued that the legislature provides an insufficient check on the president because the electoral system is biased in the president’s favor to make an appeal to the public about the need

for electoral reform. Reforms proposed in this context will likely include provisions that reduce the president's or her party's electoral advantage.

Of course, the reforms from the opposition parties are not the only way in which reform proposals originate. The president or her party may also try to change the electoral system to favor themselves. However, only when the political and social landscape is favorable to them do they want to propose reform. The country's economic condition, whether good or bad, does not influence the reform initiated by them much. In particular, when the economy is good, the president will likely not feel the need to propose reform because they will win the following election again. In contrast, when economic conditions are poor, reform proposals from opposition parties are more likely. A bad economy can cause voters to become dissatisfied with the government, and it can allow the opposition parties to promote a reform bill that benefits them while punishing the president and her party.

In short, when voters' dissatisfaction with the country's economic situation snowballs, there can be demands to change the current situation. Electoral reform is promoted as one way of responding to such demands. In particular, political entrepreneurs, primarily the opposition parties, may take advantage of this context and mobilize it for electoral reform attempts. Since it may be suggested as a solution to the country's poor economic condition, people may agree with the reform proposal as a solution to the problem.

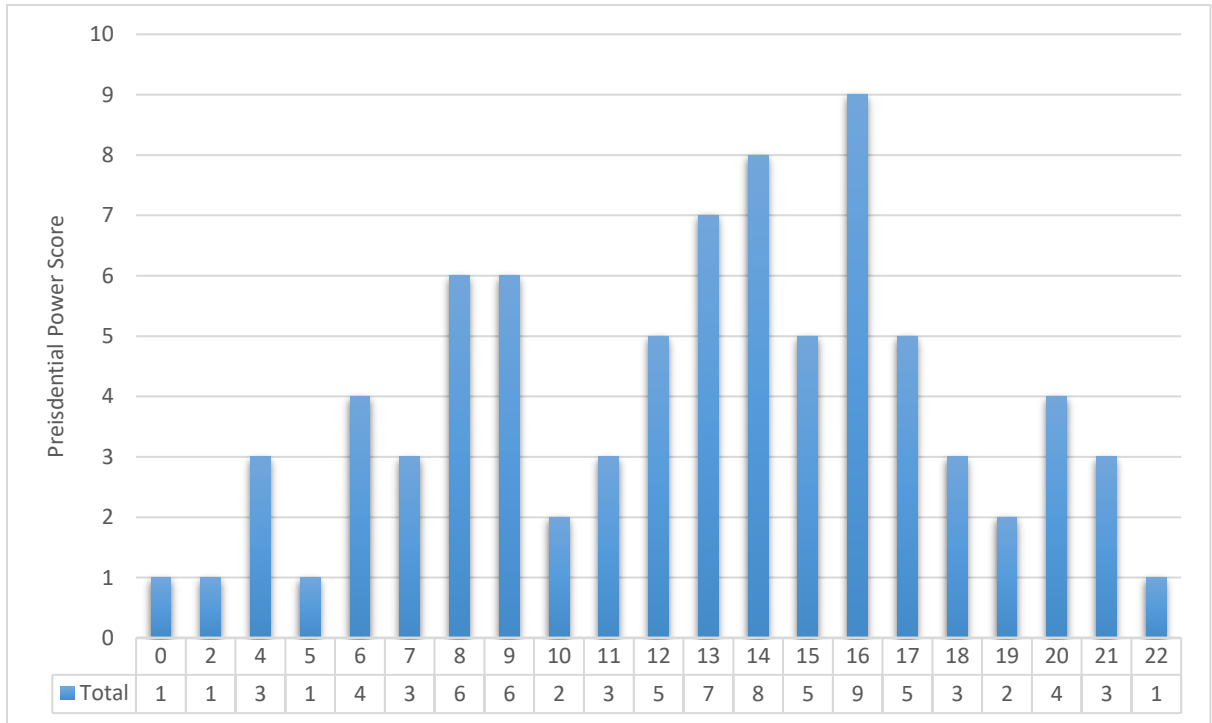
***H1 A country's bad economy facilitates electoral reform.***

In addition to the economic condition, politicians' political resources and institutional constraints can influence whether or not reform is implemented. In particular, when reform is proposed by the opposition parties, the influence of these two factors becomes more important. According to Calvo and Negretto (2020), "Party leaders must obviously have sufficient partisan power (either from their own party or a coalition) to muster the votes necessary to adopt an electoral reform. At the same time, however, reforms must be legally and politically viable." This indicates that electoral reform requires both partisan and institutional power. If the opposition parties' partisan and institutional power is relatively weak while the president and her party are strong, reform may not happen. Often, the opposition parties aim for more seats by changing the electoral landscape via reform, while the president and her party seek to defend the status quo. Therefore, the power dynamic between two actors having competing interests matters in implementing electoral reform. In this context, it is necessary to note that the Constitution vests powers in the president. In other words, when it comes to the electoral reform process, the president may possess significant resources to thwart a reform that they dislike. The president's institutional power is crucial, as it can determine the success or failure of reform and even shape its outcome. According to Shugart and Carey (1992), presidents have various powers at their disposal. Figure 13 shows details of the variation in presidential powers across 74 presidential and semi-presidential countries.



**Figure 13**

Presidential Power Score (74 presidential countries)



The range of powers and their strength determine the president's level of authority. When presidential systems grant presidents extraordinary powers, it gives the president more leverage to drive reform initiatives. For instance, a strong veto can block reforms from opposition parties that do not benefit the president's party while initiating the reform to favor them. Decrees and referendum powers can provide legal means to bypass the legislature and the judiciary. Presidential involvement has often led to reforms favoring the president and her party; presidents have utilized vetos (e.g., Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Romania, Russia), decrees (e.g., Russia and Romania), and referendum powers (e.g., France, Romania) to achieve desired electoral reforms.

Examining the influence of presidential power on electoral reform is an important undertaking. It is crucial to investigate whether presidential power plays a central role in determining the success or failure of reforms and how this may be connected to voters' dissatisfaction. Beyond the question of who benefits from the final outcomes of electoral reform, the troubling reality is that reforms linked to voters' discontent with the current economic situation have not been introduced, which raises significant concerns about the state of democracy. Indeed, presidential power has thwarted reforms that the president does not favor. Presidents have wielded their veto powers and decrees effectively. Their veto powers have been used to block reform, and their mere existence has prevented reform attempts like the case in the 2008 Romanian reform. For instance, the 2000 Czech electoral reform, which sought to change the electoral system from a single-member district majoritarian system to a proportional representation (PR) system, exemplifies this dynamic (Nikolenyi 2011). During that time, President Havel used his veto power to

prevent electoral reform from passing, as he believed the reform proposal did not adequately reflect the principles of PR. In another case, the 1925 Costa Rica electoral reform attempt, the president vetoed a bill that would have filled electoral rolls and weakened the principle of a secret ballot (Lehoucq 2000). Only after the legislators revised the bill, accepting most of his requests, did the president sign it. In the 2008 Romanian reform attempt, the legislature failed to pass its version of electoral reform, resorting to a mixed system out of fear of the presidential veto. These cases demonstrate the status and influence of the presidential veto in the electoral reform process. In each instance, presidential vetoes successfully suppressed electoral reforms that the president did not prefer.

