

COHABITATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINE'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

This article attempts to investigate the impact of the mixed electoral system on the creation of the state of cohabitation that occurred in the Palestinian political system after the second legislative elections in 2006, viewed through a theoretical framework based on the idea of divided societies. This study employed quantitative and qualitative research methods together. This study found several important results regarding this relationship. Firstly, cohabitation is more likely to occur when there is a low rate of party fractionalization (more polarization) produced in the mixed electoral system. Second, the strategic voting in this election was sensitive to the divided attitudes about the Israeli occupation. Third, the mixed electoral system did not greatly reduce the small parties punishment caused by the pluralistic system, which increased opportunities for creating a state of cohabitation

Keywords: *Cohabitation, Mixed Electoral System, Consensus Democracy, Occupied Palestine, Fatah, Hamas.*

Introduction

After 1948, the beginnings of Palestinian political regime, or what Jamil Hilal calls the Palestinian Political field refers to the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964¹. Over time, several factors such as Arab polarization and a series of Arab-Israeli conflicts influenced the development of Palestinian politics². After several a protracted series of battles, the PLO was expelled from Lebanon and exiled to Tunisia in 1982. As Palestinians started to accept reconciliation, international conditions became more suitable for making such reconciliation possible. The process started at the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991 and succeeded with secret negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Called the Oslo negotiations, the negotiations ended with Oslo Accord I in 1993 and Oslo Accord II in 1995 by which the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was established as a self-autonomous authority and created a modern Palestinian political regime, although the PNA was located in the non-sovereign territories.

The Oslo Accords was intended to achieve peace and create self-determination for the Palestinian people. The terms of this accord and the later agreements contained arrangements for what was to be a five-year transition period. The Oslo Accords called upon the Palestinian National Authority to conduct democratic elections at the presidential and legislative levels. The first elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council were on 20 January 1996. The government elected by the PLC was renamed the Palestinian National Authority.

Despite expectations that these accords might lead to a successful peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis, elections problems and issues with the democratic process in the Palestinian political system have continued until the present. The first legislative and presidential elections were conducted in 1996 under Plurality formula. Although elections were supposed to be held every four years, they were not held again until after the death of Yasser Arafat, the founder and former head of the Palestinian National Authority. That presidential election was held in 2005, which Mahmoud Abbas won. Then, the second legislative elections were held in 2006.

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¹ See Jamil Hilal (2006), *The Palestinian Political System after Oslo, Critical Analytical Study*. Ramallah: Muwatin, The Palestinian Institute for Democracy Studies, p. 3-10.

² Mousa Al Budeiri et. al. (1995), *The Palestinian Democracy: Critical Papers* (1st ed.), Ramallah: Muwatin, The Palestinian Institute for Democracy Studies, p. 25-40.

In advance of that election, a new electoral system was used called mixed electoral system. This new electoral system expanded the PLC from 88 to 132 seats.

The new Palestinian political regime had been first established as a presidential regime, with Palestinian basic law giving the elected president the power to establish his government, and gave him great independence from the legislative council. However, as a result of great pressure from the US administration after the failure of Camp David negotiations in 2000, the Palestinian Basic Law was amended in 2003, and the position of prime minister was introduced³. Under international pressure, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) assumed the position of prime minister on 19 March 2003, a position in which he served until September 2003.

With this amendment, the Palestinian political system was altered from a presidential system to a semi-presidential system, in which the president was elected directly and then appointed the Prime Minister from within or outside the Parliament, provided that he obtains the trust of the Legislative Council. Although this amendment to the Palestinian Basic Law withdrew many of the powers granted to the President, he retains many powers, in particular, those related to the work of the Cabinet and its functions.⁴ The president also has the power to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister (Article 45 of the Amended Basic Law), and the prime minister is accountable to both the President and the Legislative Council (Article 50 of the Amended Basic Law). Because of this, the Palestinian semi-presidential system is classified as a Presidential-Parliamentary system.

The transition of the Palestinian political system into a semi-presidential system was initially considered a remarkable milestone for the stability of the nascent Palestinian democracy, especially after the second legislative elections, which were held in 2006. In this election, Hamas won a majority of council seats in the legislative council (74 seats), compared to 45 seats only for Fatah⁵ - the ruling party - (the party of President Abu Mazen)⁶. The results of this election created a problematic case for the Palestinian political system among semi-presidential systems, which was the state of cohabitation in which the President was from one party, which was Fatah, and the prime minister belonged to another party, which was Hamas. This situation led to a gridlock of the Palestinian political system, and conflict concerning the powers granted between the two parts of the executive branch: the president on one side, and the prime minister on the other side. This conflict soon led to an internal conflict, which led, to the division between the West Bank led by Fatah, and Gaza Strip led by Hamas in mid-2007. Soon, the Palestinian democracy was in shambles, a condition that exists to the present.

The electoral system used in this election was divided into two tiers: the first tier was a plurality system (First Past The Post System) that included 66 seats, used in 16 electoral constituencies varying in their sizes, with a system called Block Voting. The second one was a system of proportional representation (PR), which also included 66 seats and considered the nation as one constituency, in which seats were distributed proportionally to those lists that received more than 2% of the total lists votes using the Sainte-Laguë method. Indeed, cohabitation phenomenon has its constitutional and political origins also, but the electoral system also can produce this phenomenon by controlling of a number of elected parties. In this context, the polarization in voting by supporters of small parties favored the Hamas opposition party, and, according to Duverger's law, increased the chance of cohabitation in the Palestinian political system in the face of rising numbers of independents and a high degree of disproportionality in the mixed electoral system.

³ Liana A. Lopes (2008), "Palestinian Visions and Divisions about a Palestinian Nation-State," Paper presented at the Second Global International Studies Conference. University of Ljubljana, Slovenia-23/26, World International Studies Committee. p. 2.

⁴ Ammar Dweik (2013), "Palestinian Political System's Experience Under The Palestinian Authority," in Abu Fasheyeh, Jaqaman, Khalil, Shuaebi, Ammar, Jayyosi and Al-Aryan (ed). *Papers in the Palestinian Political System and Authority Transition*, Ramallah: Muwatin, The Palestinian Institute for Democracy Studies. pp. 63-82.

⁵ Central Election Commission-Palestine (2006), *Second Legislative Elections Report 25 January. 2006*. Ramallah. Retrieved on 6 January 2015 from https://www.ndi.org/files/2068_ps_elect_012506.pdf

⁶ Abu Mazen has won the presidential elections held in 2005 that were boycotted by the majority of Palestinian parties and political factions, including Hamas. Abu Mazen gained 62.52% of the vote against 19.48% for his closest competitor Mustafa Barghouthi. Refer to *Presidential Elections (2005)*.

