
Cohabitation in semi-presidential countries

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Abstract: This paper aims to discuss various forms of cohabitation in semi-presidentialism through the constitutional stipulations and intra-executive relationships between the president and the prime minister. By examining the cases of emerging semi-presidential countries, this paper suggests that “cohabitation” not be considered as the necessary outcome of a president-parliamentary divided government. The yielding or competing relations between the president and the prime minister may be variables that complicate semi-presidential types. Thus, concerning both the normative and practical aspects, this paper will analyze the intra- executive interaction in order to explore the executive-legislative stability within semi-presidentialism.

Keywords: Semi-Presidentialism, Cohabitation, President, Prime Minister, Executive Power

1. Introduction

According to Maurice Duverger, one of the characteristics of semi-presidential constitution is: “he has opposite him, however, prime minister and ministers who possesses executive and governmental powers and can stay in office if parliament does not show its opposition to them” [1]. That is, from the normative perspective, the executive power of semi-presidential constitution belongs to the prime minister who is responsible for a majority in the parliament. In other words, the cabinet system joins a president who is elected by people could be considered to match the original definition of semi-presidentialism [2].

Based on this definition, the “normative aspect” of semi-presidentialism lies in the implementation of cabinet system. The prime minister needs to be responsible for the parliament whether the government-legislature relation is cooperated or divided.¹ Scholars generally supported the view that “cohabitation” was the destiny of semi-presidentialism when the president and the prime minister (premier) are from different parties [3]. However, following Duverger’s argument in 1980, the gap between normative structure and practical implementation of

semi-presidentialism has become the study point for researchers to debate [1]. Factors including presidential power, constitutional conventions, political conditions, the composition of the parliamentary majority, and the president-parliamentary majority relation all complicate the performance of semi-presidentialism [4]. Therefore, it is difficult to study more than sixty semi-presidential countries only from the institutional aspect. The noticeable difference between the normative and practical aspects of semi-presidentialism has led many researchers to turn to empirical research methods. For instance, they tend to explain the stability of semi-presidentialism from the aspects of cabinet stability, the electoral procedure, democratic performance, and so on [5].

In recent years, the empirical studies of semi-presidentialism have tended to focus on the result of power relations instead of the system itself. This tendency diversifies the category of semi-presidential operations, while the focal analysis may be far from the essence of this institution, making it difficult to reach a comprehensible understanding of semi-presidentialism [6]. When it comes to analyzing how cohabitation emerges in a semi-presidential country, the intra-executive conflict/competition often becomes what best describes the cohabitation between the president and the prime minister [7]. Also, current studies about intra-executive relationships tend to view the instability of cohabitation as the result of president-premier conflicts, causing bad reputation for semi-presidentialism, and may lead the emerging

¹ The “normative aspect” is based on Duverger’s definition of semi-presidentialism, in which the premier claiming the executive power is considered the necessary, or the normative performance. This definition is widely taken as the condition for the semi-presidential stability under a president-parliamentary incongruence.

democracies to exclude semi-presidential system when designing the constitutional system [8].

Indeed, the normative aspect of “executive power belonging to the premier” under the cohabitation circumstance does not secure the stability of semi-presidentialism. For instance, France is considered the model of cohabitation, yet the large number of veto players often leaves its foreign policy stranded during the cohabitation periods [9]. Moreover, the overlapping powers of a dominant premier and an ambitious figure-head president often lead to political turmoil in many semi-presidential countries. Therefore, examinations of actual performance of constitutionalism and its normative aspect is an important direction for current semi-presidential studies. Nevertheless, classifications such as subtypes, regime types or operational type are rarely defined. Moreover, researchers interested in about practical aspects tend to focus on the initial cause of conflicts or competitions [10], they think that the “ambiguous” within semi-presidentialism itself results in the departure from the norm of semi-presidentialism, and thus introduces the diversified types of semi-presidential operation. Accordingly, semi-presidentialism is considered as a constitutional system controlled by “human factors”, so the political actors have much room for maneuver [11]. Thus, factors such as the president’s nomination of the prime minister, the parliament’s power to dissolve the cabinet, and the premier’s assertion of executive power are crucial to the stability of semi-presidential system.

The dichotomy between normative and practical aspects may make it difficult to compare semi-presidential countries. Likewise, diverse variables also make the classification of semi-presidential operation types a difficult task. Is French cohabitation a semi-presidential model or only a case? Do other countries have potentials to develop the French model of cohabitation? If not, are there other types or styles of cohabitation?² Discussions to the above questions should be the basis of the “comparative benefits” of classified semi-presidentialism, and the key to predicting the operation of semi-presidential system [12]. To this end, this paper argues that the constitutional system should be neither the only guiding direction nor the single focus of the semi-presidentialism study. Instead, a method inclusive of normative and practical aspects would better extend the basis of comparing semi-presidential countries.³ Also, discussions of types of semi-presidential operation, such as

cohabitation, minority government or highly presidentialized semi-presidentialism, should neither overstate nor ignore the differences among these types [13]. In fact, the blending of opposite types of semi-presidential operation do exist [14], and the outcome of each type may vary with different interpretations of semi-presidentialism.

Therefore, this paper takes cohabitation as the starting point to re-examine the types of semi-presidentialism. Since cohabitation has been regarded as important for investigating the institutional design as well as the practical operation of semi-presidentialism, it stands as a proper condition for the study of variables between the normative and the practical aspects. Also, this paper attempts to demonstrate that the different understandings toward cohabitation between the president and the premier would diversify the practice of cohabitation, and may even affect the stability of the executive and legislative interaction.

2. Cohabitation, and the Normative and Practical Aspects of Semi-Presidential System

In semi-presidential system, the president's political party (or coalition) may be different from the ones of the majority seats in the parliament because the president and the members of parliament are elected by the people directly. Thus, whether the president will appoint the person who represents the majority in parliament as the premier becomes an important constitutional issue [15]. Cohabitation is formed when the majority of seats in the parliament are held by one political party, and the president releases executive power to the premier agreed by the majority party [3]. Observing the historical meaning of cohabitation, Jeng-Rong Shyu defines cohabitation as “a peaceful coexistence between a directly-elected president, and a prime minister who holds different political position from the president and is supported by the parliament.”⁴ That is, the president may leave the leading post, a similar situation to the parliamentary system. Under this circumstance, the prime minister’s executive power, which is bestowed by the constitution, may overlap with the president’s. Since there is hardly an institutional distinction of who, either the president or the premier, uses the overlapped executive power [16], the “peaceful coexistence” between the president and the premier is often regarded as the normal result of semi-presidentialism, with the semi-presidentialism as the “sufficient condition” for cohabitation to emerge.