Other presidential powers, such as budget authority, cabinet formation, and the power to dissolve the legislature, can influence reform. Although these powers do not directly impact legislation often, they indirectly pressure legislators during negotiations over electoral reforms, preventing them from acting against the president's wishes. For example, the budget power can influence legislators' support. Presidents have used budgetary powers to pressure legislators and build legislative majorities to pass legislation (Carey 2009). Carey (2009) conducted interviews with legislators, and the interviews indicate that presidents mobilize institutional resources, like budgetary powers, to influence legislative votes. Specifically, the president's ability to expedite or delay the disbursement of funds for projects in deputies' districts has been employed as a source of influence. As a result, if the president has strong budget power, the president's preferred reforms may be realized, while Congress' proposals may fail. These examples

of presidential powers influencing electoral reforms underscore the significant role of the president in shaping reform. In particular, presidential powers can effectively prevent electoral reform that the opposition proposes and do not favor the president's party. Based on these examples, it is reasonable to think that the stronger the presidential powers are, the more likely the president will be able to thwart attempts at reform.

The strength of presidential power and the following executive-legislative relations are associated with the difference between two similar regime types: the presidential system and the semi-presidential system. Duverger's (1980) definition of presidential democracy is as follows: "The executive is headed by a popularly elected president who serves as the 'chief executive'; the terms of the chief executive and the legislative assembly are fixed and not subject to mutual confidence; the president names and directs the cabinet and has some constitutionally granted lawmaking authority." Since the the president is guaranteed a fixed term and the executive is not subject to the legislature's confidence, under the presidential system, the president exists as an additional actor distinct from the legislature and holds a "constitutionally granted lawmaking authority." Some of these features are different from semi-presidential systems. Again, according to Duverger (1980), semi-presidential system has three features: "A president who is popularly elected; The president has considerable constitutional authority; There also exists a prime minister and cabinet, subject to the confidence of the assembly majority." In a semi-presidential system, the president is directly elected and may have considerable power, which is the same as in a presidential system. However, it differs from the presidential system in that the executive powers are

shared by a president and a prime minister, who is responsible for parliament. This feature implies that the president in a presidential system has more powers than in a semi-presidential system since she tends to enjoy more discretion over overall governing. In terms of the reform process, in presidential systems, where the president has more independent power, the president can lead the outcome of reform to favor her and her party or effectively stop any attempts at electoral reform that she does not like, even if the voters demand reform.

*H2 Electoral reform promoted under poor economic conditions causing voters' dissatisfaction is less likely to occur under the presidential system than in the semi-presidential system.*

*H3 Electoral reform promoted under poor economic conditions causing voters' dissatisfaction is less likely to occur in the presence of strong presidential power.*

Presidents rely on their official powers and other sources of influence to govern a country effectively. Regarding the legislative process, the size of the parties in Congress may be more important than presidential powers. If the president's party has a large enough majority in Congress, the president is more likely to realize her will regarding her legislative agenda. The size of the president's party in the legislature and the following composition of the cabinet determines the form of government: majority government, minority government, and coalition government. This form of government affects how many other parties the president bargains with and what kind of interparty negotiations take place.

In a majority government, the president's party commands a legislative majority, allowing the president to recruit only her party members for the cabinet. Conversely, a minority government arises when the president, despite lacking a legislative majority, decides not to seek governing partners and instead forms a cabinet exclusively from her party members. Under this form of government, cooperation from opposition parties outside of the cabinet is essential. Any president's legislative proposal without agreement with the opposition parties cannot pass the legislature. Finally, a coalition government is formed when the president's party lacks a majority, much like in a minority government, but the president recruits coalition partners into the cabinet to bolster legislative support. Under this government, how much the president needs legislative assistance from the opposition party depends on the size of the coalition and consensus among the cabinet parties. In short, like minority governments, coalition governments also require a certain level of consensus from other parties for the success of the president's legislative agenda, but compared to the minority government, that kind of cross-party negotiation can be made in and out of the cabinet.

In sum, each form of government presents the president with a distinct political environment and resources. In other words, this form of government affects the political context in which the president determines how to achieve desired electoral reforms. Especially in the presence of a majority government, the president can effectively prevent electoral reform that disadvantages the president's party because the president's party outnumbers the opposition. In this case, taking a step further, the president may try a counteroffer that favors her party and negates the opposition's proposal. No matter where

the need for electoral reform originally came from, the reform proposal to favor the opposition parties is less likely to succeed under the presence of the majority government. The demand based on an economic reason is also not an exception.

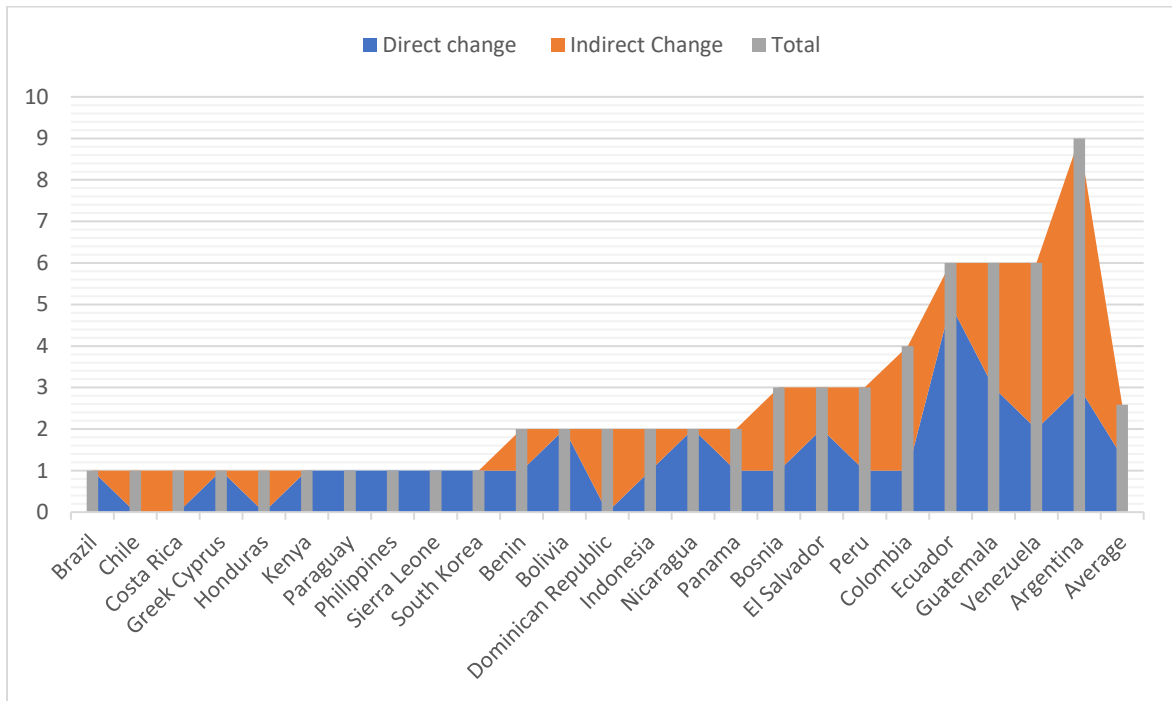
*H4 Electoral reform promoted in a bad economy causing voters' dissatisfaction is less likely to occur in the presence of a majority government.*

### **Overview of Electoral Reforms in Presidential Systems**

From 1945 to 2021, we count 62 major electoral reforms of the rules for legislative elections. This study defines electoral reform as changes in the specific electoral formulae, the number of tiers, the type of mixed electoral systems, average district magnitude, or electoral threshold. Figure 14 summarizes these reforms by country and each category.

**Figure 14**

Number of Electoral Reforms by Country and Category





Electoral rules determine when and how citizens cast their votes and how they are aggregated to allocate representative positions among the political parties. For instance, with regard to the electoral formula, we code shifts between majoritarian, mixed, and proportional systems as reform. We also count changes in average district magnitude as reforms. This is because changes in the average district magnitude directly affect the electoral threshold, the minimum vote share needed to win a seat, and decides which and how many candidates are elected per district. Suppose there is a change in district magnitude from 2 to 3. The effective electoral threshold decreases significantly from 33% to 25%. Thus, we consider changes in the average district magnitude as an electoral reform. To code reforms to the average district magnitude and electoral threshold, we adopt a standard based on the average district magnitude. A one-seat change, or more, in the average district magnitude is counted as a reform. It is important to emphasize that we are only observing the formal alteration of electoral rules, not changes that result from failure to apply existing rules or transformations that derive from judicial interpretations.