Problem Statement

In general, semi-presidential political systems, especially nascent ones, often suffer from instability, crisis and regression in many cases⁷. Among such cases is the Palestinian political system. The system experienced instability after the second legislative elections in 2006. In spite of the fact that the state cohabitation rarely occurs generally⁸, it did occur after the second legislative elections in which a "Mixed Electoral System" was used for the first time in Palestinian political system. This leads to major questions about the role of the mixed electoral system in creating the state of cohabitation. In this study, we argue that the attributes of the mixed electoral system used in the second Palestinian legislative elections (mechanical and psychological impacts and disproportionality) helped in creating the state of cohabitation.

According to Duverger's law, the both big parties, Fatah and Hamas must receive more votes in the electoral constituencies than in electoral lists, but in the 2006 elections, the opposite happened. The voting percentage for both Fatah and Hamas decreased, and both parties lost more votes in the constituency tier than in the list tier. Nevertheless, the loss of Hamas (3.45%) was much less than that of Fatah (5.43%). However, a variation exists in this decrease (passive polarization). This leads to the need to address several key questions:

1. Is there any relationship between the passive polarization of votes in favor for the two major parties, unlike Duverger's law, and between the occurrences of cohabitation in the Palestinian political system?
2. What is the relationship between the independent candidates and Hamas' victory in the legislative elections, consequently, creating the state of cohabitation?
3. What is the relationship between the contamination effects of the mixed electoral system and increasing the opportunities for creating cohabitation in the second legislative elections, through facilitating Hamas gaining a majority in the second legislative council?

Theoretical Framework and Previous Literature

In imposed democracies, the state of cohabitation is considered to be rare. The reason is the novelty of the semi-presidential systems compared to purely parliamentary and presidential systems, which widely spread in the nineties after the collapse of the Soviet Union, while the occupation era has been almost finished before this period. For this reason, the topic of cohabitation in the Palestinian political system is unique, as it reflects a case that has not been addressed in previous studies.

The concept of cohabitation appears in semi-presidential systems when the president belongs to one party, and the prime minister belongs to the opposite party, and the president's party is not represented in the ministry⁹. This situation leads to stagnation and/or instability in most cases. These problems appear in the semi-presidential systems, in which the constitution divides executive authority between the president and the prime minister, who are elected for specific periods and who each possess different powers¹⁰.

These semi-presidential systems are divided into two types. The first type is the President-Parliamentary system in which the prime minister is accountable to both the president and parliament. The second type is a Premier-Presidential system, in which the prime minister is only accountable to the parliament. Linz pointed to the potential conflict in semi-presidential systems between the two legitimate authorities, which might lead to instability and the collapse of the political system.¹¹ Most studies found a negative relationship between cohabitation and the

⁷ Robert Elgie (2007), "Varieties of Semi-Presidentialism and Their Impact on Nascent Democracies," *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, Vol.3, issue 2, pp. 53-71. and Matthew S. Shugart and John Carey (1992), *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁸ Robert Elgie (2010), "Semi Presidentialism, Cohabitation and the Collapse of Electoral Democracies 1990–2008." *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 45, issue 1, pp. 29–49. p. 46.

⁹ Robert Elgie and Iain McMenamin (2011), "Explaining the Onset of Cohabitation under Semi-Presidentialism," *Political Studies*, 59 (3), pp. 616-635. p. 620.

¹⁰ Elgie (2010), *Ibid.*

¹¹ Linz, Juan (1990), "The Perils of Presidentialism," *Journal of Democracy*, 1(1), pp. 51-69.

sustainability of democracies,¹² but Elgie and McMenamin¹³ confirm findings of study of Shugart and Carey,¹⁴ that cohabitation becomes much more dangerous when the president's power increases and when the type of the semi-presidential system is the Presidential-Parliamentary. However, analysis of the extant literature provides no coherent theory about the emergence of cohabitation; all the theoretical literature about this phenomenon focuses on its implications for the cohesion of democracies, without identifying the specific factors that help create the occurrence of this phenomenon.

This study focuses on understanding the features of the electoral system that help produce cohabitation, but not on the reasons for the collapse of the cohabitation system. Previous literature has not addressed this relationship, except for Elgie and McMenamin's study¹⁵. However, the connection between party fragmentation and the occurrence of cohabitation was unclear in their study. That is because Elgie and McMenamin's study settles for the assumption that cohabitation is less likely to happen when there are either many or few elected parties¹⁶. In fact, this assumption is very general and unclear, as well as it has not been examined according to the theory of party fragmentation in a parliament.

We asked Elgie about the paradox in his previous article about cohabitation emergence in the cases in which the number of parliamentary parties was many or few, explaining that no theoretical framework existed for this assumption in his study¹⁷. In this context, we argued that the logical assumption was that fewer parties would increase the opportunities for the opposition party to receive 50% of the seats, which would, in turn, increase the prospect of cohabitation. Conversely, if the number of parliamentary parties decreased, the opportunities for cohabitation would be reduced because the opportunity of the opposition party to garner a larger percentage of the votes would be reduced accordingly. Elgie responded that this argument was correct in cases in which presidential and parliamentary elections were not asynchronous in the light of bipartisan systems.

In fact, these objective conditions as explained by Elgie are compatible with those of the Palestinian case. The state of cohabitation in the Palestinian political system resulted from a decrease in the number of effective parliamentary parties. In second Palestinian legislative election year 2006, the number of effective parties decreased to 2.32. This value is close to the party fractionalization in the majority/ Plurality electoral systems, but not mixed systems. The study addresses this dialectic and detects a potential relationship between strategic voting and the emergence of cohabitation, which followed the second legislative elections in Palestine.

The decline in the fragmentation of parties in the second Palestinian legislative elections indicates the great influence of mechanical and psychological factors included in Duverger's law, which may explain the creation of cohabitation in the Palestinian political system, as argued in this current study. Duverger's law states the following¹⁸:

1. The number of small parties is few in pluralist elections (the psychological factor on parties); and
2. Voting is less fractionalization (more polarized) in majority elections in favor for big parties (psychological factor on voters).

According to this law, the effects of psychological and mechanical factors do not apply to majority or proportional representation systems, only to plurality and mixed electoral systems, in which voters do not want to waste their votes even to express their preferences. That is because voters feel sure that their opportunity to successfully express their preferences are limited in a plurality tier. For their part, small parties will also not direct resources like money and efforts to electoral constituencies because winning opportunities are limited in Plurality tier. Therefore, they

¹² Refer to Linz (1990). *Ibid.* and Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach (1993), "Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarism Versus Presidentialism," *World Politics*, 46 (1), pp. 1-22.

¹³ Robert Elgie and Iain McMenamin (2011). *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Matthew S. Shugart and John Carey (1992), *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Robert Elgie and Iain McMenamin (2011). *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹⁷ Robert Elgie (16 sep. 2015), personal communication.

¹⁸ Maurice Duverger (1986), "Duverger's Law: Forty Years Later." Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences," in Lijphart and Grofman (ed). *Choosing An Electoral System: Issues and Alternatives*, New York: Praeger, pp. 69-84. p. 70.

focus on lists tier within the proportional representation system, in which they have greater opportunities to win more seats.