However, such discourse is challenged when it comes to power relations. In cohabitation, the government agencies need comply with the constitutional principle even though the Constitution doesn’t provide definite regulations on the

2 Elgie once had in-depth discussion in his article about French cohabitation should not be regarded as an archetype. For more information see R. Elgie, (2009), “Duverger, Semi-presidentialism and the Supposed French Archetype,” *Journal of Democracy*, 16(3), pp. 98-112.

3 This paper agrees with Elgie’s revised definition to semi-presidentialism, which refines a semi-presidential country as “having a directly-elected president in fixed term, and a cabinet responsible to the parliament”. This definition is to avoid the most controversial part of Duverger’s definition that “the president has quite considerable power.” To simplify the disputes over the discussion about the normative and practical aspects of semi-presidentialism may help the follow-up researches with classifying or confirming semi-presidential countries.

4 This definition refers to Shyu’s work in examining the original meaning of French cohabitation. In *Le Robert* dictionary, cohabitation was included as a term in 1987 during the first French cohabitation in 1986-1988. For more information see Shyu (2006: 5-6).

major political actors' behaviors. Thus, the "peaceful coexistence" becomes the necessary result, no matter whether the president and the prime minister's relationship is cooperative or labor-divided [17]. Concerning the main triangle in semi-presidential system: president, premier and parliament, when the government-legislature relation is incongruence, if the president has the powers to nominate and dissolve the premier but decides not to use the powers, and he accepts the parliament's will and coexists with his political dissenters, he agrees to share, or even yield up, his executive power with the premier in order to avoid the constitutional deadlock [8]. In this case, the definition of the president's agreement to share his executive power needs further clarification. For instance, does the president accept it due to factors like political culture, coercion from the parliament, or the premier's confrontation? Also, to what extent does the president release out his executive power? Such questions indicate that treating cohabitation as the normative aspect could oversimplify its causes and ignore the fact that cohabitation is the necessary political outcome in many semi-presidential countries.

Other than the power relation, diverse cohabitations also lead to many critics' warning to the emerging democratic nations in semi-presidential system. For instance, Linz and Stepan [18] suggest that the cohabitation under dual executive power is vulnerable to constitutional deadlock, because policy differences often result in challenges to the ruler's legitimacy and thus weaken democracy. From the perspective of constitutional practice, Elgie [19] offers an opposite conclusion. According to his research, in the emerging semi-presidential nations, cohabitation emerges less than the minority government does. Increasing evidences also shows that the cases of cohabitation causing collapse of democracy are not as many as people imagined.⁵ Using the termination of democratic election as the indicator to examine democratic breakdown in cohabitation countries, Elgie in his study shows the only case is Niger. See Table 1:

In order to understand the operation of cohabitation, cohabitation should not be viewed as a single variable. Instead, discussions should be open to relations other than "labor division" or "cooperation" between the president and the prime minister.⁶ As mentioned above, emphasizing the differences among operation types may segment semi-presidential system; moreover, the content of single operation in different countries may be ignored. Take

premier-presidential regime and president-parliamentary regime for examples, according to Matthew Shugart and John Carey [20], it is important to distinguish the two types because in semi-presidential system, the power relation between the president and the premier will cause hierarchical and transactional relationships, and thus will influence the relation to the parliament.⁷ Nevertheless, their categorization may oversimplify the variations in different countries. To this point, by comparing premier-presidential regimes in different countries, Steven Roper argues that the "variations" of this regime in each country should be emphasized. The oversimplified types may lead to incorrect inference to semi-presidential study, or even a direct view of "premier-presidential regime" as the "French model" [13].

Table 1. Correlation of Cohabitation and the Collapse of Democracy in the Emerging Democracies (Statistics from 1991-2008)

Country	Taking Semi-presidential system and democratic elections	Democracy Terminated	Cohabitation Occurred
Bulgaria	1991	—	1995-1997 2001-2005
Lithuania	1991	—	1996-1998 2003-2004
Mongolia	1991	—	1993-1996 1997-2000
Niger	1993	1996	1995-1996 1991-1995
Poland	1990	—	1997-2001 2007-
Romania	1992	—	2007-2008
Sao Tome and Principe	1991	—	1994-2001 2004-2005
Slovakia	1999	—	2004-2006
Slovenia	1991	—	2004-2006

Source: Elgie (2010: 35)

Concerning the emerging controversy, Shugart elaborates the contents of premier-presidential regime and president-parliamentary regime in his recent work. Through the analysis of who holds the power to dissolve the premier, Shugart argues that in semi-presidential constitution, the

⁵ Elgie also points out that cohabitation has rarely happened. It took place in the Weimar Republic of Germany sporadically from 1922 to 1928, and Weimar Republic of Germany collapsed in 1933, or five years after its final cohabitation. Also, the cohabitation in Republic of Niger occurred in 1995-1996, but the halt of democratic elections in 1996 and the return in 1999 made it difficult to conclude whether Niger is in democratic breakdown or turns out of semi-presidentialism. Elgie further suggests that countries without cohabitation history, like Georgia, Haiti, and Centr. Afr. Rep., have also undergone democracy collapse because of stopping democratic elections. [27]

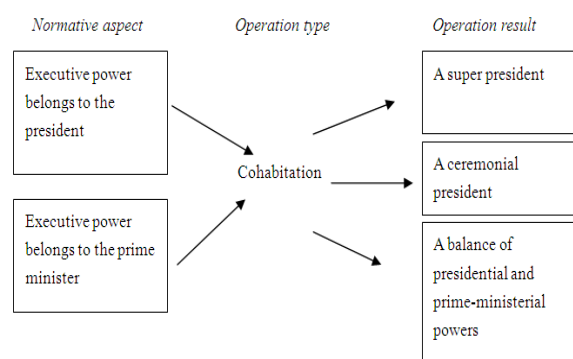
⁶ From the constitutional theoretical perspective, cohabitation is the manifestation of constitutional norms, constitutional operation and constitutional spirit, or elements that highlight both normative and practical aspects within cohabitation.

