



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***METATHEORETICAL STUDY OF LIJPHART'S POWER SHARING
THEORY***

RAMIN MAFAKHERI

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THEORY**

By

RAMIN MAFAKHERI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2015

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DEDICATION

TO MY NATION, WHICH STRUGGLES FOR FREEDOM



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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in the
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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RAMIN MAFAKHERI

July 2015

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Faculty: Human Ecology

This research provides a metatheoretical study of Lijphart's power-sharing theory. The purpose of the study is to analyze the various factors contributing to the formulation and development of Lijphart's theory by using metatheorizing methodology *Mu* through two of its four dimensions: the internal-social dimension and the internal-intellectual dimension. It goes beyond available literature on Lijphart's theory, to not only present his approach, but to understand the roots and underlying structure of his theory.

The researcher, by using *Mu*, realized that the theoretical framework and underlying structure of power sharing theory as an empirical and normative democratic theory can be determined by basing them on four different but overlapping categories that shape the findings of this study: First, Lijphart's critical studies of two major democratic theories; second, examining his background, intellectual activities, connections and pursuits; third, discovering the empirical and philosophical roots of the theory, analyzing the methods what Lijphart used in a comparative method and comparative politics; and fourth determining the main theoretical contexts that provided a theoretical framework for theory-building.

Several ways were used to get access the information – primary and secondary data – needed in this study. While, articles, books and some other important documents were used for secondary data collection, interview is the technique of primary data collection in this research. Specifically, e-mail interview was chosen to provide appropriate information to achieve the goals of the study; it included the email interviews with the theorist and also some other eminent political scientists.

Accordingly, in the first chapter on the findings, the researcher discovered the theoretical pillars and boundaries of Lijphart's theory. It was also determined that the roots of power sharing theory originated in the classical theories of horizontal and vertical division of power. Furthermore, it was shown that power sharing theory should initially be recognized as the outcome of Lijphart's critical studies on two main democratic theories from the 1960s; Almond's typology of political systems and Lipset's theory of cross-cutting cleavages.

In addition, in a separate chapter, it was demonstrated that how the internal-social factors of the theorist's background (family and education), and his intellectual pursuits (activities and intellectual connections) formed the basis of his democratic approach. The researcher also in the two last chapters on the findings focused on the internal-intellectual factors; in this regard, it was demonstrated that comparative politics, comparative methods, and new institutionalism have been the main influential methodological and theoretical contexts in the construction and development of power sharing theory.

Furthermore, the researcher found that while power sharing theory is principally recognized among the democratic theories that merely deal with democratic institutions, this theory should also be considered to some extent from the cultural perspective. In this regard, in an interview, Steiner in the critique of Lijphart's theory argued that, in order to institute democratic stability, "institutions are a necessary but not sufficient condition, you need also culture". Lijphart confirmed that "I agree with Jurg Steiner that both culture and structure are needed but I would also point out that they interact with each other." Therefore, in this research, power sharing theory was considered from both institutional and cultural perspectives.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senate Universiti Putra Malaysia adalah sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KAJIAN METATEORI MENGENAI TEORI PERKONGSIAN KUASA LIJPHART

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Kajian ini memberikan satu kajian metateori mengenai teori perkongsian kuasa Lijphart. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menganalisis pelbagai faktor yang menyumbang kepada pembentukan dan pembangunan teori Lijphart dengan menggunakan metodologi metateori *Mu* melalui dua daripada empat dimensi iaitu: dimensi dalaman-sosial dan dimensi dalaman-intelek. Kajian ini menjangkau literatur yang sedia ada mengenai teori Lijphart, untuk bukan sahaja membentangkan pendekatan beliau, tetapi untuk memahami akar dan struktur asas teorinya.

Dengan menggunakan *Mu*, penyelidik menyedari bahawa rangka kerja teori dan struktur asas teori perkongsian kuasa sebagai teori demokratik empirikal dan normatif boleh ditentukan dengan menjadikannya sebagai dasar kepada empat kategori yang berbeza tetapi bertindih dalam membentuk hasil kajian ini: pertama, kajian kritis Lijphart terhadap dua teori demokratik utama; kedua memeriksa latar belakang, aktiviti intelektual, hubungan dan kegiatan; Ketiga, dengan menemui akar empirikal dan falsafah teori, menganalisis kaedah Lijphart menggunakan dalam kaedah perbandingan dan politik perbandingan; dan keempat, dengan menentukan konteks utama teori yang menyediakan satu rangka kerja teori untuk pembangunan teori.