In this study, we focus on electoral reforms for legislative elections to the lower chamber. The argument here focuses on how the interaction between three political actors—the president, the parties, and the people affects electoral reform. Compared to other elections, electoral reform for the legislative election is the one in which the interests of the three actors are most clearly revealed and may clash most sharply. Moreover, since not all countries have a bicameral system, for a broader cross-national comparison, taking the reforms for elections to the lower chamber as the unit of analysis

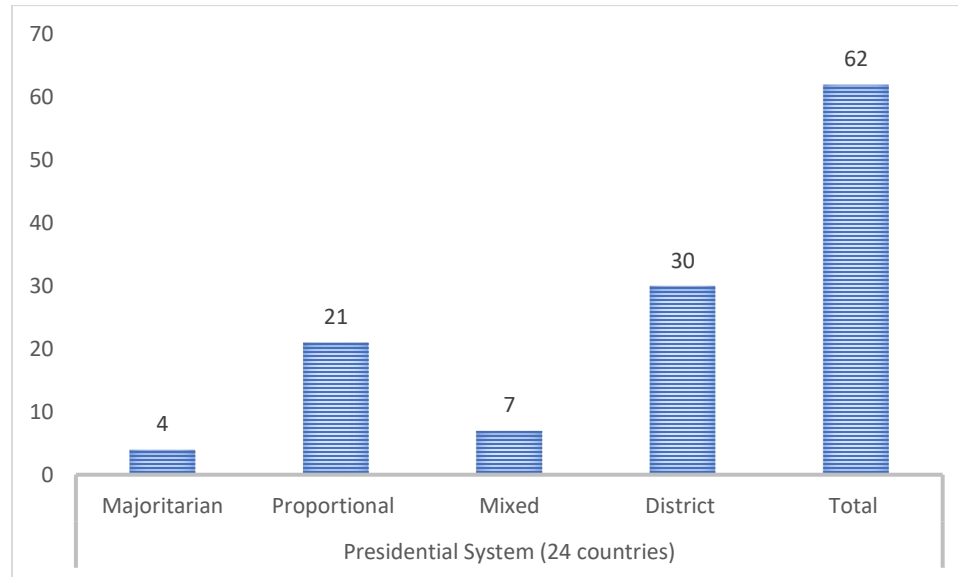
is reasonable. In terms of the number of reforms, we have more reforms in the election for the lower chamber.

In fact, there have been frequent reforms for legislative elections in presidential countries. Here, we look more closely at the frequency of changes in basic electoral formulas, where reforms are usually considered rare events. Western Europe and established democracies provide a good standard for comparison. Bartolini and Mair (1990) found only 14 major shifts in legislative electoral formulas in Western Europe from 1885 to 1985, while Katz (2005) counts the same number of electoral changes among established democracies from 1950 to 2005. In Bormann and Golder (2022), we observe that in 24 parliamentary countries, 71 electoral reforms occurred in 784 elections during the period 1945-2021. By contrast, in the same dataset, we find 62 reforms for the elections to elect members of the lower or single chamber of Congress across 390 elections from 1946 to 2021. Figure 15 shows the specific types of those reforms.

**Figure 15**

The Outcomes of Electoral Reforms in the Presidential System by Electoral System

Categories



When looking at the substance of electoral reforms, specific patterns can be discerned over time. For the legislature's election, reforms toward or within the proportional systems and reforms with changes in the district magnitude are more typical. Especially when it comes to reforms within proportional systems, there is a trend toward decreasing proportionality that runs parallel with the diminishing fragmentation of party systems. This relationship results from adopting a less proportional formula and lowering the average district magnitude.

Second, reforms with a change in district magnitude do not show a clear pattern. Of 30 reforms of this type, 13 reduced the average district magnitude, while 15 increased it. However, regardless of the direction of these choices, the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP) increased under this reform. In fact, these changes allowed, on average, 0.3 more parties to get seats in the parliament.

Last, despite being rare, there are reforms to majoritarian systems. Most are within-majoritarian system changes (Argentina, 1951, 1958) or an add-on of a new tier under the current majoritarian system (Kenya, 2013). The reform in Sierra Leone is the sole case in which a system changed from proportional to majoritarian. This type of reform tends to occur in response to the collapse of traditional parties and the emergence of a new dominant party.

### **Data, Method, and Analysis**

To examine how presidential powers influence electoral reform, we constructed a dataset of 78 presidential and semi-presidential democracies. The unit of analysis is the

country-legislative election.<sup>23</sup> Table 23 shows the countries in our sample, the number of observations for each country, electoral reforms, and the elections included in our analysis.

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<sup>23</sup> Data unavailable: Argentina 1948-2019; Austria 1953-1990; Benin 1995-2019; Bolivia 1985-1993; Bosnia 1998-2018; Brazil 1950-1962, 1986-1990; Bulgaria 1994; Cape Verde 1995-2016; Chile 1953-1969, 1993; Colombia 1958-1991; Comoros 1993, 2015-2020; Congo 1993; Costa Rica 1958-1990; Croatia 1995; Dominican Republic 1970-1990; East Timor 2012-2018; Ecuador 1952-1962, 1979-2021; El Salvador 1991-2018; Finland 1951-1991; France 1968-1993; Greek Cyprus 1985-1991; Guatemala 1948-1978, 1990-2019; Guinea Bissau 2004-2019; Honduras 1971-2017; Iceland 1949-1991; Indonesia 2004-2019; Ireland 1951-1992; Kenya 2007-2017; Kiribati 2020; Kyrgyzstan 2010-2020; Liberia 2017; Lithuania 1996-2020; Macedonia 1998-2020; Madagascar 1998-2019; Mali 1997-2020; Micronesia 1993-2019; Mongolia 1996-2020; Montenegro 2009-2020; Nicaragua 1990; Niger 1995, 2004-2020; Nigeria 1999-2019; Palau 2000-2020; Panama 1956-1964, 1989-2019; Peru 1963, 1980-1985, 2001-2020; Philippines 1949-1961, 1987-1992; Portugal 1979-1991; Gambia 1977-1992; Romania 1992-2020; Russia 1995; Sao Tome and Principe 1994-2018; Senegal 2007-2017; Serbia 2008-2020; Slovenia 1996-2018; Somalia 1960; South Korea 1992; Sri Lanka 1994-2020; Suriname 1996-2020; Taiwan 2001-2020; Uruguay 1950-1971, 1989; Venezuela 1963-1993

**Table 23**

Number of Observations for the Countries, Electoral Reforms and Elections

<b>Country</b>	<b>Obs.</b>	<b>Reform.</b>	<b>Election Years</b>
Armenia	4	1	1999-2012
Austria	9	2	1994-2019
Bolivia	7	1	1997-2020
Brazil	7	0	1994-2018
Bulgaria	7	2	1997-2017
Burundi	4	0	2005-2020
Central African Republic	1	0	1998
Chile	6	0	1997-2017
Colombia	7	1	1994-2018
Costa Rica	7	0	1994-2018
Croatia	7	1	2000-2020
Czech Republic	1	0	2017
Dominican Republic	7	1	1994-2020
Finland	7	1	1995-2019
France	5	0	1997-2017
Georgia	4	1	2008-2020
Ghana	6	0	2000-2020
Greek Cyprus	5	0	1996-2016
Guyana	5	1	1997-2015
Iceland	8	2	1995-2017
Ireland	6	0	1997-2020
Malawi	5	0	1999-2019
Mexico	6	0	2003-2018
Moldova	2	1	1998, 2019
Nicaragua	5	2	1996-2016
Paraguay	6	1	1993-2018
Philippines	8	0	1995-2019
Poland	8	3	1993-2019
Portugal	8	0	1995-2019
Sierra Leone	4	1	2002-2018
Slovakia	5	1	2006-2020
South Korea	7	1	1996-2020
Ukraine	7	3	1998-2019
Uruguay	6	0	1994-2019
Venezuela	5	3	1998-2015
Zambia	1	0	2016
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>30</b>	

Our dependent variable is whether electoral reform occurs or not. It is constructed from the dataset “Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946-2020” (Bormann and Golder 2022). We define a major reform as a change in any or several central rules that make up the electoral regimes to elect deputies. Any shifts between majoritarian, mixed, and proportional systems and changes in average district magnitude are counted as reforms. We create the reform variable on electoral reform by capturing changes in the electoral system between legislative elections.

