

## **EFFECTIVENESS, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF MINORITY GOVERNMENTS IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACIES: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTEXT**

The article is dedicated to analyzing negative and positive aspects and disclosures of socio-economic and political effectiveness and consequences of minority governments in European parliamentary democracies. The researcher also identified the parameters of perceptions of minority governments by the public and electorate. As a result, it was argued that: the voters who support small parties or the voters who support large parties, but hope that they will not win elections, consistently favor minority governments; the voters who are more concerned about socio-economic policies are less inclined to support minority governments; the voters who are not inclined to concentrate power support the idea of minority governments.

*Keywords: government, minority government, governmental cabinet, socio-economic and political implications, perceptions of minority governments, parliamentary democracy, Europe.*

## **ЕФЕКТИВНІСТЬ, СОЦІАЛЬНО-ЕКОНОМІЧНІ ТА ПОЛІТИЧНІ НАСЛІДКИ І СПРИЙНЯТТЯ УРЯДІВ МЕНШОСТІ У ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИХ ПАРЛАМЕНТСЬКИХ ДЕМОКРАТІЯХ: ТЕОРЕТИЧНИЙ І ПРАКТИЧНИЙ КОНТЕКСТ**

Проаналізовано негативні та позитивні сторони і вияви соціально-економічної та політичної ефективності й наслідків урядів меншості у європейських парламентських демократіях. Виявлено параметри сприйняття урядів меншості громадськістю і електоратом. Аргументовано, що: виборці, які підтримують малі партії, або виборці, які підтримують великі партії, але сподіваються, що вони не переможуть на виборах, послідовно віддають перевагу урядам меншості; виборці, які більше стурбовані соціально-економічною політикою, менше схильні підтримувати уряди меншості; виборці, які не схильні до концентрації влади, підтримують ідею урядів меншості.

*Ключові слова: уряд, уряд меншості, урядовий кабінет, соціально-економічні та політичні наслідки, сприйняття урядів меншості, парламентська демократія, Європа.*

Despite the fact that minority governments are the norm for the majority of European parliamentary democracies and it is known almost everything or a lot about their attributes, preconditions, reasons and models of their formation, functioning and accountability, the problems of the parameters of their effectiveness, social-economic and political consequences and perception have not been solved and synthesized yet. And this issue is of great topicality, as their effectiveness, social-economic and political consequences/results and features of public perception of minority governments is a crucial factor of viability or non-viability while choosing them and quality of functioning of those political systems, where minority governments operate and thus political institutions and processes evaluated in them, as the latter are a predictor of the system stability, democratic representativeness and accountability and prospects of democratic strengthening. Nevertheless, the issue of effectiveness, social-economic and political consequences and perception of minority governments (as distinguished from the problem of minority government effectiveness) nowadays is predominantly solved only partially (in the form of “tangential issues” within the frames of more comprehensive scientific research<sup>1</sup>), primarily descriptively and intuitively and not absolutely analytically and therefore it requires undiverted and systematic attention, what has been done in the current scientific paper.

However, while constructing systematized and synthesized conclusions concerning parameters of effectiveness, social-economic and political consequences and perception of minority governments the majority of already existing research, referring to this and adjacent range of problems, have been applied. Among of them, for instance, there are works by such scientists as A. Alesina, N. Roubini and G. Cohen<sup>2</sup>, A. Blais, J. Kim and M. Foucault<sup>3</sup>, L. Dodd<sup>4</sup>, P.-A. Edin and H. Ohlsson<sup>5</sup>, M. Laver and N. Schofield<sup>6</sup>, J. Linz and A. Stepan<sup>7</sup>, G. Pech<sup>8</sup>, A. Robert<sup>9</sup>, R. Franzese<sup>10</sup>, L. Helland<sup>11</sup> and many others. As a matter of fact they are united by a scientific position, according to which “minority rules” determine time-limited, ineffective and weak (in comparison with “majority rules”) governments, in particular when referring to the issues of their economic results, fiscal (budget) discipline, currency and monetary policy, budget deficit, social-economic forward-thinking, responsibility for their own actions and reaction to exogenous shocks.