Beberapa cara telah digunakan untuk mendapatkan akses maklumat - data primer dan sekunder diperlukan dalam kajian ini. Walaupun, artikel, buku dan beberapa dokumen penting lain telah digunakan untuk pengumpulan data sekunder, temuduga adalah teknik pengumpulan data primer dalam kajian ini. Secara khusus, temu bual melalui e-mel telah dipilih untuk menyediakan maklumat yang sesuai bagi mencapai matlamat kajian; ia termasuk temu bual melalui e-mel dengan ahli teori dan juga beberapa pakar sains politik terkenal.

Justeru, dalam bab pertama mengenai penemuan kajian, penyelidik mempersembahkan asas teori dan batasan teori Lijphart ini. Ia juga telah menunjukkan bahawa akar teori perkongsian kuasa berasal dari teori-teori klasik pembahagian kuasa mendarat dan menagak. Tambahan pula, ia telah menunjukkan bahawa teori perkongsian kuasa mulanya patut diiktiraf sebagai hasil kajian kritikal Lijphart pada dua teori utama demokrasi dari tahun 1960-an; Tipologi Almond bagi sistem politik dan teori Lipset jurang lintas (*Lipset's theory of cross-cutting cleavages*).

Tambahan pula, dalam bab yang berasingan, ia telah menunjukkan bahawa bagaimana faktor-faktor dalaman-sosial latar belakang penggubal teori ini (keluarga dan pendidikan), dan kegiatan intelektual beliau (aktiviti dan ikatan intelektual) membentuk asas pendekatan demokrasi itu. Dalam dua bab akhir mengenai penemuan p,enyelidik juga memberi tumpuan kepada faktor-faktor dalaman-intelek; dalam hal ini, ia telah menunjukkan bahawa politik perbandingan, kaedah perbandingan, dan institutionalisme merupakan telah berpengaruh konteks utama metodologi dan teori yong mempengaruhi pembinaan dan pembangunan teori perkongsian kuasa.

Tambahan pula, penyelidik berpendapat bahawa walaupun teori perkongsian kuasa pada dasarnya antara teori-teori demokrasi yang semata-mata berurusan dengan institusi demokratik, teori ini juga perlu dipertimbangkan sedikit sebanyak dari perspektif budaya. Sehubungan itu, dalam satu temu bual, Steiner dalam kritikan terhadap teori Liphart pula berpendapat, bagi memulakan kestabilan demokrasi, "institusi adalah perlu tetapi tidak mencukupi, anda juga perlu budaya". Lijphart mengesahkan bahawa "Saya bersetuju dengan Jurg Steiner bahawa kedua-dua budaya dan struktur diperlukan, tetapi saya juga akan menunjukkan bahawa mereka berinteraksi antara satu sama lain." Oleh itu, dalam kajian ini, teori perkongsian kuasa dilihat daripada kedua-dua perspektif institusi dan budaya .

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PR:	Proportional Representation
USA:	United States of America
OECD:	The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
UCSD:	University of California, San Diego
UCI:	University of California, Irvine



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Power sharing theory ‘‘has become the international community’s preferred remedy for building peace and democracy after civil wars.’’ (Roeder & Rothchild, 2005, p. 5)

1.1 The Background of the Study

Power sharing theory seeks to institute democratic stability based on the consensus of the main ethnopolitical groups in fragmented societies. It has gradually become one of the influential theories in the studies of democratic institutions since the 1960s. This theory has effectively enriched comparative politics in general and democratic studies in particular by recommending non-majoritarianism and its two models of democracy; consociational and consensus democracy.

Lijphart’s theory recommends a new institutional design based on logical connections for establishing a democratic and stable political system in divided societies. In this regard, it is worth emphasizing that while democratic political systems – both in theory and practice – take different forms, relatively analyzing sociopolitical relations has always been significant in order to recognize the level of democratic stability. Therefore, discovering the ways of instituting democratic stability in different sociopolitical situations has always been one the main concerns of political scientists.

Accordingly, the efforts of some eminent scholars in contemporary political philosophy in general and political theory in particular are much more considered. In this regard, Gabriel Almond as one of the great political scientists considered the study of democratic stability in his seminal work, *Comparative Political Systems* (Almond, 1956). Almond’s theory was not optimistic about the maintenance of standing democratic stability in divided societies. Moreover, the preconditions of democratic stability were also analyzed by the American political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset which led to formulating the theory of cross-cutting cleavages in his seminal work *Political Man* (Lipset, 1960).