The independent variables include measures of the country’s current economic status, regime type, presidential power, and types of government. As for the country’s current economic status measures, we employ exchange rate and unemployment measures. The exchange rate impacts voters’ consumption. They are reminded of it every time they go to the grocery store. Those out of a job will feel unemployment, but others are also likely to notice when people in their social circles lose their jobs or fail to find employment. For our measure of exchange rate, we use a real effective exchange rate showing changes in substantial purchasing power dependent on inflation. The real effective exchange rate is used to measure the average external real value of a country's currency relative to its major trading partners and is effectively used as an indicator of the external purchasing power of a country's currency and the price competitiveness of its products.

For the measure of unemployment, we use the International Labor Union’s unemployment estimates, Unemployment (ILO est). The unemployment and economic

data are obtained from the World Bank's DataBank.<sup>24</sup> In particular, instead of using the economic indexes at a specific time, we create the change in a real effective exchange rate and change in unemployment from the prior year and employ them for the measures.<sup>25</sup> Here, we focus on the percentage change in a real effective exchange rate while, in the case of unemployment, simply taking the change between  $t$  and  $t-1$ . We chose those two measures because when the exchange rate or unemployment is high, the opposition parties propose reform as a solution to the current situation, and then voters can be more receptive to reform proposals.<sup>26</sup>

We get the data classifying the regime type at the end of the year as a categorical variable from a dataset of "Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946-2020" (Bormann and Golder 2022). We obtain information on presidential powers from Hicken and Stoll's (2008) measure, which utilizes Shugart and Carey's (1992) presidential power coding scheme. In this scheme, the presidential powers are divided into legislative and non-legislative categories. The president's legislative powers include the executive veto, decrees, the exclusive right to introduce specific legislation, a budget bill, and the right to call referenda. The president's non-legislative powers encompass the authority of cabinet formation, dismissal of public officials, dismissal of the legislature, and the legislature's

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<sup>24</sup> The DataBank can be accessed at [databank.worldbank.org/home.aspx](http://databank.worldbank.org/home.aspx).

<sup>25</sup> Change in a real effective exchange rate is calculated as follows:  $\text{Real effective exchange rate}[t]/\text{Real effective exchange rate}[t-1]$

<sup>26</sup> We originally included a president's disapproval rate as another measure of voters' dissatisfaction with the country's current economic situation by employing the monthly and yearly versions of approval and disapproval rate data in "Executive Approval Database 3.0" (Carlin et al., 2023). While doing the analysis, we lost 20% of the data, so we finally dropped the disapproval variable. Additionally, the disapproval rate is a function of a bunch of other factors which are unrelated to the economy.



ability to propose a vote of no confidence in the cabinet. Each item, except the legislature's authority to censure the cabinet, was coded from 0 to 4 based on the powers granted by a country's constitution. The legislature's authority to censure the presidential cabinet was coded in reverse, reflecting the notion that presidents are stronger when they do not have to be concerned about the legislature's censure power. The scores are then aggregated to create indices for both subcategories and a total score. The theoretical range of the legislative powers index is from 0 to 20, but the actual range for the countries in our sample is from 0 to 10. The non-legislative powers index can take values from 0 to 16, with a range of 0 to 15 in our data. Finally, the total presidential power ranges from 0 to 22. However, some countries lack data for itemized presidential powers, so we coded the itemized powers following Shugart and Carey's (1992) scheme based on each country's constitution from the Comparative Constitutions Project (Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton 2009).

The information on the types of government is drawn from "The Database of Political Institutions 2020" (Scartascini, Cruz, and Keefer 2021). Specifically, the data on governing parties, the name of the executive party, and their election results allow us to determine whether the current government has a majority, minority, or coalition. In each model, we include the president's remaining years in office and the age of the democratic regime. These factors may affect the president's political status and relative power over the other branches. The variables also come from "The Database of Political Institutions 2020" (Scartascini, Cruz, and Keefer 2021). The president's remaining term is measured by the number of years left in the current term, while the duration of the democratic

regime reflects how long the country has been democratic. When a country has a shorter democratic history, electoral institutions may not yet be fully consolidated, allowing it to attempt different types of electoral systems. These variables represent the president's political resources, which are not stipulated in the constitution but significantly influence the implementation of reform initiatives.

We estimate a series of panel logit models with electoral reform as the dependent variable. In Table 24, we start with a panel logit that focuses solely on the impact of voters' dissatisfaction on the likelihood of electoral reform occurring with economic variables. The result in Table 24 shows that, among those variables, the impact of change in a real effective exchange rate is statistically significant. The effect of change in an unemployment rate also has the same direction, but the coefficient is not statistically significant.

**Table 24**

Impact of Economic Conditions on the Probability of Electoral Reform

VARIABLES	(1) Reform	(2) Reform
$\Delta$ Unemployment	0.180 (0.143)	0.229 (0.148)
$\Delta$ Real Effective Exchange Rate	5.165* (2.962)	5.209* (3.099)
Remaining Terms		0.00509 (0.0208)
Democratic History		-0.0165 (0.0108)
Presidential System		-1.035** (0.432)
Constant	-7.005** (3.030)	-6.198* (3.193)
$\ln(\hat{\sigma}_u^2)$	-11.57 (32.28)	-12.92 (31.34)
Observations	203	203
Number of countries	36	36

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Table 25 presents the impact of regime type on the likelihood of electoral reform. It includes the economic variables and their interactions with the regime-type variable, which presents the effect of electoral reform conditional on whether the country has a presidential or semi-presidential system. The coefficient of the interaction between a presidential system and changes in the real effective exchange are statistically significant. This means that reform tends to occur in a poor economy, whereas, in the same condition, reforms are less likely in presidential systems. A similar pattern is observed in the results with the changes in unemployment. Changes in unemployment alone have a positive coefficient, while its interaction with the regime type gets a negative coefficient. However, unlike real effective exchange rate changes, the interaction between unemployment and a regime variable is not statistically significant. Figure 16, graphing the marginal effect of changes in the real effective exchange rate conditional on the regime type, shows a positive impact of changes in the real effective exchange rate on the probability of the reform has more impact when a country has a semi-presidential system than a presidential system. In Figure 17, which graphs the marginal effect of changes in unemployment conditional on the regime type, a positive impact exists when a country has a semi-presidential system rather than a presidential system.