<sup>1</sup> Strom K., *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Alesina A., Roubini N., Cohen G., *Political Cycles and the Macroeconomy*, Wyd. MIT Press 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Blais A., Kim J., Foucault M., Public Spending, Public Deficits and Government Coalitions, *“Political Studies”* 2010, vol 58, nr. 5, s. 844.

<sup>4</sup> Dodd L., *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government*, Wyd. Princeton University Press 1976.

<sup>5</sup> Edin P.-A., Ohlsson H., Political determinants of budget deficits: coalition effects versus minority effects, *“European Economic Review”* 1991, vol 35, nr. 8, s. 1597–1603.

<sup>6</sup> Laver M., Schofield N., *Multiparty Government: The Politics of Coalition in Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Linz J., Stepan A., *The breakdown of democratic Regimes*, Wyd. John Hopkins University Press 1978, s. 66.

<sup>8</sup> Pech G., Coalition Governments versus Minority Governments: Bargaining Power, Cohesion and Budgeting Outcomes, *“Public Choice”* 2004, vol 121, nr. 1–2, s. 1–24.

<sup>9</sup> Robert A., Demythologizing the Czech opposition agreement, *“Europe-Asia Studies”* 2003, vol 55, nr. 8, s. 1273–1303.

<sup>10</sup> Franzese R., *Macroeconomic Policies of Developed Democracies*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Helland L., Minority-Rule Budgeting under a De Facto Constructive Vote of No Confidence: A Cure for the Norwegian Illness?, *“Scandinavian Political Studies”* 2004, vol 27, nr. 4, s. 391–401.

This stated position and a fact of relative social-economic ineffectiveness of minority governments are supported by P. Warwick<sup>12</sup>, S. Borrelli and T. Royed<sup>13</sup>, who argue that minority government cabinets are reliable on support of “hostile parties, which even do not get benefits from their control over ministries”. As a result, on average minority governments are obliged constantly or contextually, in particular appealing to expediency of aspects of governing and retaining their seats, to “shift” from a desirable political-ideological position or constantly or contextually take into account distinctive/controversial political preferences of non-government parties<sup>14</sup>. And this postulates an intermediate, though an artificial conclusion that those minority government cabinets either are or can be, “the weakest” and the least effective in comparison with other types of governments<sup>15</sup>, even under conditions when some of them perform substantially effective and significant social-economic actions. First of all, it is revealed in the fact that minority governments contribute to reduction in efficiency of taxation policy and fiscal (budget) discipline and growth in expenses, debt crisis and budget deficit. K. Strom<sup>16</sup> states that historically it is presupposed by an “impressionist” negative perception of minority governments and the fact that lots of minority governments, being legislatively inefficient and within the frames of their stability, predominantly became predictors of social-economic and political crises, determining themselves by “political illness”, irrationality and weak level of governing<sup>17</sup>.

Herewith, A. Blais, D. Blake and S. Dion<sup>18</sup>, S. Borrelli and T. Royed<sup>19</sup>, B. Volkerink and J. De Haan<sup>20</sup>, J. De Haan, J.-E. Sturm and G. Beekhuis<sup>21</sup>, D. Diermeier and R. Stevenson<sup>22</sup>, P.-A. Edin and H. Ohlsson G. Pech<sup>23</sup>, L. Helland<sup>24</sup> and many other scholars believe that the reason for this may be hidden in the fact that ineffectiveness of taxation policy, reduction in fiscal (budget) discipline and growth in expenses, debt crisis and budget deficit are caused by

<sup>12</sup> Warwick P., Coalition Policy in Parliamentary Democracies, *“Comparative Political Studies”* 2001, vol 34, nr. 10, s. 1212–1236.

<sup>13</sup> Borrelli S., Royed T., Government “Strength” and Budget Deficits in Advanced Democracies, *“European Journal of Political Research”* 1995, vol 28, nr. 2, s. 235.

<sup>14</sup> Robert A., Demythologizing the Czech opposition agreement, *“Europe-Asia Studies”* 2003, vol 55, nr. 8, s. 1280.

