Presidential Strength under Different Measures of Party Fragmentation

This short piece considers the effect of presidential strength on party systems using different measures of party fragmentation. The results of regressing presidential strength on a measure of party strength calculated using nation-wide data are reported at Table 4. These results were those reported by Clark and Wittrock (2005). The means of calculating party fragmentation scores for mixed electoral systems treats these systems as unique (the SMD and PR tiers experience contamination effects that do not permit us to treat them as separate elections) and considers independent deputies and small regional parties as distinct parties. (See Measuring Party Fractionalization in Mixed Electoral Systems, Terry D. Clark and Matthew C. Falvey [unpublished research note].)

Table 4 also reports the results of using an alternative measure for Nv and Ns in mixed systems based on constituency-level data (red figures in the second row). In essence, the method for calculating Nv and Ns treats independents and small regional parties as part of a single national party. While presidential strength is no longer statistically significant in explaining the variation in the number of effective electoral parties (Nv), it does increase the explanatory power of the electoral system (SMD versus other). However, presidential strength remains the best predictor of the number of effective parliamentary parties (Ns).

Since Nv is a measure of the psychological effect, it may well be that it will not be experienced until after the first elections. Testing for this possibility, we also report regression results of presidential strength on party fragmentation scores excluding first elections (in green in row three). While both the electoral system (SMD or other) and presidential strength have a stronger effect on Nv, neither is statistically significant.

However, both factors have a statistically significant effect on Ns, with the stronger effect being exerted by presidential strength. It would appear that the psychological effect is exerting an influence through the mechanical effect after first elections (Benoit, 2002). Further, presidential strength as Clark and Wittrock (2005) argued exercises an important influence on the party system.

Table 4 ***Results of Regression Analysis of the Models***

Variable	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Dependent Variable = Effective Electoral Parties (N_v)			
Electoral System (SMD or other)	.177	.236***	.222***
	.169	.173	.171
	.146	.158	.138
Presidential Strength	-	.476*	.484*
		.035	.036
		.138	.149
Bicameralism	-	-	.048
			-.006
			-.068
r2 =	.031	.254	.256
	.028	.030	.030
	.021	.040	.044
p =	.188	.000	.001
	.218	.457	.670
	.362	.459	.638
Dependent Variable = Effective Assembly Parties (N_s)			
Electoral System (SMD or other)	.107	.127	.125
	.109	.138	.129
	.113	.263*	.189

Presidential Strength	-	.322**	.323**
		.307**	.307**
		.364**	.388**
Bicameralism	-	-	.005
			.003
			-.207
r2 =	.011	.115	.114
	.012	.106	.106
	.059	.191	.228
p =	.414	.029	.071
	.409	.043	.101
	.113	.013	.015

Standardized Betas are reported.

* significant at less than or equal to the .001 level,

** significant at less than the .05 level

*** significant at less than the .10 level

REFERENCES

Benoit, Kenneth. (2002). The endogeneity problem in electoral studies: a critical re-examination of Duverger's mechanical effect. *Electoral Studies* 21, 35-46.

Clark, T.D. & J.N. Wittrock (2005). Presidentialism and the Effect of Electoral Law in Post-Communist Systems: Regime Type Matters. *Comparative Political Studies* 38(2), 171-188.