**Table 25**

Impact of Regime Types on the Probability of Electoral Reform

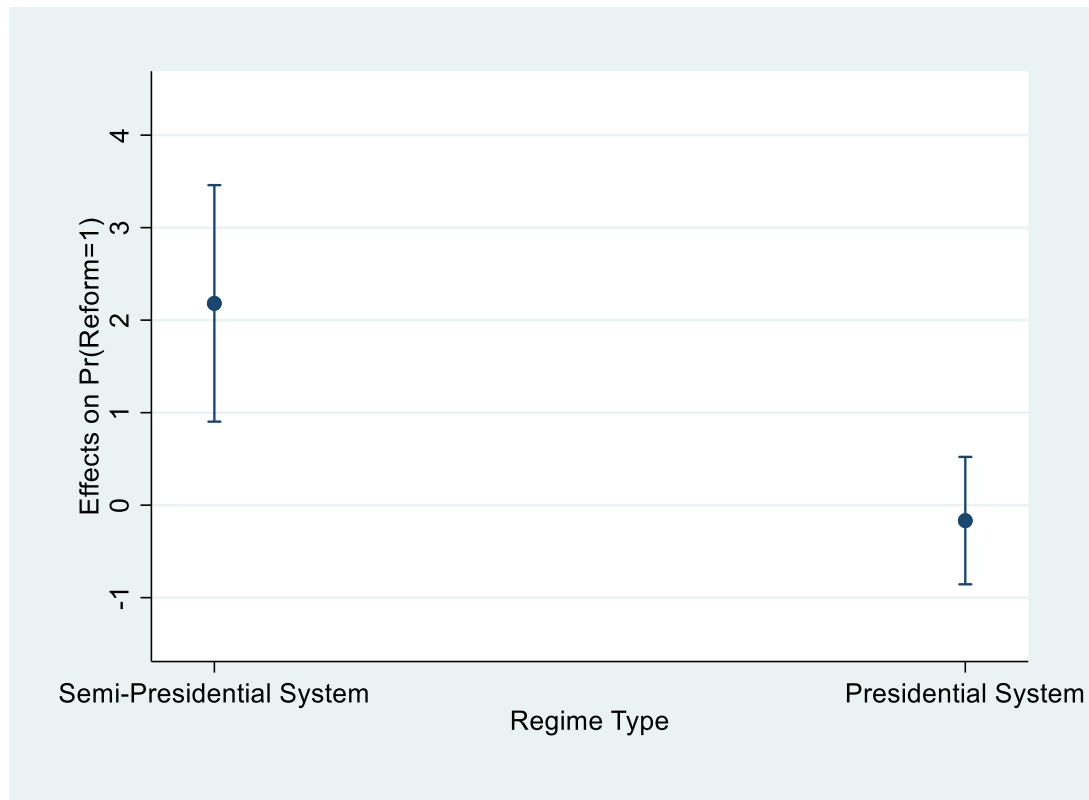
VARIABLES	(1) Reform	(2) Reform
$\Delta$ Unemployment	0.202 (0.150)	0.409** (0.203)
Presidential System		17.06** (7.110)
Presidential System x $\Delta$ Unemployment		-0.459 (0.363)
$\Delta$ Real Effective Exchange Rate	5.031* (2.935)	15.74*** (5.646)
Presidential System x $\Delta$ Real Effective Exchange Rate		-17.69** (6.972)
Remaining Terms	0.00517 (0.0171)	0.00516 (0.0276)
Democratic History	-0.00969 (0.0107)	-0.0137 (0.0111)
Constant	-6.652** (3.025)	-17.06*** (5.839)
$\ln(\hat{\sigma}_u^2)$	-11.02 (31.94)	-12.13 (31.10)
Observations	203	203
Number of countries	36	36

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Figure 16**

Average Marginal Effects of  $\Delta$  Real Effective Exchange Rate

(Table 25, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals)



**Figure 17**

Average Marginal Effects of  $\Delta$  Unemployment

(Table 25, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals)

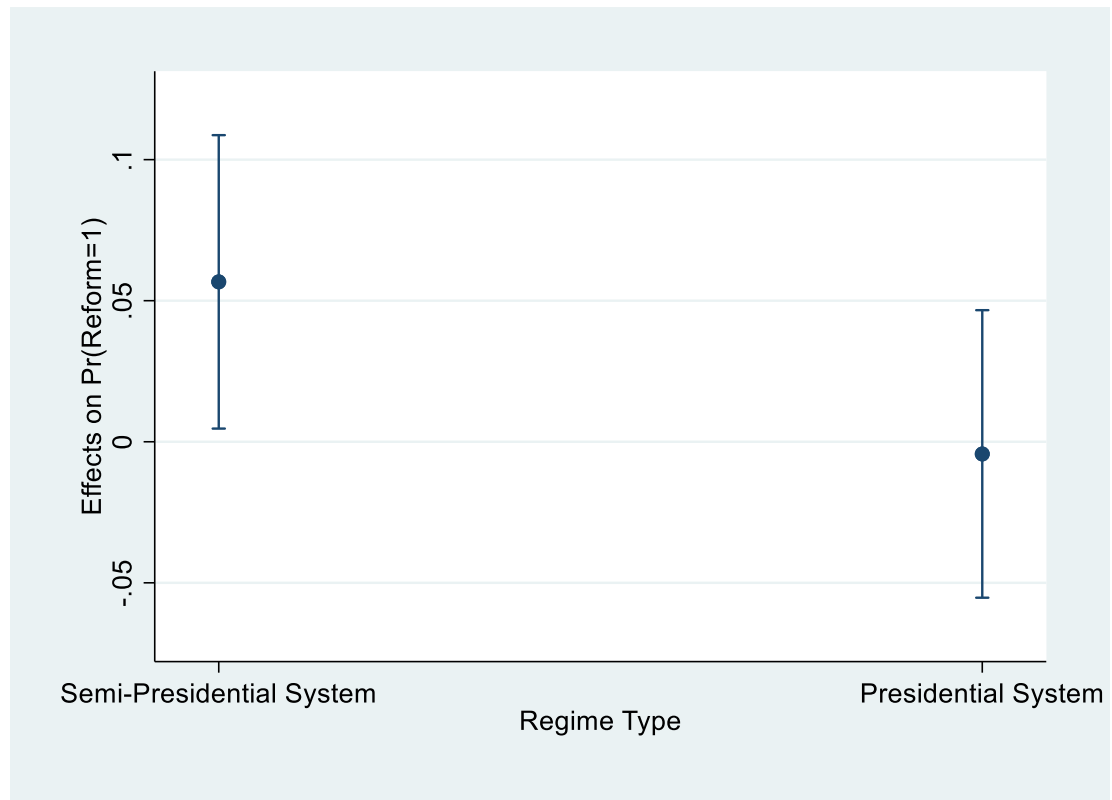


Table 26 includes the presidential power variable and its interaction with variables regarding voter dissatisfaction. In model 2, we find some suggestions that presidential power alone does have a positive impact on the likelihood of the reform, showing that electoral reform is more likely. However, similar to what we found with the regime type, the same condition, but with a poor economy potentially associated with voters' dissatisfaction, changes the direction of impact, preventing reform. This implies that presidential power has impacted the suppression of those reforms attempted in a poor economic situation. In particular, the coefficient of the interaction between presidential power and the real effective exchange rate changes is statistically significant with a negative sign. The interaction between presidential power and change in unemployment has a similar direction of impact, but the estimates are not statistically significant at conventional levels. Figure 18 presents the results, showing the marginal effects of the changes in the exchange rate on the reform conditional on the strength of presidential power. It shows that the impact of change in the exchange rate on the reform gets smaller as presidential power gets stronger. A similar pattern but with a less steep slope is observed in Figure 19, showing the average marginal effects of changes in unemployment. This implies that the impact of the changes in unemployment on the reform gets smaller as the presidential power becomes more substantial.