<sup>15</sup> Roubini N., Sachs J., Political and Economic Determinants of Budget Deficits in the Industrialized Democracies, *“European Economic Review”* 1989, vol 33, s. 903–938.

<sup>16</sup> Strom K., *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990, s. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Lijphart A., Measures of cabinet durability: a conceptual and empirical evaluation, *“Comparative Political Studies”* 1984, vol 17, nr. 2, s. 265–279.

<sup>18</sup> Blais A., Blake D., Dion S., Do Parties Make a Difference? Parties and the Size of Government in Liberal Democracies, *“American Journal of Political Science”* 1993, vol 37, nr. 1, s. 56.

<sup>19</sup> Borrelli S., Royed T., Government “Strength” and Budget Deficits in Advanced Democracies, *“European Journal of Political Research”* 1995, vol 28, nr. 2, s. 225–260.

<sup>20</sup> Volkerink B., De Haan J., Fragmented government effects on fiscal policy: New evidence, *“Public Choice”* 2001, vol 109, nr. 3–4, s. 221–242.

<sup>21</sup> De Haan J., Sturm J.-E., Beekhuis G., The weak government thesis: some new evidence, *“Public Choice”* 1999, vol 11, nr. 3–4, s. 163–176.

<sup>22</sup> Diermeier D., Stevenson R., Cabinet Terminations and Critical Events, *“American Political Science Review”* 2000, vol 94, nr. 3, s. 627–640.

<sup>23</sup> Pech G., Coalition Governments versus Minority Governments: Bargaining Power, Cohesion and Budgeting Outcomes, *“Public Choice”* 2004, vol 121, nr. 1–2, s. 1–24.

<sup>24</sup> Helland L., Minority-Rule Budgeting under a De Facto Constructive Vote of No Confidence: A Cure for the Norwegian Illness?, *“Scandinavian Political Studies”* 2004, vol 27, nr. 4, s. 391–401.

scenarios (especially in the periods of economic crises<sup>25</sup>) of conflict-ridden relationship between the government and legislative majority in legislature, political factionalization and excessive number of parties (in the parliament and government cabinet<sup>26</sup>) and political instability. They, in their turn, if are not then can be attributes of minority governments, at least in comparison with majority governments and on the background of party government in general. Besides, to incoordination within the policy of minority governments contributes the fact that such cabinets must or can adjust to one party/some parties while dealing with some issues and to another/other parties while dealing with other questions. As a result, parties which provide parliamentary support to minority governments, demand “their part in the budget”, are influencing on increase in expenditures, growth of the budget deficit and decrease in economic effectiveness of cabinets<sup>27</sup>. It is notable, that political/party factionalization of legislatures is traditionally higher over the periods of economic crises, and this is the reason why minority governments exert negative influence on income and expenditure<sup>28</sup>.

It should be mentioned as well, that in case with minority governments key decisions are taken not directly in government cabinets, but in legislatures and their committees. Such situation, in particular on the basis of not preserving, but overcoming a status quo, fragments and complicates social-economic policy, reducing effectiveness and resulting quality of minority governments. A. Falco-Gimen and I. Jurado<sup>29</sup> supplement such described logics stating that social-economic ineffectiveness of minority governments is influenced by parameters of parliamentary opposition structuring, in particular expectations and probability that it may become a part of a hypothetical/future government cabinet. As consent of opposition is required to form and approve of political programs of minority governments and thus unwillingness or procrastination of the process on the part of opposition may become a precondition for minority government ineffectiveness. Therefore, it is obvious that the problem of minority government inefficiency lies in the fact that government parties and coalitions, which compose them, do not coincide with parliamentary parties/coalitions, which support them. Thus, of great importance in the process of reducing minority governments ineffectiveness are rational preferences of political parties, which are in opposition to them.