⁷ The three fundamental features of premier-presidential regime are: first, a directly-elected president; second, a president with considerable power; third, a cabinet dealing with administrative affairs and responsible only to the parliament. Besides, the president has some meaningful non-executive powers, such as to dissolve and to organize the cabinet. [20] Also, what this regime emphasizes is different from the "presidential regime" in the way that the president in the former does not necessarily hold legislative influence, such as the veto power that possessed by the president in the later. For more information see H.M. Cheng, (2004). "The Formation and Survival of Minority Governments under Semi-presidentialism: Taiwan, 2000-2004," Diss. Soochow U, pp.42. In contrast to premier-presidential regime, the president in "presidential-parliamentary regime" holds the absolute power to appoint and remove the cabinet leader regardless the major political party of the parliament (Lu and Shyu 2005: 134). The features of this regime include: first, a directly-elected president; second, a president with the power to decide the premier and the cabinet members; third, a cabinet with the trust from and responsibility to the parliament; fourth, a president with legislative power and power to dissolve the parliament.

premier is responsible to the parliament in premier-presidential regime, and to both the president and the parliament in presidential-parliamentary regime [21]. This argument makes a breakthrough to the often overstated institutional rules in the two regimes. Shugart also suggests that semi-presidentialism should not simply be classified as a dual-track system since the executive power is transferred between president and premier to varying degrees. For instance, the political realities in many semi-presidential countries indicate that when the president's power is restrained and the government is in president-parliamentary congruence, the system may not necessarily change track to presidential system; the premier is still responsible to the parliament or the president, so the premier's term will not be exclusively decided by the president as the situation in presidential system. Also, a super-powerful president may weaken the parliament and the separation of powers, making the alternation of executive power more difficult [22]. Agreeing with Shugart's argument, this paper argues that only through "mixing" various norms and operations can semi-presidentialism be authentically analyzed. Moreover, the political performance in semi-presidential countries should be included in the analysis to better understand the shifting of constitutionally-enacted executive power between the president and the premier.

The actual constitutional operation creates two variations of executive power claiming other than the premier-oriented: the president-oriented and the president-premier balanced", which profoundly affect different operational types. According to Elgie [23], "highly presidentialized semi-presidentialism regimes", "semi-presidentialism regimes with a ceremonial president" and "semi-presidentialism regimes with a balance of presidential and prime-ministerial powers" are actual operations showing the growth and decline of power relation between the president and the premier. In presidentialized semi-presidentialism regimes, a highly individualist president may sacrifice democracy for personal interest, and may weaken the premier's power as well as the stability of semi-presidentialism. Examples are the dominant leadership of the Madagascar president Marc Ravalomanana from 2002 to 2009, and the Russian president Vladimir Putin from 1999 to 2008. In contrast, in semi-presidentialism regimes with a ceremonial president, the situation is similar to parliamentary system; the premier holds the real power while the president is just the symbolic leader. Among the semi-presidential countries, only Austria, Bulgaria, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal and Slovakia are in this situation. The third operation is chosen by most countries for it gives important power to both the president and the premier. In countries like Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Lithuania and Poland, the premier is the decision maker while the president has the power to influence foreign policies and military strategies; in France, Senegal, Sao Tome and Principe, the premier has great political power, while the president has great influence as well [23].

Concerning the practical aspect, the above three operations still need to meet the constitution in different countries. For instance, the types of "super president" and "ceremonial president" may appear in countries where the presidents have limited or great power. Thus, as what is emphasized in this paper for the semi-presidential study, concerning both the normative and practical aspects, the analysis of cohabitation would be as the following (Graph 1):



Graph 1. The relations of cohabitation, constitutional norms and operations (Source: Author).

This graph combines Shugart's and Elgie's arguments. As for the normative aspect, according to Shugart and Cary's subtypes, semi-presidentialism bestows executive power to the premier, but constitutional regulations such as the president's power of appointing and removing the premier, and the parliament's power may directly influence the content of the constitutional norm. Thus, though semi-presidentialism originates from the content of the parliamentary system, according to Shugart, the notion that "the premier is responsible to both the president and the parliament" in president-parliamentary system indicates that executive power does not necessarily belong to the prime minister. As a result, the above graph divides the constitutional norms into two to show the growth and decline of power between the president and the premier, and to suggest the various targets to which the premier is responsible.⁸

As for the practical aspect, according to Elgie's categorization, the three operations create three types of cohabitation. Accordingly, the three operations (super president, ceremonial president and balanced presidential and prime-ministerial powers) have the president or the

⁸ As for the normative aspect, this paper divides the executive power into "belonging to the premier" and "belonging to the president" for the convenience of classification in the following discussion. Combining definitions from many scholars, in part III this paper attempts to examine the constitutions in semi-presidential countries regarding the executive power belonging. It should be noted that inclination exists in degrees within both types; however, due to the length limit this paper will reserve the question concerning how to define the degrees of executive power inclination in the two types to the later case study or comparative study.

prime minister hold the executive power.⁹ Thus, as shown in the graph there are at least six types of cohabitation, not to mention the actual practice of cohabitation in different periods in different countries. The following will be discussions of the variables of cohabitation; through explaining the causes and categorizations of cohabitation, it is hoped to create an insightful basis for the comparative study of the constitutions in semi-presidential countries.

3. Explanatory Variables of Cohabitation

An examination of executive power shifting between the president and the premier is essential for not only a profound understanding of semi-presidentialism [24], but also the interaction between executive power and legislative power. Thus, how different cohabitation types emerge becomes the prior issue for discussion here. According to previous discussion, the labor division or cooperation between the president and the premier, or the “peaceful coexistence” between the two political heads, do not fully account for the mix of various operational types shown in Graph 1. A better interpretation is that coexistence leads to the coordination of both the normative and the practical aspects. This constitutional coordination shows a preferable constitutional practice which avoids the constitutional deadlock; in contrast, digressive operations from constitutional norms may cause constitutional problems. Such discourse is often applied for the examination of the constitutional stability within a country. Based on this constitutionalist view, the “instability” of semi-presidentialism might be interpreted as the president’s or the premier’s political deviation from the constitutional norm. However, such interpretation concerns only the interior interaction within executive power. In fact, the interaction between the executive power and the legislative power may lead to different results. As Protsyk points out, in addition to patterns such as labor division and cooperation, “competition” and “conflict” within executive power could be considered as the patterns of semi-presidentialism as well. Protsyk further argues that the intra-executive conflict is shaped by a fierce confrontation between the president and a premier who is supported by the parliament. If the president allies with the premier to form a league opposite to the parliament, this unified president-premier executive power will turn to confront with the parliament [7]. Therefore, the conflict relationship between the president and the premier may result from their different interpretations of cohabitation, and then this difference may cause the gap between the normative and practical aspects.