**Table 26**

Impact of Presidential Power on the Probability of Electoral Reform

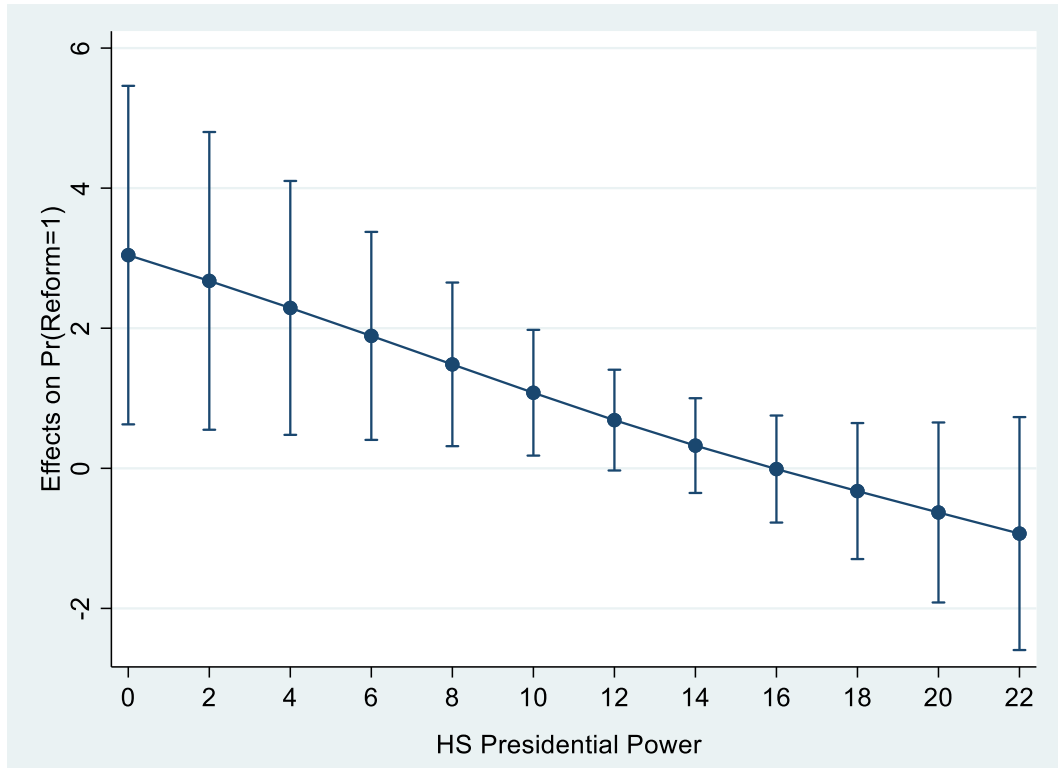
VARIABLES	(1) Reform	(2) Reform
$\Delta$ Unemployment	0.210 (0.140)	0.465* (0.271)
HS Presidential Power	-0.0120 (0.0482)	1.496* (0.766)
$\Delta$ Unemployment x HS power		-0.0251 (0.0258)
$\Delta$ Real Effective Exchange Rate	5.586* (3.099)	24.07** (10.44)
$\Delta$ Real Effective Exchange Rate x HS power		-1.510** (0.755)
Presidential System	-0.783 (0.554)	-0.755 (0.564)
Remaining Terms		0.00426 (0.0211)
Democratic History		-0.0143 (0.0118)
Constant	-6.933** (3.183)	-25.11** (10.73)
$\ln(\hat{\sigma}_u^2)$	-12.91 (31.45)	-13.81 (512.1)
Observations	203	203
Number of countries	36	36

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Figure 18**

Average Marginal Effects of  $\Delta$  Real Effective Exchange Rate

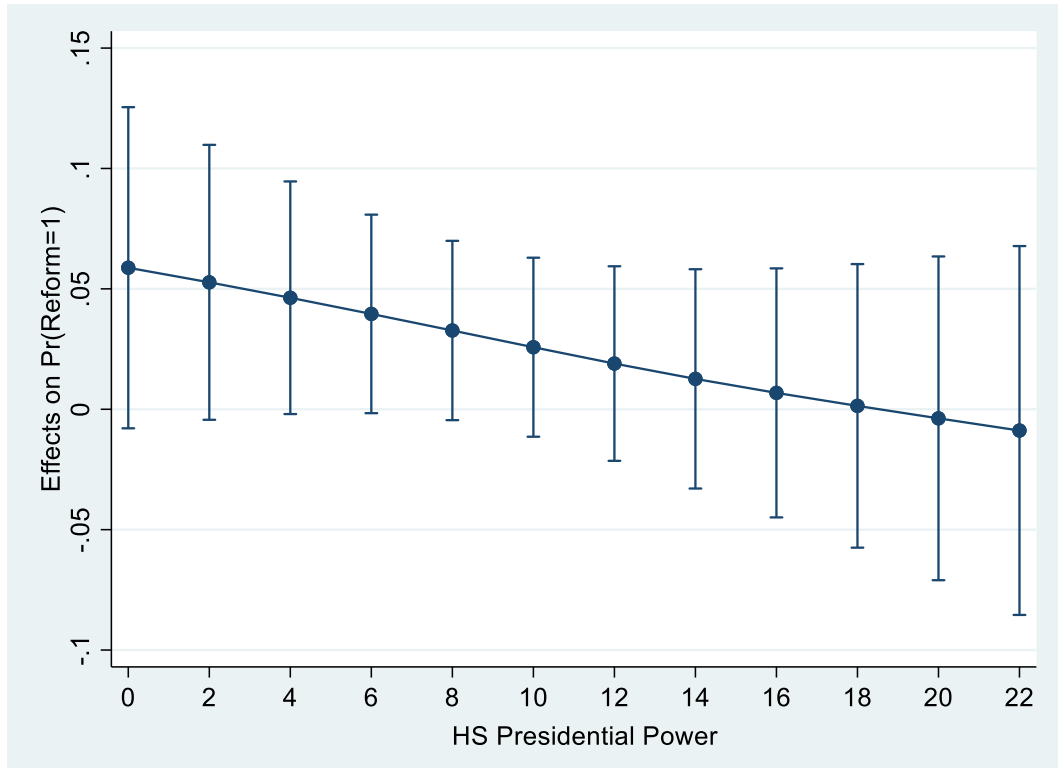
(Table 26, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals)



**Figure 19**

Average Marginal Effects of  $\Delta$  Unemployment

(Table 26, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals)



In Table 27, we examine the impact of types of government on the probability of electoral reform with voters' dissatisfaction variables. The thing to note is that in all the models, estimates are not statistically significant except for the changes in the exchange rate variable in model 2. However, the directions of impact on the interaction terms are what we just expected. Similarly to what we found with presidential power, a majority government does increase the likelihood of electoral reform. In contrast, the interaction between a majority and changes in real effective exchange rate reduces the probability of reform. If the reform occurs during a poor economy but under a majority government, the likelihood of the reform succeeding will decrease. In other words, a majority government tends to thwart reform attempts in a poor economy, which may increase voter dissatisfaction. The coefficient of the interaction variable between a majority government and the change in unemployment as well is statistically significant in a negative direction, while a majority alone is in a positive direction and statistically significant. But, again, neither estimate is statistically significant.

Thus, in the overall results, we find limited evidence to examine the interaction between economic variables and a government-type variable. However, to see the relationship in these interactions in more detail, we create Figures 20 and 21. First, Figure 20 presents the marginal effects of the changes in unemployment on the reform conditional on the types of government, showing that changes in unemployment have a highly negative impact on the reform where the president has a majority rather than a minority or coalition government. Figure 21 shows the average marginal effects of changes in the real effective exchange rate; changes in the exchange rate negatively affect

reform occurrences where the president has a majority. However, a standard error for the coefficient for this variable is too large, making the coefficient statistically insignificant.