In general, it is revealed in the fact that oppositional parties in their relations with minority governments concentrate on two major issues or interests: a) avoid supporting budgets, which do not improve their chances to bring down current governments; b) avoid excessed complication

<sup>25</sup> Bortelli S., Royed T., Government “Strength” and Budget Deficits in Advanced Democracies, *“European Journal of Political Research”* 1995, vol 28, nr. 2, s. 225–260.; Kontopoulos Y., Perotti R., *Government fragmentation and Fiscal Policy Outcomes: Evidence from OECD Countries*, [w:] Poterba J. (ed.), *Fiscal Institutions and Fiscal Performance*, Wyd. National Bureau of Economic Research 1999, s. 81–102.

<sup>26</sup> Kontopoulos Y., Perotti R., *Government fragmentation and Fiscal Policy Outcomes: Evidence from OECD Countries*, [w:] Poterba J. (ed.), *Fiscal Institutions and Fiscal Performance*, Wyd. National Bureau of Economic Research 1999, s. 81–102.

<sup>27</sup> Edin P.-A., Ohlsson H., Political determinants of budget deficits: coalition effects versus minority effects, *“European Economic Review”* 1991, vol 35, nr. 8, s. 1597–1603.

<sup>28</sup> Towliat V., *Minority government and fiscal policy outcomes: New evidence*, Wyd. Lund university 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Falcó-Gimeno A., Jurado I., Minority governments and budget deficits: The role of the opposition, *“European Journal of Political Economy”* 2011, vol 27, nr. 3, s. 554–565.

of a social-economic situation, which they can hypothetical face, when coming into cabinet, composing further government cabinets. In this context, of great significance is the point, the more opposition is concentrated in one party, the more probably it will be a part of further government cabinet, in fact one party cabinet. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned expenses and benefits of minority governments depend not only a composition of parliamentary opposition. The point is that social-economic effectiveness or ineffectiveness of minority governments is influenced by their type, which is directly evaluated with respect to own advantages over parliamentary opposition. In this way, apart from the composition of parliamentary opposition, minority governments effectiveness is influenced by the level of party factionalization within government cabinets. It can be traced from the perspective of assessing by oppositional/non-government and government parties their prospects, concerning conducting early parliamentary elections, in particular when functioning of minority governments deteriorates or at least does not improve social-economic situation in the country. On this account K. Strom<sup>30</sup> remarks that the higher factionalization of the government is, the less probable it will be that such government continues functioning under complicated social-economic dramatic circumstances. That is why it is more difficult for a factionalized minority government to overcome budget deficit and symptoms of economic crisis, in comparison with a non-factionalized minority government or a majority government. It is presupposed by the fact that in this case factionalization of minority government is overlapped with the wish of parliamentary opposition to gain benefits from situational support or non-support, provided to the cabinet. Consequently, parliamentary oppositions are not obligatory willing to provide support to minority governments in the issues of overcoming budget deficit and symptoms of economic crisis. On the contrary, less factionalized minority government, at least hypothetically, can solve social-economic problems easier, because it can significantly influence parliamentary opposition, especially when the latter is composed of several parties. And this regulates, that ineffectiveness of minority governments is variable and depends on the type and composition of minority governments and parliamentary opposition. Such situation is predetermined by the fact that oppositional and ad-hoc (in general non-government) parties, in particular depending on their chances to become a part of future cabinets and weakness of current cabinets, leave their mark on the results of social-economic effectiveness of minority governments<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Strom K., *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990.

<sup>31</sup> Falcó-Gimeno A., Jurado I., Minority governments and budget deficits: The role of the opposition, "European Journal of Political Economy" 2011, vol 27, nr. 3, s. 554–565.