⁹ This paper further argues for modifications of the concept that “executive power belongs to the premier” and “cohabitation” should be the normative aspect of semi-presidentialism under a president-parliamentary incongruent circumstance. Such discourse may oversimplify the real operation of semi-presidentialism. Thus, this paper suggests treating cohabitation as a “mediator” to clarify the interaction of normative and practical aspects.

Taken together, this paper suggests that the four interactive types (labor division, cooperation, conflict and competition) are created by whether the president has a consistent “goal” of cohabitation, or a consensus, with the premier.¹⁰ In other words, under the constitutional regulation if the president and the premier have a consensus about who takes the executive power, then the normative and practical aspects of semi-presidentialism will be merged to create a unitary outcome. In contrast, other types of operation will appear when a discrepancy of power belonging occurs between the president and the premier. Take the constitutional norm which gives executive power to the president for example. If the premier doesn’t agree with this norm, usually the president will take the executive power first, while the premier waits for the opportunity to take over the president’s executive power. In this case, the two types of cohabitation, “a ceremonial president” and “a balance of presidential and prime-ministerial powers” may emerge. The characteristics of the two types of cohabitation are that though the president has much power, when the political environment changes, such as the downgrading of president’s popularity, the premier may rise to compete with the president. In this situation, the cohabitation will emerge. Other constraints including the parliament’s power check and the military forces may weaken the president’s power and make him a ceremonial president as well. In other words, for the two executive heads, their claiming of authority is influenced crucially by the constitutional and non-constitutional factors. If we take executive power as the means and president-premier interaction as the goal, the operation types of cohabitation can be shown as Table 2:

Table 2 shows different types from Graph 1 in the way that when the president and the premier are in competitive or conflict state, the types listed on the right side of Table 2 are the so-called “unstable” executive power interactions between the two political heads with different goals. Based on the discussions above, this paper argues that an unstable intra-executive power interaction may ease the disagreement between the executive and the legislative powers. In order to examine whether this argument is practically applicable to the situations in semi-presidential countries, drawing on the four types listed on the right side of Table 2, this paper will proceed to an examination of emerging democracies cases. The traditional semi-presidential countries and Taiwan are selected as the cases to investigate the multiple executive-legislative interactions.

¹⁰ It should be noted that since it is difficult to define the political agents’ intentions, this paper uses behavior-oriented aspect for the examination of the goals between the president and the premier, and as the basis for the case analysis in part IV. Another point emphasized is that instead of being the targets for analysis, the four interactive types applied here are for the examination of the variables of cohabitation and of the degrees of the president-premier conflict. Also, the examination is intended to bridge the following discussion of comparing Shugart and Carey, Elgie, Ekman and other scholars’ views on executive-legislative interior interaction, so further detailed behavior-oriented discussions are saved for the future study.

Table 2. Intra-executive Interactions and Cohabitation Types.

Means \ Goals	Goals	
	Similar (Labor Division or Cooperation)	Different (Competition or Conflict)
Executive Power Belongs to President	Highly Presidentialized Semi-presidentialism Regimes	Semi-presidentialism Regimes with A Ceremonial President Semi-presidentialism Regimes with a Balance of Presidential and Prime-ministerial Powers
Executive Power Belongs to Prime Minister	Semi-presidentialism Regimes with A Ceremonial President	Highly Presidentialized Semi-presidentialism Regimes Semi-presidentialism Regimes with a Balance of Presidential and Prime-ministerial Powers

Source: Author

4. Re-investigation of the Stability of Semi-Presidentialism through Different Types of Cohabitation

The gap between the normative and the practical aspects of semi-presidentialism manifests on the degree of the power struggle between the president and the premier. The varying degree then constructs different types of cohabitation. For example, if the constitutional norm of the president taking the executive power fails to be effectively implemented, then the premier may take full control of the executive power, and thus results in two types of cohabitation, “ceremonial president” and “a balance of presidential and prime-ministerial powers.” Since it is difficult to quantify the degree of power competing between the president and premier, this paper applies Alan Siaroff’s statistics of presidential power to measure the presidents and the premiers’ institutional powers in the semi-presidential countries. Siaroff uses presidential power as the main criterion and then lists nine indicators: the president is directly elected; the president’s political party wins the parliamentary election; the president can appoint important executive officials; the president can act as Chairman of the Cabinet meeting; the president can influence legislative institutions through veto power; the president has the power to enact the Emergency Decrees; the president has actual diplomatic power; the president can dissolve the parliament. The answer “Yes” gets one point while “No” gets no point; the highest score is 9. Different scores suggest different types of semi-presidentialism [25]. In addition to Siaroff’s indicators, this paper also applies Sedelius and Ekman’s research result of the intra-executive power interaction in the post-communist semi-presidential countries. Sedelius and Ekman did a broad research on the intra-executive power relations

within various countries, and they categorized these power relations into different levels of conflict. They also suggested that the levels of conflict correspond significantly with the frequency of cabinet replacements. Sedelius and Ekman’s study stands as an insightful verification to this paper’s argument that cohabitation should not be examined only from a single aspect. That is, whether the practice of semi-presidentialism in a country is in stability should not be analyzed merely through the substitutions of the cabinet; the interaction between the president and the premier also deeply changes the context of cohabitation.