The mechanical effect of electoral systems is determined by how votes are converted into seats. In their study about the psychological and mechanical influence in a number of electoral systems, Blais, Lachat, and Doray-Demers argued that all electoral systems including their methods of votes calculation such as Sainte-Laguë or D'Hondt, are biased towards big parties. The issue here is determined by the number of votes were gained by each party, and then how they were converted into seats¹⁹. The same percentage of the vote, the seats obtained by the party vary according on the applicable electoral system. In this case, disproportionality is considered an important indicator for the bias of these systems towards big parties. In majority/pluralism systems, the degree of disproportionality increases.

New Framework

This study uses the impact of Duverger's law on the second Palestinian legislative elections, in order to explain how Hamas, the opposing party, won the majority of legislative seats, which allows an occurrence of cohabitation. Hamas won that election, and cohabitation resulted because the president was from Fatah. Nonetheless, a consensus model could produce successful governance. Lijphart argued that a consensus model could produce a successful democracy in less divided countries. He said, "The consensus model is obviously also appropriate for less divided but still heterogeneous countries, and it is a reasonable and workable alternative to the Westminster model even in fairly homogeneous countries"²⁰

His theory is based on five critical points. The first is power sharing through wide coalitions. The second is a proportional electoral system. The third is the ability and willingness of various political segments to implement consensus democracy. The fourth is veto power for minorities. The fifth and last is decentralization and federalization. Lijphart believed that the advantages of implanting the consensus model in divided countries were stability, justice, and inclusive political participation by integrating minorities and non-governed groups and parties into the power mechanism of the political system²¹.

Indeed, Lijphart believed that his model could be a suitable model for nascent democracy states, even occupied for ones. He felt that the consensus model could be implanted in Palestine as an occupied country. His advice was to compare democracy in the Palestinian case with his database of consensus variable of thirty-six countries included in his book *Patterns of Democracy*.²²

Palestine democracy is foreign-imposed democracy, which has divided Palestinian society into two opposing groups. The first is pro-authority, which agrees with the occupier; whereas, the second group opposes any relationship with occupier. This division is stronger because it is combined with culture and an ideological split in Palestinian society. In Palestine, two splits exist. The first one is religious, led by Hamas, which is against Oslo agreement. The second is secular-led by Fatah, which is leading the peace process with the occupier.²³

Our model argues that, in light of sharp split in Palestinian society, according to Duverger's law, voters of small parties who are against the Oslo agreement view Israel as occupiers gave their votes to Hamas instead of Fatah at the constituency level. This model argues that the mixed electoral system present in a semi-presidential political system due to the social split in an occupied country is more likely to increase the rate of polarization towards the larger opposing parties in a bi-partisan system, which increases the likelihood of cohabitation.

The others contribution from this article on the theoretical level is to link the split in the community with party fractionalization (polarization). This issue is mainly linked to the consensus theory. As a matter of fact, it is a

¹⁹ André Blais et. al. (2011), "The Mechanical and Psychological Effects of Electoral Systems A Quasi-Experimental Study," *Comparative Political Studies*, 44 (12), pp. 1599-1621.

²⁰ Arend Lijphart (1999), *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, New Haven: Yale University Press. p. 33.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Arend Lijphart (22 March, 2015), personal communication.

²³ Iyad Barghouti (2012), *Political Secularism and Religion in Palestine*, Ramallah: Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies.

theory which differentiates between democracies in homogeneous and heterogeneous communities. The focal point here is that foreign imposed democracies face a great value of division within the community between the two main parts due to a position with or against the occupation. Necessarily, this division significantly affects the polarization of votes in favor for the two main parties in the legislative elections, and then increases the likely hood of occurrence for the state of cohabitation in the mixed electoral systems, because it reduces party fractionalization.

Hypotheses of the Study

This study assumes that in the cases of non-synchronization of the presidential and parliamentary elections in bipartisan systems, a larger vote share of main opposition party compared to the ruling party would lead the opposition party to win a majority of parliamentary seats. This leads in most cases to produce the state of cohabitation in the semi-presidential political systems, in case the President belongs to a political party.

In fact, polarization in favor for the big parties is a form of strategic voting; in this case, the voters divided their electoral ticket between more than one party. In general, the mixed electoral system encourages this kind of strategic voting for several reasons: First: state of confusion that affects voter as a result of the presence of two electoral tiers; proportional and a plurality/majority. Second, the failure of some smaller parties that compete in the proportional tier to nominate their candidates in plurality/majority tier due to the impact of the Duverger's psychological law. Third: the novelty of using the mixed electoral system by both voters and parties, and lack of experience in dealing with this type, which leads to confusing in voting and candidacy. Because of these factors, it can be concluded that the mixed electoral system is more likely to produce a strategic voting, and necessarily, this electoral system reduces party fractionalization. In this article, We refer to polarization in voting as a synonym for low value of party fractionalization, and necessarily, the main contribution that I'm trying to point out is that cohabitation is more likely to occur in the case with a low value of party fractionalization (the existence of fewer parliamentary parties), or polarization in favor of big parties. As the mixed electoral systems are more likely to produce strategic voting as we explained earlier, cohabitation is more likely to occur in mixed electoral systems. Thus, the first hypothesis of this study is:

H1: In the cases of mixed electoral system, cohabitation is more likely to occur when the strategic voting increases.

Focusing on a variable that may explain the increasing possibility of creating cohabitation in semi-presidential systems is important. The degree of polarization exhibited in voting for the big parties is greatly influenced by the attitudes of voters about the reality of political and ideological divisions in the Palestinian society that has resulted from the relationship with the occupation. This polarization has increased the chances of the two major parties receiving a high percentage of votes in the mixed electoral system, and, as a result, has increased the opportunities to create a state of cohabitation and for the two major parties to receive the largest number of seats, according to Duverger's law. The paradoxical attitude of the Palestinian political parties was reflected not only in the political divisions in Palestinian society but also in the process of voting in the legislative elections of 2006. Thus, the second hypothesis of this study is:

H2: In the cases of non-synchronization of the presidential and parliamentary elections, cohabitation is more likely to occur when the polarization between the two parties voting varies in favor for the opposition party, depending on the attitudes of smaller parties towards the relationship with the occupation.

The paradoxical attitude may also, explain the reason behind the mismatch of strategic voting with Duverger's law in the Palestinian case, which has led to an increasing number of independent candidates in the constituencies. In fact, Moser and Shiner noticed this problem in Armenia, Russia and Ukraine, which lead to an increasing number of independent candidates²⁴. This point, perhaps explains the large loss of Fatah in districts, which was larger than

²⁴ Robert Moser and Ethan Scheiner (2004), "Mixed Electoral Systems and Electoral System Effects: Controlled Comparison and Cross-National Analysis," *Electoral Studies*, 23 (4), pp. 575-599.

the losses of Hamas. This was due to the high number of dissident independent from Fatah as indicated by previous studies²⁵. Accordingly, the third hypothesis of the study is:

H3: In cases of non-synchronization of presidential and parliamentary elections, cohabitation is more likely because of the impact of rising numbers of independent candidates on the ruling party compared to the opposition party depending on the degree of institutional partisanship.