Quite similar but at the same time different point of view is offered by P.-A. Edin<sup>32</sup>, C. Green-Pedersen<sup>33</sup>, E. Damgaard<sup>34</sup>, G. Pech<sup>35</sup>, A. Robert<sup>36</sup>, T. Sakamoto<sup>37</sup>, K. Strom<sup>38</sup>, M. Hallerberg and J. Von Hagen<sup>39</sup> and other scholars, who argue that not all minority governments, in particular, not all the types and scenarios of minority governments are ineffective. As a number of constructions of minority government cabinets achieve positive (especially in Denmark, Sweden, Spain and Croatia) and negative (including Italy and Romania) social-economic outcomes, which are determined by a general state of development of political and social-economic systems. B. Mukherjee and D. Leblang<sup>40</sup> assume that minority governments after all are capable of taking complicated and significant economic (in particular budget, currency and financial) and social decisions. Besides, different types of minority government cabinets (first of all those created on the basis of agreements and support on the part of non-government parties in legislature) are potentially different as to the indices of social-economic effectiveness and weakness or power<sup>41</sup>. For example, it is quite obvious that coalitional minority governments possibly face a bigger number of obstacles while promoting their own initiatives and political courses (and thus are less effective), than single-party minority governments, as they are determined by a double-fold field of veto-players, from the perspective of essence and problematical character of minority governments, and in the context of essence and problematic character of coalition. In addition, as K. Strom<sup>42</sup>, T. Bale and T. Bergmann<sup>43</sup> believe, that operating efficiency of minority governments is under influence of types of agreements between government and non-government political parties in legislature. As a result, some minority governments (which enjoy reliable support in parliaments or the so-called “externally supported” minority governments or governments within the frames of “contract parliamentarianism”) become more powerful (overall), while others (which are not characterized by these attributes) become weaker (less comprehensive).

<sup>32</sup> Edin P.-A., Ohlsson H., Political determinants of budget deficits: coalition effects versus minority effects, *“European Economic Review”* 1991, vol 35, nr. 8, s. 1599.

<sup>33</sup> Green-Pedersen C., Minority Governments and Party Politics: The Political and Institutional Background to the ‘Danish Miracle’, *“Journal of Public Policy”* 2002, vol 21, nr. 1, s. 53–70.

<sup>34</sup> Damgaard E., *Minority Governments*, [w:] Karvonen L., Ståhlberg K. (eds.), *Festschrift for Dag Ancker on His 60th Birthday on February 12, 2000*, Wyd. Åbo Akademi University Press 2000, s. 353–369.

<sup>35</sup> Pech G., *Government Formation, Budget Negotiations and Re-election Uncertainty: The Cases of Minority and Majority Coalition Governments*, Wyd. Centre for Research into Industry, Enterprise, Finance and the Firm 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Robert A., Demythologizing the Czech opposition agreement, *“Europe-Asia Studies”* 2003, vol 55, nr. 8, s. 1280.

<sup>37</sup> Sakamoto T., Economic Performance of “Weak” Governments and Their Interaction with Central Banks and Labour: Deficits, Economic Growth, Unemployment and Inflation, 1961–1998, *“European Journal of Political Research”* 2005, vol 44, nr. 6, s. 801–836.

<sup>38</sup> Strom K., *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990, s. 1–22, 129, 238.

<sup>39</sup> Hallerberg M., von Hagen J., *Electoral Institutions, Cabinet Negotiations, and Budget Deficits in the European Union*, [w:] Poterba J., von Hagen J. (eds.), *Fiscal Institutions and Fiscal Performance*, Wyd. University of Chicago Press 1999, s. 209–232.

<sup>40</sup> Mukherjee B., Leblang D., Minority Governments and Exchange Rate Regimes: Examining Evidence from 21 OECD Countries, 1975–1999, *“European Union Politics”* 2006, vol 7, nr. 4, s. 450–476.

<sup>41</sup> Robert A., Demythologizing the Czech opposition agreement, *“Europe-Asia Studies”* 2003, vol 55, nr. 8, s. 1280.

<sup>42</sup> Strom K., *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990, s. 61.

<sup>43</sup> Bale T., Bergman T., Captives No Longer, but Servants Still? Contract Parliamentarism and the New Minority Governance in Sweden and New Zealand, *“Government and Opposition”* 2006, vol 41, nr. 3, s. 422–449.

That is why minority governments may be conventionally divided on the grounds of their own theoretically probable power and social-economic effectiveness.