**Table 27**

Impact of Types of Government on the Probability of Electoral Reform

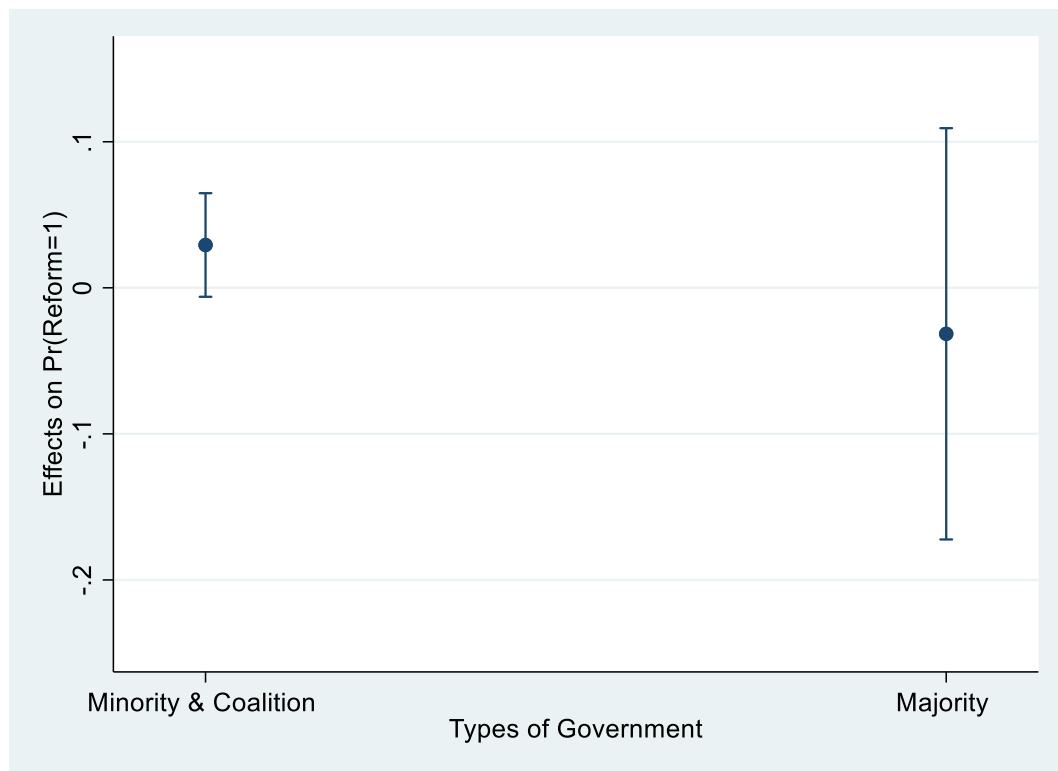
VARIABLES	(1) Reform	(2) Reform
$\Delta$ Unemployment	0.213 (0.152)	0.255 (0.158)
Majority	0.237 (0.613)	5.911 (11.08)
Majority x $\Delta$ Unemployment		-0.494 (0.569)
$\Delta$ Real Effective Exchange Rate	6.096** (3.073)	6.492** (3.225)
Majority x $\Delta$ Real Effective Exchange Rate		-5.654 (11.09)
Remaining Terms	0.00586 (0.0216)	0.00473 (0.0201)
Democratic History	-0.00658 (0.0108)	-0.00670 (0.0109)
Constant	-7.876** (3.201)	-8.288** (3.364)
$\ln(\hat{\sigma}_u^2)$	-12.62 (31.84)	-12.76 (30.54)
Observations	202	202
Number of countries	36	36

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Figure 20**

Average Marginal Effects of  $\Delta$  Unemployment

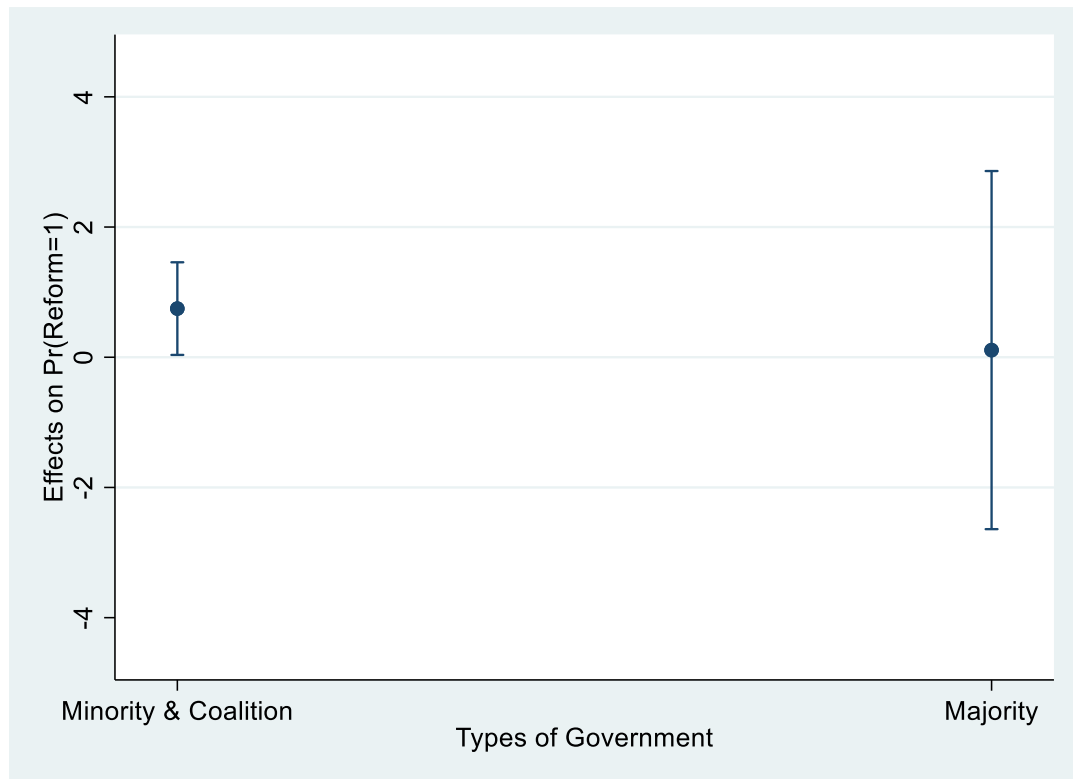
(Table 27, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals)



**Figure 21**

Average Marginal Effects of  $\Delta$  Real Effective Exchange Rate

(Table 27, Model 2, 95% Confidence Intervals)





## Conclusion

In this paper, we present a theory about how voters' dissatisfaction with the economic situation leads to a discussion of electoral reform and how the president's presence influences the success of that reform attempt. Specifically, we expect reform attempts to fail when the presidential power is strong, or the president has a majority.

Our results indicate that the country's economic condition is closely linked to the occurrence of electoral reform while interacting with other institutional factors. First, we can see that as a change in a real effective exchange rate increases in a positive direction, the probability of reform occurring increases. However, in the same condition but with a presidential system distinct from the semi-presidential system, the probability of reform occurring decreases, meaning frequent failures of the reform attempts. As for presidential power, we observe that under strong presidential power and positive increases in the changes in the exchange rate, reform tends not to occur. This implies that presidential power suppresses reform attempts occurring in a poor economy. However, our analysis revealed limited evidence for whether a majority government plays a similar role to presidential power. Still, the direction of effect is what we expected, showing the negative coefficient under the presence of a majority government and an increase in change in a real effective exchange rate.