Mechanical factors could be expected to be responsible for Hamas and Fatah having a large share of seats in the second Legislative Council, and necessarily increasing Hamas' chance of winning in the majority of these seats. One way to conduct this analysis is to utilize the variable of proportionality. Disproportionality expresses the ratio between the number of votes that have been obtained and the number of seats gained. The degree of disproportionality varies inversely with the size of constituencies; the more the electoral constituencies expand, the less the disproportionality.²⁶ In fact, the degree of disproportionate reflects the bias of the electoral system towards big parties, which punishes small parties. With the same share of the votes, big parties gain more seats than in the lists system seats than do small parties.²⁷ Thus, the following hypothesis is posited.

H4: In cases of non-synchronization of the presidential and parliamentary elections, cohabitation is more likely to occur when the degree of disproportion increases.

Methodology and Data Analysis

In order to test the first hypothesis, we used two ways in order to test application of strategic voting in second legislative election. If we find this type of strategic voting in this mixed electoral system, we can assume that cohabitation will be occurred due to that effectiveness. The first way is to compare ENP in both district and list tiers in order to follow the impact of Duverger law.

The results of the second Palestinian legislative election, shown in Table 1, Indicate that a mixed electoral system has led to low value of party fractionalization, where the number of competing parties in list tier was 11 party parties, while this number was reduced in the constituencies to six parties. On another hand, the number of winning parties in list tier was six including Fatah and Hamas, while this number is reduced to only two parties in constituencies, and accordingly, the effective number of parties (ENPs) was reduced from 2.65 in constituencies to 1.88 in list tier. These results indicate firstly that effective number of parties in both list and district tiers are low.²⁸ Besides that, the results indicate secondly that strategic voting occurred according to fewer numbers of winning and competing parties in constituencies than list tier. That fact explains how psychological impact of the Duverger law affected on both voters and parties, even the four smaller parties that competed in constituencies did not nominate only 34 candidates from the total 66 constituencies' seats of which 23 candidates from the list of Abu Ali Mustafa alone. This explains that the majority of the smaller parties in the constituencies were competed weekly and just only on the front seats of the constituencies seats.

The second way to monitor the relationship of the electoral system with strategic voting is to compare the percentage of votes share obtained by the party in the constituency and between the percentages of votes shares obtained in the list. If the ratio is equal to one, it means that there is no strategic voting or Duverger law impact. If the ratio is larger than the one, it means that there is a strategic vote, and if it is less than one, it means no strategic voting, as the party's candidates lost votes in in constituencies more than those obtained by the party in the list tier. In that calculating of votes, we used an average of votes for the party in the constituency because of nature of the electoral bloc voting system.

²⁵ Refer to Alaa Lahlouh (2007), "Results of Legislative Election, Strength and Weakness Points in Electoral Constituencies," in Al-Shiqaqi and Harb (ed). *Second Palestinian Elections: Presidential, Legislative, and Local Governance 2005, 2006* (1st ed.), Ramallah: Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research. pp. 111-146.

²⁶ Arend Lijphart (1999), *Ibid.*

²⁷ André Blais and R. Kenneth Carty (1991), "The Psychological Impact of Electoral Laws: Measuring Duverger's Elusive Factor," *British Journal of Political Science*, 21 (1), pp. 79-93.

²⁸ Note that ENPs for mixed electoral system in second Palestinian legislative election is 2.31.

Applying comparison in the share of the vote for parties between the constituencies and the list, we find that the voters in the constituencies were more likely to vote strategic for Hamas, compared to the Fatah. We find that is clear in three constituencies; Qalqilya, Bethlehem, and Rafah, where the rate was 1.1, 1.1, 1.02 respectively. In contrast, Fatah did not have any strategic voting only in one small constituency; Jericho (1.2). From another side, Hamas has maintained almost votes without any loss in two constituencies; Ramallah and Al Bireh, and Deir Al-Balah, while it lost some votes in three constituencies; Gaza, north of Gaza, and Khan Younis. In contrast, Fatah lost voices in the majority of constituencies, where the percentage of votes obtained by Fatah in the constituencies divided by Fateh's votes were obtained in list tier is 82% rate. In contrast, the very same rate for Hamas reached to 95%. This shows that voters were closer to reaching strategic voting for Hamas than Fatah, however, that the average also clarify that both parties lost votes in the constituency, but the percentage of votes were lost by Fatah were more than Hamas.

In order to test the second hypotheses, the small political parties in each constituency were classified in terms of their attitudes toward Oslo (peace agreement), based on the electoral program for each list or party and its political statements and declarations of its officials. Once so categorized, the votes of the pro-Oslo parties were added to each other, and the votes of parties that opposed Oslo were also added to each other. Then, descriptive statistics and regression using the ordinary least squares (OLS)²⁹ method were used to determine if any changes were brought about by the differences in voting patterns of small parties based on their attitudes toward Oslo. Through this process, a determination can be made as to whether the vote shares of small parties according to their attitude towards Oslo did or did not have any influence on strategic voting in favor for Hamas, the opposition party, and the direction of this relationship if any. The results will indicate the amount of either the increase or the decrease in the percentage of votes for Fatah and Hamas separately that were due to changes in the percentage voting for small parties between constituency votes and electoral list (strategic voting).

An analysis of the categorization of party materials leads to the conclusion that the list of Abu Ali Mustafa, the Albadil List, the Independent Palestine list, and the list of Martyr Abu Abbas should considered to be Oslo opposition parties, while the Third Way List, the list of Freedom and Independence, the list of Freedom and Social Justice, the list of Palestinian Justice and the Al-Waa'd list should be considered to be pro-Oslo.

Table 2 below presents the descriptive statistical analysis for data collected from 16 electoral constituencies, which represents all the population of the study. This table shows the following:

1. Fatah lost more votes in constituencies than did Hamas, as the average of the votes of Hamas was 2.1% of the total votes in the constituency, while the rate was 6.5% for Fatah.
2. For Fatah, the sharp decline in the percentage of constituency votes represented negative polarization with a higher vote average for Oslo opposition parties (11.1%) compared to (9.3%) for pro-Oslo parties. Hamas had a lower percentage of polarization compared to Fatah, which had a higher average of the Oslo opponents' votes.
3. The proportions votes average of Fatah independent dissident candidates (5.95%) was slightly lower than the proportion of negative polarization for the Fatah movement in the constituencies (6.5%). This demonstrates that, if Fatah had not lost these votes in the constituency elections, Fatah would have lost 0.54 % of the votes on average. This percentage is less than the votes lost average for Hamas, which was 2.1%.