Although Protsyk’s view is similar to Sedelius and Ekman’s argument on taking the frequency of premier replacement as the result of conflict intensity, a difference still exists in the degree of intensity. For Protsyk, he believes that “low” conflict means no president-premier confrontation on special policies and the premier appointment, while “high” conflict denotes confrontation between the two political heads’ executive dominance and policy statements. Moreover, the degree of conflict reflects in the replacement of the premier [7]. For Sedelius and Ekman, they add “moderate” to the conflict rate, for they believe that “moderate” denotes sporadic and perceivable conflict, while “low” belongs to no conflict and “high” to frequent intense conflict [10]. The main indicator is that if the executive power belongs to the president, the intra-executive conflict will show in the president’s removal of the premier, or in the premier’s yielding to the threat. If the premier holds the executive power, the conflict will manifest on the president’s power of influence to criticize the government and to arouse people’s distrust of the premier [10]. Table 3 is based on Siaroff’s indicators and Sedelius and Ekman’s study on the intensity of intra-executive conflict to re-express the cohabitation patterns of emerging democracies:

Table 3. *Power Relations in Emerging Democracies Cohabitation*

Country	Subtypes (Shugart and Carey)	President's Dominance (Siaroff)	Executive Cohabitation Period (Elgie)	Degrees of Intra-executive Conflicts (Sedelius and Ekman)
Bulgaria	Premier-presidential regime	3	1995-1997 2001-2005 2009-	high low --
Lithuania	Premier-presidential regime	4	1996-1998 2003-2004	low moderate - high
Mongolia	Premier-presidential regime	4	1993-1996 1997-2000	low low
Niger	Premier-presidential regime	6	1995-1996	high*
Poland	Premier-presidential regime	3	1991-1995 1997-2001 2007-	high- low low - high --
Romania	Premier-presidential regime	5	2007-2008	moderate
Sao Tome and Principe	President-parliamentary regime	8	1994-2001 2004-2005	low * low *
Slovakia	Premier-presidential regime	2	2004-2006	low
Slovenia	Premier-presidential regime	1	2004-2006	low *

Source: Elgie (2008: 27-28), Sedelius and Ekman (2010: 528-529) and author's update; the executive interior interaction in Mongolia, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, and Slovenia are based on the author's study and Sedelius and Ekman's research

Concerning the idea that cohabitation have different types due to the intensity of internal competition for executive dominance, it could be further argued that when the executive power belongs to the president, "low" intra-executive conflict may form "highly presidentialized semi-presidentialism regimes", while "moderate" intra-executive conflict may form "semi-presidentialism regimes with a balance of presidential and prime-ministerial powers" and "high" intra-executive conflict shows in "semi-presidentialism regimes with ceremonial president." If the executive power belongs to the premier, "low" intra-executive conflict may form "semi-presidentialism regimes with ceremonial president", while "moderate" intra-executive conflict may form "semi-presidentialism regimes with a balance of presidential and prime-ministerial powers" and "high" intra-executive conflict shows in "highly presidentialized semi-presidentialism regimes."¹¹ Accordingly, the president and the premier's labor division and cooperation are embodied in "low" conflict relation, while competition and conflict are demonstrated in "moderate" and "high" conflict relation, as shown in the following analysis.

The following section will take four countries from Table 1 to analyze the performances of different types of cohabitation. Countries of "moderate" and "high" intra-executive conflict are selected in order to examine

whether an unstable intra-executive interaction will ease the executive-legislative confrontation. The four selected countries are Niger, Romania, Bulgaria and Poland. In the former two countries, the executive powers belong to the presidents, and the intra-executive conflict in Niger is high while in Romania it is moderate.¹² In the latter two countries, the executive powers belong to the premiers, and the intra-executive conflict is high in Bulgaria while it is moderate in Poland. Other than these four countries, Weimar Republic, Portugal, Taiwan, and the Fifth Republic of France are also applied as comparative cases to the above four countries in order to demonstrate different developments of cohabitation.¹³

4.1. Executive Power Belongs to the President

4.1.1. Cohabitation with a Ceremonial President

Niger began its cohabitation in 1995-1996; Mahamane Ousmane was the first president elected in the democratic

11 The three levels of conflict degree are based on the intensity of the power struggle between the president and the premier in order to distinguish the three types of cohabitation. Thus, the subtle change of power within "balanced executive power" is not the focus for discussion here.

12 Sedelius and Ekman have defined Romania as in high conflict in its cohabitation period, yet according to Shih's research (2010), Romanian situations in 2004- 2007 and 2007 onward could be described as from the president and the premier's direct confrontation to the president-parliament and premier-parliament confrontations. Thus, this paper modifies the later Romanian situation as in moderate conflict.

13 Experienced semi-presidential countries except Taiwan are included in discussion because their rich contents of cohabitation can serve as both the foundation for case comparison and the explanatory factors for causes and directions of cohabitation. It is noted that the emerging countries are the focus for analysis here, while the other four cases (Weimar Germany, Portugal, Taiwan and the French Fifth Republic) are served to highlight the trend and experience of cohabitation and thus will not be detailed in explaining their cohabitation.

presidential election in March, 1993. According to the constitution, the president is both the head of state and the highest chief executive; the premier is appointed by and shares part of executive power with the president. Thus, Niger can be defined as semi-presidential country in which “executive dominance belongs to the president” [26]. However, after the parliamentary election in January, 1995, the president's party, “Democratic and Social Convention - Rahama” was in fight with the premier Hama Amadou, who was supported by the parliament. It caused a military overturn launched by Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara from the party “National Union of Independents for Democratic Renewal. Maïnassara then dissolved the parliament and took over the presidential position, ending up the one-year cohabitation. During the fight between the president Ousmane and the premier Amadou, because the opposition parties became the majority in the parliament through elections, their oppositions against the president often led the president-premier relation to a deadlock. This deadlock made government administration come to a halt and offered the military force an opportunity to intervene in. The military strongman then forced the Martial law to be implemented and suspended the constitution. As a result, the president's role became ceremonial, and the high intra-executive conflict eventually caused a serious domestic upheaval [27].