From different perspectives, Almond and Sidney Verba in *The Civic Culture* (Almond & Verba, 1963) discussed the citizens’ values for democratic participation and political stability. Samuel Huntington in his 1968 book, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, also considered political order¹ as an essential objective in developing countries and

1. Huntington (1968) in this seminal work criticizes the modernization theory in which economic changes and development are the main influential factors for the creation of democratic political systems and stability. Huntington instead emphasizes other elements such as urbanization, social

emphasized the significance of political institutions in general and party systems in particular (Huntington, 1968). It should be considered that all these democratic theories emphasize majoritarianism and majority rule² as well as plurality electoral systems.

What is worth emphasizing here is that these democratic theories ignore the sociopolitical structure of plural societies and the ways of establishing democratic systems based on minorities' participation in such societies. Almond in his famous typology of democratic systems (Almond, 1956) and Lipset (1960) in the cross-cutting theory, – obviously declare their pessimistic view of the impacts of cultural and political cleavages in the absence of political stability in fragmented societies.

Lijphart (1977, p. 1) accordingly asserts that “it is difficult to achieve and maintain stable democratic government in plural society is a well-established proposition in political science.” Therefore, the contribution of Lijphart's power-sharing theory to democratic theory is to explain the deviance of such standpoints by showing the ways of attaining democratic stability in such societies and by and large delivering “kinder, gentler” results in many policy areas.

Therefore, in contrast to majoritarian theories, while Lijphart's theory challenges majoritarianism, it considers establishing stable democratic political system in deeply divided societies. In this connection, Lijphart (1985a) obviously argues that the characteristics of power-sharing democracy are stated as the antitheses of majoritarianism and majoritarian elements. Nonetheless, how can democracy be sustainable in deeply fragmented societies? The answer to this question, for a long time, was one of the controversial debates in political science.

In this aspect, John S. Mill clearly proposed that it is nearly impossible to establish democracy in multi-ethnic countries because it is incompatible with such social structures (Mill, 1958). Therefore, some political scholars explicitly argued that the major obstacles to instituting sustainable democracy in plural societies rise from such a social structure.³ In other words, stable democracy is not found in fragmented but only

mobilization, increased literacy, and economic growth. He relatively asserts that order itself is a significant objective in developing countries.

2. It also is worth mentioning that democracy in general and majoritarianism in particular has been criticized by many other scholars from various perspectives. Altman points out that there is indisputably a big gap between the ideal type of democracy in theory as the prototype of democracy and current representative democracies in practice. According to Walzer, (2004, p. 24) “government is in principle democratic, in (liberal) theory mixed, and in practice oligarchic”. From another point of view, some older scholars believed that the tyranny of the majority is the outcome of democracy. For instance, in ‘Democracy in America’ Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) noticeably emphasized the ‘tyranny of the majority’. He stated “yet I consider that the will of the majority is the origin of all powers”(2010, p. 410).

3. In this aspect, Schendelen (1984) points out that while political scientists were seeking to find the conditions of stable and democratic political rule, they came to believe that the attempts to establishing stable democracy in divided societies with deep political fragmentation face enormous challenges. Accordingly, the dominant ethnic, religious, linguistic, and even social differences pose huge obstacles to the emergence of a stable-democratic regime.

in homogeneous societies. Accordingly, there is not a comprehensive agreement and also a minimum level of social and political consensus in such societies. This opinion, until at least the 1960s, was supported by many political thinkers and policy-makers (Railly, 2004).

Since the 1960s, Lijphart has particularly challenged such arguments. Accordingly, he (1999b) argued that there is a comprehensive agreement among the majority of experts on divided societies as well constitutional engineering in three aspects: Firstly, they broadly agree that it is extremely difficult to establish democracy in countries with deeply divided societies. In other words, establishing a stable democracy in is easier in homogeneous rather than segmented societies.

Secondly, many scholars state that this problem is more serious in countries that are non-democratic or semi-democratic than in well-established democracies. Some researchers also believe that such deep divisions lead to many obstacles to the development of democratization in the twenty-first century. In these two cases, there is universal or near-universal agreement among political experts. And thirdly, there is a broad—but not universal—agreement that power sharing and group autonomy are the main requirements for establishing a successful democratic system in divided societies (Lijphart, 1999b).