Table 1 Major indicators for the results of Palestinian political parties in second legislative election

Indicator	Value	Percentage %
Votes number in Districts (Hamas)	1932168	41
Votes number in list (Hamas)	440409	44.45
Votes number in Districts (Fateh)	1684441	36

²⁹ The least squares method was used in the analysis of regression relationships, according to the estimated number of votes according to averages of study variables.

Votes number in list (Fateh)	410554	41.43
Saets number in Districts (Hamas)	45	68
Saets number in list (Hamas)	29	44.45
Saets number in Districts (Fateh)	17	25.7
Saets number in list (Fateh)	28	42.4
Votes Average for Pro-Oslo parties	38916	N
Votes Average for Oslo opposition parties	100994	N
Number of seats gained by small parties in district	0	0
Number of seats gained by small parties in list	9	13.6
Independents votes in district	953465	20
Votes average for senior independents	115806	N
Votes average for junior independents	21566	N
Votes average for dissident independent from Fateh	260784	N
Number of seats for independents in district	4	6
Number of Hamas nominated candidates in district	56	13.5
Number of Fateh nominated candidates in district	66	15.9
Number of independents nominated candidates in district	258	62
Effective number of parties upon votes (ENPv)	3.26	8
Effective number of parties upon seats (ENPS)	2.31	-
Disproportionality rate (Lsq) for mixed system	10.6	-
Disproportionality rate (Lsq) for list tier	0.8	-
Disproportionality rate (Lsq) for district	22.5	-

N: Un-Unknown value.

Resources: Aggregate data from Central election committee (2006, pp 89-119; pp 14-141)

Table 2 Descriptive analyses for aggregate data (n=16)

	Lowest point	Highest point	Mean	Standard regression
Polarization for Hamas	-6.5	2.9	-2.0869	2.44761
Polarization for Fatah	-14.3	7.5	-6.5187	5.16168
Oslo opposition parties	3.9	19.8	11.0875	4.76485
Pro-Oslo parties	2.0	45.5	9.3438	11.28421
Constituency size Junior	1.0	9.0	4.125	2.39096
	0.98	4.7	2.2613	1.02269

independent candidates				
Senior independent candidates	3.5	23.3	11.8125	6.34632
Fatah dissident independents	0.0	17.9	5.9563	4.45855

Note: All data were calculated using the mean, and then classified by using percentages, except the electoral constituency size, which was calculated using the number of seats.

The data in Table 2 above was classified according to the variables' values means. These data were divided into either less than or more than the mean of the values of independent variables, which were: Oslo-opposition parties, pro-Oslo parties, the size of the electoral constituency, in addition to variables associated with independent candidates. Each variable will be divided into two groups: the first group comprises the values that are lower than the general variable mean at the constituency level; whereas, the second group comprises the variable values that are higher than the general variable value at the constituency level. Then, these values are examined according to the constituency with the values of polarization of both Fatah and Hamas. The next step is finding the correlations and regression between these variables. If as the result produces significant differences between the lowest and highest values of the variable, this denotes that a contrast exists between the positive or negative polarization values.

Oslo Opposition Parties

Data recorded an increase above this average (11.1%) in eight constituencies, which were: Jerusalem, Jenin, Tubas, Nablus, Salfit, Ramallah, Jericho and Bethlehem. This rate dropped in the remaining eight constituencies: Tulkarem, Qalqiliya, Hebron, North Gaza, Gaza City, Khan Yunis, Deir al-Balah and Rafah.

The descriptive statistical analysis of the data shows that constituencies with a higher level of votes for Oslo opposition parties were associated with a higher level of negative polarization for Hamas than were those constituencies with a lower level of votes for Oslo opposition parties. Hamas lost more votes in constituencies in which votes of Oslo opposition parties were higher, with a loss average of 2.82% in these constituencies compared to 1.89% in constituencies with a lower level of Oslo opposition votes. In parallel, Fatah lost a higher mean percentage of votes in constituencies characterized by higher level of votes for Oslo opposition parties 7.46 % versus 5.58 %. However, Hamas' loss of votes in constituencies with a higher weight for Oslo opposition parties was 0.93%, which was less than the rate of votes lost by Fatah which was 1.885%. This inferred that Fatah was more negatively affected than Hamas, as a result of the increase in the Oslo opposition vote.

The results of regression corresponded with previous descriptive analyses, in that a medium correlation between the two variables; Polarization for Hamas and Votes of Oslo opposition parties, (-0.505) was found. Table (3) shows the most important results in this relationship as follows:

1. Votes of opposition parties to Oslo had a negative effect on the polarization of Hamas in terms of the number of votes with one unit; polarization to Hamas is decreased by 0.285 units.
2. The more votes of opposition parties to Oslo, the more polarization decreased for Fatah as a one unit increase in the opposition parties decreased polarization to Fatah by 0.655.
3. Fatah was less polarized by the opposition parties to Oslo than was Hamas.

Pro-Oslo Parties

The data show that pro-Oslo constituencies had a higher number of votes in Tulkarem, Qalqiliya, Salfit, Jericho, and north of Gaza, while these votes decreased in Jerusalem, Jenin, Tubas, Nablus, Ramallah and Al Bireh, Bethlehem, Hebron, Gaza City, Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah. This shows that the general trend of this variable is a decline in the majority of constituencies.

The descriptive statistical analysis of data shows that the results of the five constituencies, with relatively high votes for pro-Oslo parties (higher than the 9.30% average) were associated with an average Hamas loss of votes that was 2.56% higher than those constituencies associated with a lower level of votes in favor of the Oslo Accords (1.87%). This indicated that supporters of small parties did not give votes to Hamas. In contrast, the results demonstrated that when pro-Oslo votes increased, the loss of Fatah votes in these constituencies ranged from 8.01% to 3.1%.

The results of regression corresponded with the previous descriptive analyses, as shown in Table 3 below. A strong negative relationship existed between the Polarization and pro-Oslo (-0.781) variables, and these results show that the votes of the Oslo supporters may negatively affect both Fatah and Hamas almost equally. The decreased polarization of both Fatah and Hamas indicated that the proponents of Oslo withheld their voices from both Fatah and Hamas. In a sense, the voting of pro-Oslo supporters was neutral for both the two major parties.

Independent Candidates

The main contribution of this study is the relationship of the independent with strategic voting in mixed electoral systems that have a bloc voting as the other tier of these systems. The majority of studies have looked at independents candidates as they are one of the main reasons occurred split of electoral ticket and the weakness of strategic voting. This study narrows its unit analysis in terms of independent candidates by classifying them as the junior independent candidates and the senior independent candidates, in order to track their impact on strategic voting in favor for the two major parties, and necessarily to produce a state of cohabitation. The idea here is a high number of independent candidates in the light of other political variables, such as dissidence inside parties, is encouraged by electoral bloc voting system. We argue that the effectiveness of junior independent differs from seniors on polarization in voting, depends on dissidents' percentage of senior and junior independents candidates in ruling and opposition party juniors and seniors' independents.