In addition to Niger, Weimar Republic was another case. The Weimar Constitution was a model of balanced presidential and prime-powers [28]. Nevertheless, the executive power potentially favored the president, for the president could appoint cabinet personnel, dissolve parliament, initiate a referendum, and even appoint or dissolve federal judges with the federal minister's recommendation. Meanwhile, the Weimar Constitution also gave great powers to the parliament. If the parliament clearly stated distrust towards the premier or the minister through voting, either of the two must resign. Also, the parliament had the power to impeach and repeal the acts enacted by the president. Therefore, the president-parliament conflicts continued. The president used the power of dissolving the parliament as a defense mechanism, and the premier was dependent on both the president and the parliament [29]. Moreover, if the constitution gave the president independent power of personnel appointment, then the president had more power. If the premier had the power of countersign to personnel appointment and acts, the premier was able to compete with the president [30]. Weimer Republic in 1920-1930 was of this situation: the president and the premier were in different parties, and the parliament lacked a stable majority. The situation caused the president-premier competition for executive dominance, and thus formed the cohabitation with a ceremonial president, for the premier competed for power to a large degree. Except for three terms of government in 1918-1920, the presidents and the premiers were of different political parties during the 14 years of Weimar Republic from 1920 to 1933 [31].

To sum up, the cases of Niger and Weimar Republic indicate that the “high” intra-executive conflict and the cohabitation with a ceremonial president result from the premier's dependence on the parliament, and the parliament's power to check the president's power. However, the two cases of cohabitation are different from Protsyk's argument that when the parliament and the premier fail to maintain stability, the high intra-executive conflict will play the role to ease the executive-legislative confrontation. In fact, factors like the president's resistance against the legislative agencies' confrontation, and the premier's dependence on both the president and the parliament, will disturb the intra-executive interaction. In other words, instead of being a stabilizer, the conflict within intra-executive interaction is so dynamic that it could result in an unsettled performance of semi-presidentialism. Thus, Weimar Republic went to “presidential cabinet”, and Niger underwent the collapse of democracy.

4.1.2. Cohabitation with a Balance of Presidential and Prime-Ministerial Powers

Although Romania is classified by Shugart as a “prime minister – presidential regime” country, its new constitution enacted in 1992 cut down the president's power, stating that the president is mainly responsible for national defense and foreign policy. What's more, the president will need the parliament's agreement to remove the premier and the cabinet official. However, the new constitution gives the president powers to appoint important executive officials, to participate in the cabinet meetings, and to influence the legislative agencies through veto power. Therefore, some scholars even consider the president in Romania having the power to “selectively participate” in the governmental affairs [32]. In addition, according to Siaroff's categorization, Romania gets 5 point (see Table 3), which means the president has much executive power than the premier.

The cohabitation in Romania in 2007 was caused by the conflicts within the ruling alliance. Since no party got majority of seats after the Senate and Chamber of Deputies election, the president from Democratic Party, Traian Băsescu, nominated Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu from National Liberal Party as the premier, and formed a coalition cabinet with five parties including Social Democratic Party and People's Party (later renamed as Conservative Party). However, the ruling alliance had many disputes over the issue of joining the EU. The ruling foundation was shaken by not only the premier's frequent rejections to the president's reform acts [33], but also the Conservative Party's exiting from the cabinet in December 2006 to show dissatisfaction with the reform projects. The premier Tăriceanu thus formed a new coalition government in March 2007. Although members of the coalition government, the National Liberal Party and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania, only got twenty percent of the seats in the parliament, this new

coalition government was supported by Social-Democratic Party, St. Romania Party and Conservative Party on the legislative issues. Therefore, before the re-election of the parliament in 2008, there was a cohabitation, in which the president was in opposition to the premier who was supported by the parliamentary alliance. In 2007, an evident conflict happened when the premier dismissed the cabinet members from the president's Democratic Party in April. After 19 days, the parliament passed the impeachment of the president, having Nicolae Văcăroiu take over the president's position temporarily. In response to the impeachment, the president delayed his resignation and took the impeachment of the president to a public referendum in May. Since the result of referendum rejected the impeachment, Traian Băsescu resumed the presidential position immediately.¹⁴ Democratic Party then proposed the no confidence vote to the cabinet in June, but it failed to get the support from Social-Democratic Party, the largest party in the parliament. Some members from National Liberal Party turned to join Democratic Party, and formed a new party called Liberal Democratic Party.¹⁵

The case of Romania indicates that conflict emerges when the president and the premier don't share the same purpose. When they have different opinions, the president and the premier are dependent on their parties' support in the parliament respectively, because the president doesn't have the power to remove the premier, and the premier with the parliament can't fully control the president at their will, either. This type of cohabitation is "cohabitation with a balance of presidential and prime-ministerial powers," of which the executive power belongs to the president and shows a "moderate" intra-executive conflict. Moreover, during this period of cohabitation, the majority alliance had been shaken by the intra-executive conflict between the president and the premier at times, demonstrating an unstable condition of the executive-legislative relation. In Romania, the competition between the president and the premier may exacerbate the opposition between the president and the parliament in the future.

The briefly formed cohabitation in Taiwan after the party alternation in 2000 is another example.¹⁶ When president Shui-bian Chen of Democratic Progressive Party

(DPP) began his term, he appointed Fei Tang of Kuomintang (KMT) as the premier of Executive Yuan. He claimed to form a "people's government", which was widely considered an expediency to appease the parliament, in which KMT took the majority of seats. According to Taiwan's constitution, the president had complete powers to appoint or remove the premier and to passively dissolve the parliament; therefore, this cohabitation was mainly led by President Chen, while the premier needed to be responsible to both the president and the parliament. However, the fact that KMT took the majority of seats in the parliament also resulted in different goals between the president and the premier. The "people's government" had existed only for 137 days, and was terminated due to an intra-executive conflict over "the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant Project," of which the president and the premier had opposite opinions. Afterward president Chen appointed Chung-hsiung Chang of DDP as the premier; meanwhile, KMT took majority seats in the parliament. This minority government brought serious conflicts between executive power and legislative power, and premier Chang was even listed as an "unwelcome person" by the Legislative Yuan (the parliament). The example in Taiwan demonstrated that how this type of cohabitation, the "cohabitation with a balance of presidential and prime-ministerial powers," caused instability in semi-presidentialism.¹⁷

4.2. Executive Power Belongs to the Prime Minister

4.2.1. Highly Presidentialized Cohabitation

The cohabitation in Bulgaria in 1995-1997 was the type of "highly presidentialized cohabitation". According to the constitution enacted in July 1991, the president is a figurehead who represents Bulgaria; the president has no power to appoint the premier, nor does he have the governing power, which belongs to the cabinet that formed by the majority party in the parliament. However, Bulgaria is categorized as a semi-presidential country since its president is elected by universal suffrage.¹⁸

In 1992, as the first elected president after the communist period in Bulgaria, president Zhelyu Zhelev and his party, The Union of Democratic Forces (SDS), became the parliamentary majority in 1991-1994. President Zhelev and the first premier, Ljuban Berov, cooperated in harmony and were without obvious party characteristics [34]. Later, the communist-oriented party,

14 According to the Romanian constitution, when the president is suspended from duty, a referendum of the president's impeachment will be held and the impeachment must be supported by more than half of the people to become effective.