From this perspective, rather notable is a remark by D. Alexiadou<sup>44</sup> who states that minority governments are more socially-economically effective, concerning problems of capital gains and income taxation, in particular in the countries, where they are formed more often and are accompanied by the results of more proportional election systems. As in such cases the systems of governing, which are capable of increasing labor taxes and decreasing employees' taxes, can make use of additional income from bigger capital markets to finance constructions of universalistic states of welfare. Correspondingly, countries where minority governments are often formed and proportional election system are applied are usually characterized by more inclusive political systems and mechanisms of political negotiations and therefore tend to spread and divide tax burden between, employers, employees and capital. As a result minority governments in such cases are or may be the outcome of general rules of achieving consensus, according to which opposition parliamentary parties have too less political stimuli to be desirous of becoming a part of alternative government cabinets, because much less their "political value" is if they stay beyond the government<sup>45</sup>. To K. Strøm's<sup>46</sup> point of view it is especially correct and actual in case when not entering the composition of the government cabinet (minority cabinet in particular) is estimated by opposition parties as an instrument to get and multiply the number of benefits/votes of electorate in future. Taking this into consideration, the scientist remarks that "if political influence is the main aim of political parties, participation in the government composition is not an indispensable condition to get a reward"<sup>47</sup>. However, it testifies that opposition parties in legislature (at least some European parliamentary democracies) can be interested in promoting social-economic policy of minority governments for so long as it does not interfere with their basic political values and interests. Therefore, not only government, but also non-government (situational or opposition) parties under conditions of minority governments may take responsibility for social-economic life in the country. In general, it demonstrates that minority governments are more socially and economically effective when they possess potential for "broad cooperation" with non-government parties and are incorporated in the frames of more inclusive political systems<sup>48</sup>. Thus, effectiveness of minority governments may both increase and decrease in case when party systems, within which they operationalize, become more factionalized.

<sup>44</sup> Alexiadou D., *Financing the welfare state: Employers' contributions and unemployment in minority and majority governments*, Paper prepared for the 5th ESPAnet Conference 2007, Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, September 20–22, 2007.

<sup>45</sup> Luebbert G., A Theory of Government Formation, *"Comparative Political Studies"* 1984, vol 17, nr. 2, s. 229–264.

<sup>46</sup> Strøm K., Minority Governments in Parliamentary Democracies: The Rationality of Non-Winning Cabinet Solutions, *"Comparative political Studies"* 1984, vol 17, nr. 2, s. 199–226.

<sup>47</sup> Strøm K., Minority Governments in Parliamentary Democracies: The Rationality of Non-Winning Cabinet Solutions, *"Comparative political Studies"* 1984, vol 17, nr. 2, s. 211.

<sup>48</sup> Alexiadou D., *Financing the welfare state: Employers' contributions and unemployment in minority and majority governments*, Paper prepared for the 5th ESPAnet Conference 2007, Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, September 20–22, 2007.

It should be mentioned that to the point of view of B. Mukherjee and D. Leblang<sup>49</sup>, as well as M. Hallerberg<sup>50</sup>, leaders (prime-minister and heads of parties) in minority governments have strong stimuli not only to influence, but also to choose between fixed or floating exchange rates (in fact in favor of the latter). As a result, prime-ministers in minority governments and the very minority governments themselves are determined by lower discount coefficient, in comparison with majority governments, due to their relative government instability, "shorter horizon period". However, it determines that prime-ministers in minority governments are less interested in and concerned about final expenditures and expectedly higher levels of inflation, caused by such changes of currency rates, appealing to the control over inflation by means of fixed balance<sup>51</sup>.

In addition, minority governments may position themselves as effective at least because they are relatively fluent in their ability to construct majority in legislatures with political parties, which are non-governmental and thus can more rationally effectively and politically promote significant, in particular controversial reforms<sup>52</sup>. An indicator of successfulness in conducting reforms in such case is a systematic possibility to stabilize agreements between government and non-government parties<sup>53</sup>. It can be especially observed due to remarks made by M. Laver and N. Schofield<sup>54</sup>, that ideologically centrist or mediate minority governments can even play a role of "policy dictators". This is the basis for checking and supporting the hypothesis that minority governments in fiscal or budget terms are the most responsible types of party government cabinets. Against this background J. Alt and R. Lowry<sup>55</sup> disprove the position, according to which unified government cabinets are less inclined to face budget deficit, while diversified government cabinets are more inclined to do that. G. Pech<sup>56</sup> notes that minority governments are not obligatory formed or must be formed in the situation of political and social-economic crises, because they can be a sign of a stable political environment. It substantiates the position, according to which minority governments, which are formed under the political crisis, are in fact determined by relatively high expenditures, while minority governments which appear under the stable situation (especially when they are the result of a powerful position of the initiator) are characterized by rather low expenses. All this means that minority governments are more socially and economically effective and show high-performance (or generally more successful), when they are constructed by more powerful political parties. Or minority governments