In Lijphart's (1999a, p. 33) own words, majority rule in the most deeply divided societies,

spells majority dictatorship and civil strife rather than democracy. What such societies need is a democratic regime that emphasizes consensus instead of opposition, that includes, and that tries to maximize the size of the ruling majority instead of being satisfied with a bare majority: consensus democracy.

Therefore, Lijphart's power-sharing theory by and large is an intellectual attempt to present appropriate solutions to the two major concerns in democratic studies: majority rule and minority rights as well as establishing stable democracy in segmented societies (Grofman, 2000). In Lijphart's (2004, p. 77) own words, the power-sharing democracy, as the outcome of his theory, has demonstrated that it is the only democratic model that "appears to have much chance of being adopted in divided societies, which in turn makes it unhelpful to ask constitution writers to contemplate alter-natives to it."

From a broader perspective, Lijphart's statistical and comparative analyzes have shown that power sharing theory provides a situation for better representation for women, higher electoral participation, greater political quality, and closer proximity between voters' preferences and government policy than majoritarian models of democracy (Lijphart, 1984, 1999a). Borrowing from Hsieh (2013, p. 87), Lijphart's attempts in democratic studies "remind us that non-majoritarian democracy is at least as legitimate as the majoritarian model, and may perform even better in many ways."

Furthermore, whereas Lijphat's different political approach to democratic studies is one of the disputed issues in political science to date, the impacts of his theory on other fields in the discipline should not be ignored. Lijphart's efforts to formulate and

develop power sharing theory also led to improving and developing the new institutionalism approach (Grofman, 2000). Besides, in the field of comparative politics, power sharing theory has represented “one of the strongest, widely discussed, and influential research programmes” (Taylor, 2009, p. 1) to date.

Referring to the present research, the point is that, whatever Lijphart’s theory and the scholars present does not reflect the unsuspected aspects of the theory and the depth of Lijphart’s thought and his theory’s roots that have caught the attention of the researcher. Hence, gaining an in-depth understanding of the theory depends on scrutinizing the roots and the process of construction of it on the one hand, and discovering the influential factors in the formulation and development of Lijphart’s distinct approach to democracy and democratic institutional studies on the other.

For this purpose, this study throws new light on Lijphart’s power-sharing theory. It considers the discovery and understanding of the roles and roots which have shaped it. As far as the researcher can tell, up to now, there is no such serious effort to expose the underlying structures of Lijphart’s thought and other influential factors in order to gain an in-depth understanding of power sharing theory.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

A metatheoretical study of power sharing theory would not be realizable through a superficial consideration of the prism of the theory. Therefore, this study takes us beyond the theory into all the roles and roots which shape our understanding of the theory. In other words, the problem of this study is to determine the various factors that influenced the formulation and development of Lijphart’s approach to democracy and democratic studies on the one hand, and the construction of power sharing theory on the other. Specifically, what are the elements and circumstances that motivated Lijphart to consider democracy in contrast to its dominant mean? Which factors affected the development of his approach to construct power sharing theory? And, what are the roots and unsuspected aspects of the theory?

Accordingly, this research will also be concerned with the tools, methods, concepts, key principles, and theories which Lijphart worked with. Besides, it will be devoted to a critical examination and analysis of the process through which Lijphart and other eminent consociational scholars contributed to improving and developing the theory. Thus, while this research rigorously deals with gaining an in-depth understanding of the theory and its boundaries within democratic theories, it discovers the factors outside and within the discipline that affected the theorist and the process of theoretical formulation.

1.3 Research Questions

With regard to the statement of the problem, the impact of different factors on the formulation and development of Lijphart’s power-sharing theory is examined in accordance with the methodology that is applied. Therefore, the statement could be put in terms of the following paramount questions:

1. What are the theoretical pillars of power sharing theory?
2. What are the internal-social factors that motivated Lijphart to formulate and develop power sharing theory and how did they do so?
3. What are the internal-intellectual factors and how did they influence the construction and development of Lijphart's power-sharing theory?
4. What are the roots of Lijphart's theory in deliberation studies and which influential factors have developed it to this ground and how?