To examine hypothesis three, the share of independent candidates (senior and junior)³⁰ in each constituency was measured as an independent factor. Then, descriptive statistics and regression using ordinary least squares (OLS) was used to search for the relationship between the candidates and two major parties Fatah and Hamas.

Junior Independents

Data recorded seven constituencies in which junior independents votes exceeded the overall rate (2.26%) which were: Jerusalem, Jenin, Tulkarm, Tubas, Ramallah and Al Bireh, Bethlehem, and Hebron. This rate was reduced in the remaining nine constituencies, which were: Nablus, Qalqiliya, Salfit, Jericho, northern Gaza Strip, Gaza City, Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah. The data showed that all Gaza province constituencies had a marked decrease in junior independent votes compared to the West Bank.

The descriptive statistical data analysis shows that the negative polarization of Hamas increased from 1.61% on average in the constituencies in which a smaller number of junior independents were present to 2.69% in constituencies in which a high number of junior independents were present. In the case for Fatah, negative polarization rose from 4.05% in the constituencies of with fewer votes for junior independents to 9.68% in the constituencies with higher votes for junior independents. In other words, both of the two major parties, Fatah and Hamas, lost more votes in constituencies with more junior independents compared to those constituencies with less junior independents.. However, Fatah was more affected by the increasing votes for young independent than was Hamas. Fatah lost an average of 5.63% of the votes, while the rate was much lower than Hamas, which lost an average of 1.08% of the votes.

³⁰ Independent candidates were divided into senior and junior candidates in terms of the number Constituency seats. For example, in a constituency with four seats, such as the Jenin Constituency, the four independents with the highest number of votes were classified as senior independents, and the rest of the independents were classified as junior independents. The rate of their votes was calculated using the averages method.

The results of the regression in Table 3 below show the negative relationship between the junior independents variable and the polarization of both Fatah and Hamas. A strong negative relationship exists between these two variables with -0.701, and -0.776 for Hamas and Fatah respectively. The results also indicate that Fatah was more affected than Hamas because of the existence of junior independents because Hamas had β (-1.826), which was less than β for Fatah (-2.989).

Senior Independents

Seven constituencies had votes for senior independents exceeded the mean of this variable (11.8%). These were in Tulkarm, Tubas, Nablus, Salfit, Ramallah and Al Bireh, Bethlehem and Gaza City, while this rate decreased in the remaining nine constituencies of Jerusalem, Jenin, Hebron, Qalqilya, Jericho, north of Gaza, Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah. These data also illustrate that the majority of constituencies in Gaza provinces, except for Gaza City, voted for senior independents votes in comparison to West Bank constituencies.

The descriptive statistical analysis of data shows that that the negative polarization of Hamas decreased slightly from 2.23% to 1.89% in the constituencies in which a smaller number of senior independents were present in constituencies in which a higher number of senior independents were present the size of the decline was on average 0.34%. In contrast, the negative polarization of Fatah rose from 4.86% of the votes to 8.64% in constituencies with higher votes for senior independents' constituencies, so the size of the decline was 3.78%. According to this data, then, the impact of senior independents was stronger on Fatah than on Hamas, Fatah lost more votes in the constituencies in which senior Independents votes increased. The regression relationship between the two variables as shown in Table 3 below demonstrates the existence of a negative medium relationship between Fatah and senior independents (-0.585), while the relationship was very weak for Hamas (-0.234), and the β in the case of Fatah was -0.274 while it was just -0.07 for Hamas.

Dissident Independent from Fatah

Previous results have indicated that Fatah candidates have been adversely affected by the presence of senior independents in electoral constituencies. The reason is largely due to an increase in the proportion of independent candidates fragmented from the Fatah movement³¹ in relationship to the total number of independents. Therefore, a list of independent dissident candidates from fragmented Fatah was drawn and classified. Then, the relationship between them and the polarization of the two big parties was analyzed.

Data recorded six constituencies in which votes of independents who had split from Fatah exceeded the overall rate of 5.95%. These were in Jerusalem, Tulkarem, Tubas, Salfit, Bethlehem and Deir al-Balah, while this rate decreased in the remaining ten constituencies in Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah and Al Bireh, Jericho, Hebron, North Gaza, Gaza City, Khan Younis and Rafah. These data showed that the majority of Gaza province constituencies, except for Deir al-Balah, voted for independents who had split from Fatah constituencies as compared to the West Bank constituencies.

The descriptive statistical analysis of the data show that the negative polarization for Fatah increased from 4.69% to 9.56% with a 4.87% average loss of votes by Fatah in constituencies. This is a high percentage (4.87%) and represents the negative effects of independent candidates who split from Fatah in that Fatah lost a high number of votes in constituencies. Hamas was clearly not as much affected by independents who had split from the party, as the polarization rate that ranged from 2.106% in constituencies in which dissidents were less, compared to 2.05% in constituencies that had more dissidents. The regression in Table 3 below shows a strong negative relationship

³¹ In determining dissident independent candidates from Fatah, the researcher depended mainly on the list of those expelled from Fatah by Fatah court decisions to expel them for competing in electoral constituencies in the second legislative elections without having the permission of the party. To see the names on this list, refer to (Palestine Network for Dialogue, 2006).

between Fatah and dissident independents (-0.705), while the strength of the relationship between dissident independents and Hamas was much less (-0.399). Thus, although both parties were impacted negatively by dissident independents, Fatah was more affected by its dissident independents than was Hamas.

29 dissidents independents candidates from senior independents, gained 153,237 votes, compared to 47 dissidents independents candidates from junior independents, gained fewer votes 106 637 votes in the face of rising their average votes compared to district size . These differences lead to an increased likelihood for any of the senior dissident's candidates to gain a majority of votes, while this possibility was reduced for junior dissident candidates, due to the high weight of votes for senior dissidents candidates (16.1%) compared to 11.2% for junior dissidents candidates. These data demonstrate that Fatah was influenced by senior dissidents independents adult independent more than Hamas, as we can say that Fatah competed itself on the front seats in the constituencies and this caused its loss.

Table 3 The results of linear regression between dependent and independent variable

Independent variable	Dependent variable							
	Polarization for Hamas				Polarization for Fatah			
	R	R2	B	Sig	R	R2	B	Sig
Votes of Oslo opposition parties	0.505	0.255	0.285-	0.046	0.784	0.615	0.655-	0.000
Votes of Pro-Oslo parties	0.781	0.610	1.192-	0.000	0.513	0.263	1.156-	0.042
Votes of Junior candidates	0.701	0.491	1.826-	0.003	0.776	0.603	2.989-	0.000

Note: OLS method, with 16 samples

Disproportionality

Hamas won 41% of the total constituency votes, which entitled the party to get 45 seats allocated to constituency (68%) voting, while Fatah received 36% of votes in the constituencies, which entitled the party to receive 17 seats (25.7%). Although the difference between the votes that Fatah and Hamas obtained was only 5% in favor for Hamas, the difference between the percentage of seats was 42.3% in favor of Hamas. The comparison between the two ratios illustrates the size for disproportionality that resulted from constituencies system in the mixed system, which was skewed towards Hamas.