<sup>49</sup> Mukherjee B., Leblang D., *Minority Governments and Exchange Rate Regimes: Examining Evidence from 21 OECD Countries, 1975–1999*, "European Union Politics" 2006, vol 7, nr. 4, s. 450–476.

<sup>50</sup> Hallerberg M., *Veto Players and the Choice of Monetary Institutions*, "International Organization" 2002, vol 56, nr. 4, s. 796–797.

<sup>51</sup> Mukherjee B., Leblang D., *Minority Governments and Exchange Rate Regimes: Examining Evidence from 21 OECD Countries, 1975–1999*, "European Union Politics" 2006, vol 7, nr. 4, s. 450–476.

<sup>52</sup> Robert A., *Demythologizing the Czech opposition agreement*, "Europe-Asia Studies" 2003, vol 55, nr. 8, s. 1280.

<sup>53</sup> Helland L., *Adequate fiscal responses under minority rule? Evidence from advanced democracies*, Wyd. Norwegian School of Management.

<sup>54</sup> Laver M., Schofield N., *Multiparty Government: The Politics of Coalition in Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 1998, s. 111.

<sup>55</sup> Alt J., Lowry R., *Divided government, fiscal institutions, and budget deficits: evidence from the states*, "American Political Science Review" 1994, vol 88, nr. 4, s. 811–828.

<sup>56</sup> Pech G., *Government Formation, Budget Negotiations and Re-election Uncertainty: The Cases of Minority and Majority Coalition Governments*, Wyd. Centre for Research into Industry, Enterprise, Finance and the Firm 2001.



effectiveness depends on how much “external expenditures of a government cabinet” coincide with “expenditures within a government cabinet”.

Taking into account studies conducted by R. Perotti and I. Kontopoulos<sup>57</sup> and our own observations we may state that effectiveness of minority governments depends on a percentage ratio in a parliamentary composition of parties, which make up governments in correlation with a nominal composition of legislature. The point is that such correlation, in addition to single-party or coalitional character of minority governments, exerts influence on capability of the analyzed governments to preserve positional and institutional status quo. Taking it into account, for example, it is obvious that the most effective among minority governments, at least theoretically, are single-party cabinets, with the number of party seats approaching to 50% of a nominal composition in legislatures. It is especially observed in those cases, when such parties in single-party minority governments are ideologically non-centrist/medial, resembling single-party majority governments. A bit less effectiveness of such governments is shown when they are operationalized in the systems of bicameral legislatures, but on the condition that personal composition of parliament chambers is ideologically different. And eventually, as V. Towliat<sup>58</sup> remarks that effectiveness of minority governments depends on combination of the number of government parties and the percent of their parliamentary seats together with the character of support provided to these parties and governments formed by them in legislatures: when the described conditions lead to the growth of party factionalization, then minority government become less politically and socially-economically effective and vice versa.

From the political perspective, consequences and effects of minority governments are also very variable. Thus, among the key negative political consequences and effects of minority governments it is possible to single out: a) relative instability of the very government cabinets, and therefore political process and political system; b) crisis of legitimacy of governing, presupposed by the lack of “strong/formalized power of minority governments and their relatively high level of stability”; c) inability to fully implement all planned programs and measures (social-economic and foreign policy) of minority governments, what caused the tendencies for such governments to be not very long-standing<sup>59</sup>; d) spending too much time on formation and spread/provision support to minority government cabinets; e) constantly low level of parliamentary discourse and cooperation between parties, what is determined by the fact that parties are in permanent conflict and in expectation of early parliamentary elections<sup>60</sup>, as a result of which elections

<sup>57</sup> Kontopoulos Y., Perotti R., *Government fragmentation and Fiscal Policy Outcomes: Evidence from OECD Countries*, [w:] Poterba J. (ed.), *Fiscal Institutions and Fiscal Performance*, Wyd. National Bureau of Economic Research 1999, s. 81–102.