15 For more information see: P.H. Shih, (2010). "The Political Instability in the Premier-Presidentialism System," Master's Thesis. National Chung Cheng U.

16 Although Fei Tang was appointed as the premier and organized the cabinet at individual level, not in the name of KMT, yet during the period of cohabitation, KMT strategically used legislative power to influence the government's policy making and implement. Therefore, the situation matched the institutional principle of semi-presidentialism that "the premier's administrative goal is to put the opinions of the majority party in the parliament into practice, not the president's." Thus, though some scholars considered that the Chen and Tang's government was in the form of minority government, its performance demonstrated the spirit of cohabitation. [3]

17 After premier Chang announced the cessation of the construction of the fourth nuclear power plant on October 27, 2000, the Legislative Yuan refused to interpellate premier Chang during the parliament session, saying that premier Chang, representing the Executive Yuan, "showed no respect to the Executive Yuan and the constitutionalism." The Legislative Yuan also suspended its reviewing of the Executive Yuan's general budget plan, making premier Chang as the first premier who was so "unwelcome" in the political development in Taiwan. For more information see C.H. Chang, and J.R. Shyu, (2007). "A Study of Restrictions and Breakthroughs of the Role of the Premier after the First Party Turnover in Taiwan," Taiwan Democracy Quarterly, 4(1), pp. 51-108.

18 This paper refers to more simplified definition of semi-presidential system by Robert Elgie.

Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), won 125 of 240 seats in the national parliamentary election in 1994. Thus, the party leader Zhan Videnov became the new premier in January 1995, and the first cohabitation was formed [35]. In the first year of cohabitation, the president mainly played the diplomatic role; however, in 1996, the serious economic crisis caused the inflation and made two thirds of banks in Bulgaria go bankruptcy. Bulgaria became the country of the lowest GNP in Eastern European country at that time [36].

The political situation in Bulgaria was closely related to its economic condition. In addition to dealing with different economic policies between the Right and the Left, the president's SDS also faced with the crisis of internal split and even lost the parliamentary majority, after they opposed BSP going communism and their proposals of a series of radical reform policies. All these events had caused disagreements between president Zhelev and SDS before the cohabitation happened in 1995. In October 1991, SDS split into "SDS-Movement", "SDS-Center" and "SDS-Liberals" [37]. In 1992, the parliament passed a vote of no confidence, and some members of SDS together with other parties nominated Berov, a nonpartisan, as the premier. Many other members of SDS were so angry about the nomination that they even prepared to overturn the government and required the president to step down. In response to the chaos, president Zhelev demonstrated his powerful political position. In a national speech in June 1993, Zhelev stated that he was not the president of SDS, but the president of three million Bulgarian citizens. Moreover, Zhelev made a great effort negotiating with the government in order to pursue the political stability.

It should be emphasized that Zhelev's success as a president was because of his high social reputation and charisma among different classes and parties (Hung 1999: 186). Despite the fact that the role of president changes from a figure head into an executive leader has been a political controversy in Bulgaria [38], president Zhelev's political and social statuses provided him a superior position in the cohabitation, during which he had high conflicts with the premier about the economic and political issues. The economic crisis in May 1996 led to a split within BSP. Meanwhile, SDS took this opportunity to cooperate with other minor parties to overturn the cabinet and successfully made two ministers step down. During this political dispute, Zhelev's impartial political position had reinforced the public's distrust toward the cabinet and thus weakened BSP's ruling power. In the end, people took to the street and overthrew the government [37].

Portugal is another example of this type of cohabitation. Similar to Bulgaria, the constitution in Portuguese also provides great executive power to the premier, and many scholars even consider the powerful premier an analogy to the operation of cabinet system in Portugal. Nevertheless, the president still has a significant influence, which manifests on the president's powers to dismiss the parliament and to use veto power, as well as the president's

reconsideration power granted by the constitutional amendment in 1982. Therefore, Portugal is considered a semi-presidential country [39]. It is noteworthy that the president's powers mentioned above are more passive than active. However, because Portugal government has been composed of multiple parties, the so-called "coalition cabinet" emerges frequently. Therefore, in the situation of coalition cabinet, when the president faces with a majority cabinet, he will reduce his power and becomes a figure head. On the contrary, when the president faces with a minority cabinet, he will increase his power to restrain the premier and the parliament [39]. Taken together, the cases of Bulgaria and Portugal indicate that the conflict of intra-executive interaction does not necessarily result in confrontations with the parliament. In fact, sometimes the president's taking over the executive power may be crucial solutions to political or economic crisis in a country.

4.2.2. *Highly Presidentialized Cohabitation*

Generally speaking, post-communist countries tend to adopt semi-presidentialism for two reasons [40]. First, they want to improve the operations of "executive diarchy" and "clientelist politics" in communist authoritarian essence. Second, they want to cultivate their own political new blood to resist the populist trends. Thus, reducing presidential power through constitutional amendments becomes one of the features of semi-presidentialism in post-communist countries [12].