In short, this study shows that a president's engagement can thwart electoral reform attempts in a poor economic situation, some of which might be demanded by voters' dissatisfaction. This may indicate that democratic institutions do not reflect the

will of their people but only follow their political interests and ultimately decide a form of institution favorable to only a few political elites. It may imply the erosion of substantive democracy. However, since this study does not delve into which kinds of reforms have been thwarted by the president, such conclusions may be premature, but I hope to address those questions in future research. However, despite its limitations, this study represents a meaningful contribution to the literature as it places the analysis of electoral reform within the broader context of democratic development, providing insights into a process that has undermined democracy in certain countries.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Conclusion**

My dissertation—Electoral Reforms in Presidential Systems—focuses on presidential engagement in the electoral reform process and the resulting outcomes. Since electoral systems affect the allocations of seats in the legislature, they tend to incentivize the president, who needs legislative support for effective governing, to influence electoral reform. Specifically, I examine whether electoral reform is influenced by the president’s power resources and political context and, second, if the reform does occur, what kinds of reforms are adopted and how they are shaped by the political context, such as the forms of government or public support.

The second chapter of my dissertation performs a statistical analysis of electoral reforms that occurred in 78 presidential and semi-presidential democracies during their democratic period. Using this dataset with a specific measure for electoral reform specified in Chapter 1, I find strong support for my argument that veto, budget power, and presidential power influence electoral reform and shape the reform’s outcome to favor the president’s party. Specifically, I find that as the veto power gets stronger, the probability of electoral reform significantly decreases, while strong budget power contributes to the adoption of a new electoral system that favors the president’s party and, eventually, improves the electoral performance of the president’s party after the reform. I also find robust support for my theory that even under strong constitutional constraints, the president with strong presidential power can pursue electoral reform by influencing

the district magnitude. The analysis suggests that there is evidence that as presidential power increases, the district magnitude lowers significantly. This is an important finding because a lower magnitude system is primarily advantageous to large parties, which is where the president mostly comes from.

The third chapter of my dissertation extends the analysis of the previous chapter to develop a more comprehensive theory considering the interaction between the forms of government—majority, minority, and coalition—and presidential power. I argue that either strong presidential power or the president's majority government makes the outcome of reform more disproportional. Drawing on an original dataset, including electoral reform, election results before and after the reform, forms of government at the time of reform, and the presidential power, I use changes in seat/vote ratio as a measure of disproportionality of the newly adopted system. In the analysis, there is strong evidence to suggest that when electoral reform occurs in the presence of strong presidential power, the outcome of reform is more disproportional than under previous electoral rule. I also find that under the presence of a majority government, changes in the seat share/vote share ratio increase by nearly 0.3. This suggests that the presence of a majority government contributes to this disproportional reform outcome. On the whole, these findings indicate under a new electoral system, more seats are distributed to the president's party than in the old system. This allows us to shed light on how presidents use their political resources over electoral reform and their institutional weapons to conduct it.

In the fourth chapter, I present a theory on how voters' dissatisfaction with the current political and economic situation drives an electoral reform and how the president's presence influences that reform attempt. Specifically, I expect the reform attempt to fail when the president's power is strong, or the president has a majority. The results indicate that presidential involvement in the reform led to outcomes favoring the president and the ruling party. First, I can see that as a change in a real effective exchange rate increases in a positive direction, which means the weakened external purchasing power of a country's currency, the probability of reform occurring increases. I also find that under a presidential system with positive change in a real effective exchange rate, the probability of reform occurring decreases more than the same condition under a semi-presidential system. As for presidential power, I can observe that under the presence of strong presidential power and an increase in change in a real effective exchange rate (in a positive direction), implying weakened purchasing power, reform has not occurred. This implies that presidential power suppresses reform attempts possibly demanded by voters. However, our analysis revealed limited evidence for whether a majority government plays a similar role to presidential power. Still, the direction of effect is what we expected, showing the negative coefficient under the presence of a majority government and an increase in change in a real effective exchange rate.

The topic of electoral reform that this dissertation addresses is highly pertinent, as the transition towards more authoritarian forms of governance in certain nations is not occurring through overt coercion but rather through gradual institutional changes. Varol (2015) defines the term 'Stealth Authoritarianism' and states that "the new generation of

authoritarians learned to perpetuate their power through the same legal mechanisms in democratic regimes. In so doing, they cloak repressive practices under the mask of law, imbue them with the veneer of legitimacy, and render anti-democratic practices much more difficult to detect and eliminate.” Electoral reform is one of these legal mechanisms to prolong the regime of politicians with authoritarian tendencies. For example, in Poland, until very recently, there was a ‘Stealth Authoritarianism’ by the Law and Process Party. Like Hungary, the Law and Justice Party government also significantly overhauled election-related laws and systems. They changed the personnel appointment system in the National Election Commission (PKW), which performs politically sensitive functions such as election management, constituency demarcation, and monitoring the appropriateness of government subsidies. With this measure, most of the election committee members were filled with pro-government figures, which made it challenging to expect fair elections any longer. In Turkey as well, Erdoğan ruled the country for 20 years since 2003 by serving as prime minister from 2003 to 2014 and president from 2014 to now. After becoming president, he pushed for and passed a constitutional amendment toward a presidential system. Under the new constitution, the president can intervene in the judicial system, declare national emergencies, and directly appoint public officials without congressional checks. This allows the president to hold all three branches’ powers. Additionally, he carried out the electoral reform, changing the presidential term. With this change, the Turkish president's term of office lasts five years, but if the president is re-elected and holds an early election during this second term, the president is guaranteed an additional five-year term. In short, virtually, this change allows

Erdogan to remain in power until the mid-2030s. All these examples above show that leaders of each country are destroying the constitutional order through the constitutional process in common. In particular, all the leaders here paved the way for long-term rule and were able to undermine democracy through electoral reform.

What is more concerning is the ‘Stealth Authoritarianism’ aspects seen in other policy areas, along with these electoral reforms. These governments carried out ‘judicial reform’ and ‘media reform’, threatening democratic institutions, individual freedoms, and the prospects for peaceful pluralism. For example, in Hungary, the Orbán government controlled the media, eliminating its critical function and turning it into a de facto public relations agency of the government. The first attempt was to create a media oversight body and fill it with pro-ruling party figures. These organizations can request any information from any media in Hungary at any time. The government also passed a media law that allowed for the imposition of large fines on any media that publishes ‘unbalanced and hateful’ reports, effectively gagging media critical of the government while carrying out a large-scale purge with MTVA (in English, Media Services, and Support Trust Fund) and resulting in the expulsion of journalists who were critical of the government. As for immigration policy, the Orbán government also shows strong ethno-nationalist tendencies. Orbán strongly opposed the EU’s ‘refugee quota system.’ A wall was built along the entire southern border where refugees enter, blocking the border while allowing those who are living abroad to apply for Hungarian citizenship. This kind of measure was read as an expression of Magyar nationalism that predicted discrimination against Gypsies and Jews and anti-immigration policies.

Since coming to power in Poland in 2015, the Law and Justice Party has been pushing for so-called ‘judicial reform’ to tame the judiciary. In 2019, a law established a judge disciplinary committee under the Supreme Court. The European Court of Justice concluded that this law undermines the ‘rule of law’ principle and violates European Union law. Furthermore, media reform was also implemented. With this reform, about 200 people were laid off from public television and radio. Journalists from right-wing media replaced them. The National Broadcasting Commission, a constitutional body that supervises all TV and radio, was filled with members recommended by the Law and Justice Party. Until the recent election, finally allowing the opposition alliance to take the majority, the public media functioned as a propaganda machine for the government. They didn’t even pretend to report objectively and neutrally.

All these examples show that contemporary countries are not free from the challenge of authoritarianism, and their various policy domains have demonstrated it. In this context, there is no doubt about the importance of studying electoral reform. In particular, in any reform attempt, it is crucial to check whether reforms are genuinely driven by a desire to adopt better or fairer institutions or someone’s desire to reinforce their powers. This study wants to place the study of electoral reform within the context of democratic development and help us understand a process that has undermined democracy in some countries.



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