The Advantage Curve for the second Palestinian legislative elections shows how disproportionality affected the party system and the government formed as a result of this election. If advantage ratio is higher than 1, this ratio indicates that the ratio of the party share of seats exceeds the proportion of votes obtained. Conversely, if the ratio is less than one, this shows the extent to which the proportion of obtained seats decreased from the party's share of votes.

The Table 4 below compares the percentage of the advantage ratio for the two big parties at the constituency level as well as with respect to the mixed system as a whole in order to compare between the two percentages and to find out which party suffered or benefited from the two systems. The data contained in this comparison process shows that Hamas earned about 67% of the seats more than its fair share of seats as demonstrated by the votes in constituencies system, while in the mixed system, Hamas gained about 35% more seats than its fair share of the votes would indicate at the macro level. As for Fatah, exactly the opposite was true. The party lost about 28% of the seats compared to its share of the votes would have indicated. Moreover, the rate of disadvantage also accompanied Fatah in the mixed electoral system results, losing about 7% of the seats as its share of the votes would have indicated.

Table 4 Advantage percentage between electoral constituencies and mixed systems

List name	Votes % in constituency	Constituency seats number	Constituency seats %	Advantage percent in constituency (S%.V%)	Votes % in mixed system	Seats % in mixed system	Advantage % in mixed system (S%/V%)*
Change and Reform List (Hamas)	40.8	45.0	68.2	1.670494	41.4	56.1	1.352688
Fatah List	35.6	17.0	25.8	0.723886	36.6	34.1	0.93157
Abu Ali Mustafa List	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	2.3	0.74

Note: *The advantage percentage in the mixed system was calculated by summing the votes in constituencies and votes in the list, and then finding the percentage. Source: Central Election Commission – Palestine (2006, 120; 140-141). The researcher calculated the advantage ration.

The above results indicate that, whenever the share of big party votes increased, the proportion of advantage increased, and that when the party's share of the votes decreased, the proportion of advantage decreased until it reached the level of disadvantage, as happened with Fatah. Fatah suffered greatly from the biases inherent in both the constituency and mixed systems due to a lower share of the votes compared with Hamas. The impact of the contamination effects of the mixed system did not seriously affect the advantage proportion, because it did not reduce the number of the seats that Hamas gained in the constituencies (only 32%), while this mixed system could not reduce the total percentage of Fatah lost in the constituencies (only 21%). This means that, even if the mixed system could reduce the high disproportionality in constituencies, it was unable to convert the results from a disadvantage to an advantage or even create a balance. In other words, Fatah which lost many seats due to plurality system (FPTP) could not compensate for its loss of seats under the proportional system used in lists (PR), which negatively influenced the overall final number of seats. Hamas received an advantage, giving it more seats within the constituencies system and was not seriously affected by the lost seats in the lists system, this helped Hamas win the majority of seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council.

An analysis of the Break-Even Point also shows the mechanical impact of the electoral system³². The second Palestinian legislative elections show the influence of Contamination Effect of the mixed system by increasing the degree of disproportionality in these results, which led to Hamas's victory and Fatah's loss. The relationship line for Proportionality Profiles represents the regression relationship between Y and X, where Y represents the proportion of seats for each party, divided by the proportion of votes obtained by each party. X represents the percentage of votes obtained by party from the total votes.

The value of the Break-Even Point was calculated on the mixed system as a whole and equaled 20.88%, which was the percentage at which Y should intersect with X. In the Proportional Profile, the horizontal line intersected at less than 40%. That indicates that the mixed electoral system used in Palestinian legislative election punished small parties less.

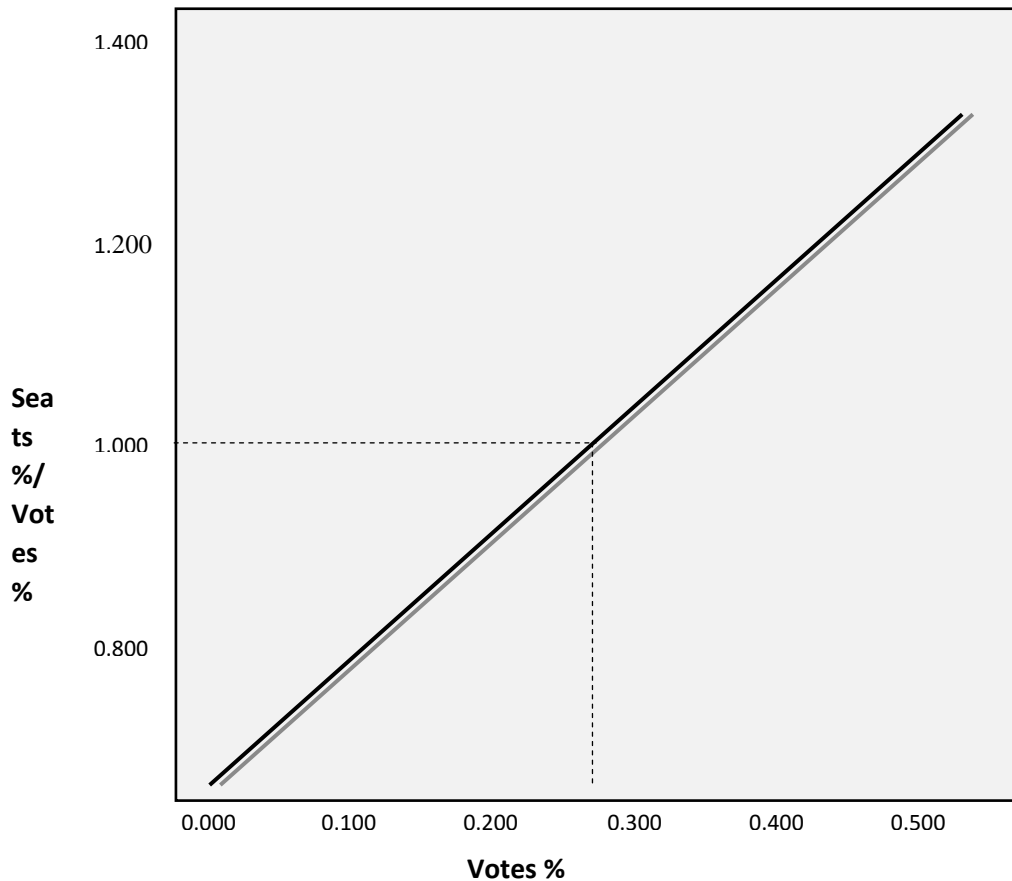
Then, a regression line between the Advantage Ratio and vote's percentage in the mixed system as a whole was created. As it is clear from Figure 1 below, the Y curve, which is the Proportional Profile, intersected with the vote rate X at 28% in the mixed system, which is less than 40%, which represents the intersection point in the ideal model of the proportional profile. However, this figures is still large, suggesting that the effect of the mixed system

³² The Break-Even Point is calculated using Taagepera and Shugarts' formula $B = 100\%(1/2)^{Nv-1}$, Nv equal number of effective parties (as cited in Herron & Nishikawa, 2001).

as a whole punished small parties more. This result is close to the hypothesis that the mechanical effect of mixed electoral system favoured the two big parties, Hamas and Fatah, but particularly favored Hamas.