The premier's executive power and the parliament's power are constitutionally secured in order to restrain the president's power. For example, in Poland, the constitution serves as a semi-presidential stabilizer in order to ward off populism [40]. The institutional design provides the parliament with two opportunities of no-confidence toward the president's nomination of the premier. In addition, constitutional decree is launched by the Minister's Meeting, not the president. As a result, the practice of semi-presidentialism in Poland may cause the emerge of a "ceremonial president"; moreover, some scholars even suggest a tendency of "rationalized parliamentary system" in Poland [41]. Nevertheless, similar to the case in Bulgaria, whether the president is content with being only a figure head becomes the crucial factor for the conflict of intra-executive power. The point is that if the constitution has a complete defense mechanism toward the president's taking of power, the "high" degree of intra-executive conflict may decrease to the "moderate" level.¹⁹

Poland has experienced two constitutional reforms since president Lech Walesa was elected in 1990. One is called "mini-constitution" in 1992 and the other one is "new constitution" in 1997. This paper will focus its analysis of the cohabitation from 1991 to 1995, during the implement

19 This paper agrees with Selius and Ekman's definition that the conflict degrees of cohabitation in Poland in 1991-1995 and 1997-2001 across "high", "moderate" and "low", showing the drastic parliament activities as the key of conflicts. The focus here will be the cohabitation in 1991-1995 to highlight the conflict patterns in the process of Polish Constitution transformation.

of mini-constitution. As the first directly-elected president, Walesa's great political ambition was shown in the design of mini-constitution. According to the old constitution in 1989, the president's executive power was quite restricted; for example, his nomination of the premier must be approved by the parliament. However, according to mini-constitution, the president's nomination of the government members still needed the parliament's approval and the list should be proposed to the parliament within 14 days, if the parliament didn't agree with the member lists, the parliament could decide the premier and the cabinet members; however, its decision needed to be approved by the president. Generally speaking, mini-constitution was considered an outcome of compromise between the parliament and the president, so the parliament could keep its power of supervision over the government while Walesa gained more presidential powers as he required [41]. It is noteworthy that the design of mini-constitution might be the only achievement of Walesa's power stretch [42]. In fact, Walesa failed to efficiently control the trade union he led, Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity", and this trade union claimed little political influence in reality.

During the cohabitation in 1993, in which Democratic Left Alliance and Polish Peasant Party took two-thirds in the cabinet, president Walesa began to take advantage of the fuzzy zone in mini-constitution in order to expand his presidential power. For example, he created the opportunity to dismiss the parliament by delaying the Budget proposal, which forced the parliament to use the constructive vote of no confidence to replace premier Pawlak of Polish Peasant Party with Oleksy of Democratic Left Alliance [42]. Walesa didn't stop competing with the new premier for the executive power till the end of the first cohabitation.

Poland's case shows that though the intra-executive conflict could become lower than the three above-mentioned types of cohabitation through the parliament's and constitution's regulations toward the president, yet the president's ambition as well as the unpredictable nature of cohabitation may interfere with the degree of intra-executive conflict. Nevertheless, at least Poland's case indicates that for this type of cohabitation, institutional regulations can effectively ease the executive-legislative confrontation. For example, in Poland, the design of new constitution in 1997 made it clear to weaken presidential power by restricting president's diplomatic and national defense powers.

France's case is also of this type of cohabitation. The three cohabitations in 1986, 1993, and 1997 in France were related to the spirit of constitutionalism, or the president's respect for the parliament, during the history of constitutional development. Also, the presidents usually recognized the necessity to follow the results of survey to

form cohabitations [15].²⁰ What's more, article 49 of French Fifth Republic constitution stipulates that the government should initiatively propose confidence motion to the parliament. This makes the premier responsible to the parliament, and is also the reason that the president is willing to form cohabitation.

Taken together, this type of cohabitation is influenced by both institutional and non-institutional factors. Moreover, the degree of the president's competing against the premier for executive power seems to be lower than the previous types. Nevertheless, it's hard to predict the future development of this type of cohabitation as no one can tell if France will exercise constitutional stipulations to regulate presidential powers, like Poland's case, or turn to become presidentialism.

5. Conclusion

Taking both the institutional and practical aspects of semi-presidentialism into account, this paper examines four types of cohabitation emerging in some semi-presidential countries. As for the type of executive power belonging to the president, different opinions between the president and the premier often make it difficult to develop a stable executive-legislative relation. Likewise, as for the type of executive power belonging to the premier, conflicts still exist between the president and the premier. However, it should be noted that both types of cohabitation were steadily developing during certain periods and showed the potential for reformation.²¹

The cases of experienced semi-presidential countries and Taiwan suggest that different types of cohabitation lead to an unpredictable future for semi-presidentialism. Weimar Republic's case shows how the president's attitude toward executive power changed from submissive to aggressive. The short cohabitation in Taiwan was a political expediency, which caused serious conflict between the legislative and executive powers in the end. Portugal's case demonstrates how the president changed his political influence according to different political structures, and so does the case of Fifth Republic of France. Taken together, factors that result in these types of cohabitation are very crucial to analyze the performance and stability of semi-presidentialism. Cohabitation could be the product of political rationality, while factors such as political culture, social structure and necessary institutional design could influence the practice of cohabitation as well. Thus, this paper tries to include both the normative and the practical aspects to see how these factors work and are interwoven in the four types of cohabitation discussed in

20 According to Lin's study on the public poll to the French government, the cohabitation system has been beneficial to promote popularity of both the president and the premier.

21 Therefore, as Elgie [23] mentioned, semi-presidential system with a balance of presidential and prime-ministerial powers may not bring conflicts to democracy. It is quite difficult to reach real balance when cohabitation occurs in countries where democracy is still fragile.

the previous parts.

As the belief of old institutionalism that institution is dominant in influencing actors' performances has met many challenges, this paper focuses more on the interaction between the president and the premier to examine the context of semi-presidentialism, rather than the normative aspect of cohabitation, such as the president's constitutional choice over the premier. In the semi-presidential countries, when the government-legislature relation is divided, "minority government," the president choosing the premier from his own political party, is often considered a sign of perils of semi-presidentialism by scholars. Moreover, minority government might result in constitutional conflicts or deadlocks, and eventually brings democracy to breakdown in the newly risen semi-presidential countries [19]. Nevertheless, even when the government-legislature relation is cooperated, if the president overtops the premier to form a "highly presidentialized cohabitation," the executive-legislative interaction could be fluctuant, and sometimes the parliament may not take what the president requires for consideration.

Although scholars of new institutionalism have begun to pay more attention on a variety of institutional issues such as the mutuality of institutional designs and actors, environmental structure and cultural influence that operate in semi-presidential countries, so far the study on the relationship among institutions, actors and structures seems to be insufficient. Therefore, for its future study, this paper will focus on analyzing the interaction between the institutional designs and the political actors in order to provide a clear picture of the diversified semi-presidential operations, and to offer a basis for comparative study of semi-presidentialism as well.

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