1.4 Research Objectives

This study by and large entails two different levels of debate: First, the level of political philosophy and theory; second, the level of metatheory which also consists of methodological and philosophical levels. Hence, the aims of this study are as follows:

Firstly, the study aims to discover a collection of theoretical pillars of Lijphart's power-sharing theory, and how this framework led to the construction of it. **Secondly**, it seeks to reveal influential internal-social factors, circumstances, and unsuspected aspects of the construction of the theory. **Thirdly**, this study aims to scrutinize the boundaries, convergence, and divergence of power sharing theory from other political approaches in the discipline. And **lastly**, this study seeks to discover the roots of the theory in deliberative theory as a different approach to democratic studies.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

In comparison with other studies on democratic theories in general and power sharing theory in particular, the importance of this study rests on the metatheoretical study of Lijphart's power-sharing theory. Lijphart's theory generally represents a good choice for study because of the following points:

1. Whereas power sharing theory has regularly become the dominant proposition of democratic theories since the early 1960s, the unsuspected aspects of the construction of this theory have not seriously been considered to date. Hence, while this study helps to get an in-depth understanding of the theory by exploring the roots and influential factors, it also provides an intellectual framework for discovering the influential elements which motivated the theorist/theorists to formulate and develop it.
2. This study also provides a comprehensive framework of recommendations and guidelines with due consideration to the constitutional requirement in divided societies. Therefore, it can be very helpful to constitution writers, political decision makers, and experts in such countries.⁴
3. According to meta-theorizing, this research is concerned with a fundamental analysis of power sharing theory –as a non-majoritarian democratic theory– and

4. The significance of an in-depth study of the Lijphartian approach in political science in the words of Grofman (2000, p. 44) is more clear when he declares that “when the history of the discipline is written, say in the year 2020, looking back not just at Lijphart's own work but also that of the students and colleagues that he has influenced (...) we will be able to identify a distinctive methodological stance and set of central questions that future political scientists will come to label Arend Lijphart and the “UCSD/UCI School of comparative institutional analysis”.”

highlights the origins of its differences in comparison to majoritarian democratic theories. Therefore, it provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for other students/researchers and experts on divided societies to be able much more clearly to recognize the theoretical roots of different democratic political systems in such societies.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

This study is organized into eight chapters. The first three chapters are focused on the introduction, literature review and research methodology. In particular, **chapter one** offers the introduction that consists of the background, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, significance, scope, and organization of the study. While **chapter two** presents definitions of some of the main concepts, it also focuses on other theorists' contributions to the development of Lijphart's power-sharing theory and a critical review of the literature and previous studies on the theory and related issues.

Chapter three covers the research methodology which consists of introducing meta-theory based on Ritzer's well-known definition, "studying the underlying structure of theories and theorists for better understanding". The two dimensions of *Mu* – internal social dimension and internal intellectual dimension – are applied for underlying the structure and sub-structures of Lijphart's power-sharing theory.

Chapter four covers answers to the first research question that emphasizes the theoretical pillars, boundaries and components of power sharing theory. In other words, this chapter, while seeking to gain an in-depth understanding of the theoretical roots of Lijphart's theory, comparatively examines other majoritarian democratic theories.

Chapter five focus on discovering internal-social factors and the relationship between them as well as the construction and development of Lijphart's power sharing theory. Some of these factors include Lijphart's family background and his personal experiences, his intellectual connection with major thinkers and the influence of their works – e.g. Seymour M. Lipset and Sir Arthur Lewis – as well as the Dutch political system and its impact on the formulation of the theory. In other words, the major aim of this chapter is to investigate the personal history of the theorist and its influences on his intellectual work in relation to the construction of power sharing theory.

Chapter six covers the answers to the second research question that emphasizes internal-intellectual factors and their impact on the formulation and development of the theory. In other words, the goal of this chapter is to investigate the relationship between the formulation and improvement of power sharing theory and the internal-intellectual elements. In particular, it seeks to discover the concepts, methods and the original ground of the theory within other academic disciplines which became a fundamental framework for its construction. In **chapter seven** the researcher also considers the discovery of some other internal-intellectual factors from a different perspective. It seeks to discover the deliberative roots of power sharing theory and its improvements in this approach.

And finally, **chapter eight** undertakes the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the present study. In particular, it summarizes the findings of the study regarding the

usefulness of *Mu* in attaining an in-depth understanding of Lijphart's political thoughts on the formulation and development of power sharing theory. In addition, it presents some recommendations for future studies in this area.



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