INSERT GRAPH OF FIGURE 1

Figure 1. Proportional profile curve in Palestinian second mixed electoral system



The previous analysis shows a positive relationship between the high degree of disproportionality and the victory of Hamas in the constituencies with an overwhelming majority, and, made the Hamas party, the main opposition party, in the second Legislative council. The results show that the majority system, including the high degree of disproportionality, led Hamas to get seats more than the proportion of votes obtained would have suggested as compared to Fatah. The mixed system as a whole led to the punishment of smaller parties, which led to the division of parliamentary seats between the two major parties. This, in turn led to the increased opportunity of Hamas ultimately to win the elections. This explains precisely the decline in the effective number of parliamentary parties in these elections, which did not exceed 2.31, as the decline in this rate resulted in a greater opportunity for the two major parties to win the elections decisively.

Discussion

The results of this study are several. First, are the findings related to the existence of strategic voting (polarization) for the two big parties. Previous studies have shown that Duverger's law to some extent affects both voters and political parties in the legislative elections in which, the two major parties lost votes in the constituency elections compared to those in the list section. However, the results also indicated important differences between the polarization rates of Fatah and Hamas. The negative polarization at the level of candidates of the party as a whole was less for Hamas compared to Fatah. The occurrence of the negative polarization in the second Palestinian legislative elections, which is contrary to the Duverger's law, can, in part be explained in light of the following:

1. The high proportion of independent candidates;

2. The weakness of partisan institutionalization in the Palestinian political system;
3. The lack of knowledge among political parties about how to deal with the block vote system in the mixed electoral system;
4. The state of confusion that struck the Palestinian voter;
5. The lack of clear information about pre-election polls and the increasing error rate;
6. The big size of the constituencies; and
7. The increased number of non-ideological party supporters.

Second, are the results associated with the existence of a relationship between polarization and the attitudes toward Oslo. Previous results show a negative relationship between the size of the opposition votes to Oslo and between both polarization and polarization of Hamas and Fatah. The results indicated that Fatah was more negatively influenced by the votes of Oslo opponents than was Hamas. This is an important result: that strategic voting was more sensitive towards the attitudes from Oslo. This can be explained as follows:

1. The great negative effect of the factors that reduced the polarization and strategic voting in favor for Hamas (and to some extent to Fatah) was much larger than the size of the positive effect of the supporters of Oslo opposition parties in its relationship with the polarization. In other words, the situation of the Oslo opposition party supporters is similar to voters who did not give their votes to Hamas in constituency elections for many reasons. These included the effect of independents, a lack of knowledge and experience in a mixed electoral system, the difficulty in dealing with the block voting system. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that the same negative relationship existed between pro-Oslo parties and Fatah movement; and
2. The nominating of candidates by the list of Abu Ali Mustafa, which is considered to be a small party, in most constituencies. This directed many voters of Oslo opposition parties to this list instead of being directed to Hamas according to strategic voting. The two parties represent the most important opposition parties, and the list of Abu Ali Mustafa produced polarization in the three major constituencies of Nablus, Bethlehem and Gaza City.

Third, the relationship between polarization and independent candidates was a factor as well. A comparison of the affected polarization of the two major parties Fatah and Hamas as a result of vote for senior and junior independents, shows that Hamas lost an average of 1.08% of the vote due to the rise of junior independents votes versus 0.34% due to the rise of senior independents votes. Fatah lost on average 5.63% due to the rise of junior independents votes versus 3.78% due to the rise of senior independents votes. First, these data indicate that both senior and junior independents deprived Fatah and Hamas of a percentage of their votes, but this percentage for Fatah was higher than that for Hamas. That's why there are high rate of dissident independent from Fatah in senior independents. Second, this data shows that the votes of junior independents had a bigger influence on the loss of votes for the two major parties in the constituencies than did senior independent votes. The third implication is that Fatah was more affected than Hamas with the rise the votes of each of the senior and junior independents.

The above analysis proved hypothesis three; the negative relationship between the increasing numbers of independent candidates (in total and depending on their variations) by polarization in favor for the two major parties, which reduced the polarization for both Fatah and Hamas. However, Fatah was the most affected by independent candidates because of the candidates who split from itself, and so the opportunities for the opposition party, Hamas, increased in winning a majority of seats in the constituencies, which created a state of cohabitation.

Fourth, the results of the study indicate a large amount of disproportionality that occurred as a result of the constituencies system in the mixed electoral system. The degree of disproportionality in constituencies system has reached 22.5, versus 10.6 in the mixed system as a whole. This high-degree of disproportionality led Hamas, which gained only 5% more votes more than Fatah, to get 42.3% more constituency seats more than Fatah. According to previous literature (Herron & Nishikawa, 2001; Cox, 1997) the determination of advantage ratios in elections, helps to know the degree of disproportionality, and how it affects small parties in favor of large parties. The results of this current study indicated that in the constituencies system, Hamas gained about 67% of seats as a bonus compared to its actual share of votes, while in the mixed electoral system, Hamas earned 35% of the seats as a bonus compared to its share of votes at the macro level. Fatah, which did not have an advantage in either system, lost in constituencies 28% of seats compared with the votes it obtained; Hamas lost 7% of seats as a decrease of its share

of votes. This result shows that the mixed system reduced the degree of punishing small parties by electoral system, but not substantially, which corresponds to third hypothesis.

Conclusion

The study recommends that researchers search for polarization trends and their relationships with divisions in society. Most theoretical literature in the Duverger field has focused on proving or denying the application of Duverger's law or splitting electoral tickets, and reasons behind this application. However, in this study we propose that researchers should focus on the mechanisms through which votes of small parties go to the two major parties, through focusing on the concept of sharp political and ideological divisions in society, which are usually represented by the major parties. Based on this division, researchers can interpret variations in positive/negative polarization among major parties. In this regard, this framework should be applied in non-homogeneous countries, i.e., those divided by political and ideological attitudes, like most of the Third World countries. This framework can also be applied in imposed democracies such as Kurdistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, in which sharp ideological and political divisions exist in a society with respect to their attitudes towards the occupation. Necessarily, testing this framework in such countries, will contribute to identifying polarization trends for major parties, and thus can be useful for both big and small parties in managing electoral campaigns.

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