<sup>58</sup> Towliat V., *Minority government and fiscal policy outcomes: New evidence*, Wyd. Lund university 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Oktay S., *United We Act, Divided We Halt? The Effects of Government Structure on the Foreign Policy Behavior of European Governments, 1994–2004*, Prepared to be presented at the Biennial Meeting of the European Union Studies Association, Baltimore, May 9–11, 2013.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas P., *A glimpse of the future? What the minority governments of the 38th and 39th Parliaments can teach about proposals for electoral reform*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Saskatoon, May 29 – June 1, 2007.

lose their expediency and accountability; f) relative slowness and operational inefficiency of administrating and governing<sup>61</sup>.

Explanations and effects of the described political consequences of minority governments are supplemented by the fact that determined institutional designs considerably lose to majority governments as to succession and resulting quality of their activity (especially in case of situational and not formalized minority governments). Therefore, minority governments are less predictable and less reliable while solving social-economic and systematic problems of state development, as traditionally they embrace smaller range of problems, than majority governments. Especially, it is difficult for minority governments to take budget and reformist decisions. This, as their experience in European parliamentary democracies proves, is predetermined by the need for constant negotiations as to parliamentary support of minority governments provided by non-government parties. Consequently, it cannot be excluded that instead of taking urgent measures of state policy, minority governments will have to take part in long and complicated negotiations over their support and further functioning. It causes and generates much smaller system responsibility and accountability than in case of majority governments. That is why we may assume that key and at the same time “cycle” drawbacks of minority governments are their relative instability, inconstancy and ineffectiveness, misbalancing character of which can especially dangerous reveal first of all in the systems of semi-presidential type (in particular under conditions of the diversified minority system). To C. Skach’s<sup>62</sup> point of view such situation is predominantly caused by the fact that minority governments in the context of semi-presidentialism (especially when they confront opposed presidents, who do not enjoy support of the majority in legislature) can lead to the problem of controllability over political process, maximization of conflicts in the system of dual executive power, political instability, decrease in effectiveness of governing and backsliding/retreat from democracy.

On the other hand, as Z. Maoz and B. Russett state that minority governments are not always characterized by relative instability (against the background of majority governments) and thus are capable of functioning successfully and effectively. The point is that “minority governments are not more restricted than majority governments”<sup>63</sup>, as the former can even be less conflictive than the latter. B. Prins and C. Sprecher<sup>64</sup>, as well as M. Ireland and S. Gartner<sup>65</sup> state that it is determined by the fact that majority governments (in particular coalitional, which are among the majority of governments in Europe) face a bigger number of variants of political/

<sup>61</sup> Forsey E., The Problem of “Minority” Government in Canada, *“Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science”* 1964, vol 30, nr. 1, s. 1–11.

<sup>62</sup> Skach C., *Borrowing Constitutional Designs: Constitutional Law in Weimar Germany and the French Fifth Republic*, Wyd. Princeton University Press 2005, s. 15, 17–18.

<sup>63</sup> Maoz Z., Russett B., Normative and structural causes of the democratic peace, 1946–1986, *“American Political Science Review”* 1993, vol 87, nr. 3, s. 626.

<sup>64</sup> Prins B., Sprecher C., Institutional constraints, political opposition, and interstate dispute escalation: Evidence from parliamentary systems, 1946–1989, *“Journal of Peace Research”* 1999, vol 36, nr. 3, s. 271–287.

<sup>65</sup> Ireland M., Gartner S., Time to Fight: Government Type and Conflict Initiation in Parliamentary Systems, *“Journal of Conflict Resolution”* 2001, vol 45, nr. 5, s. 547–568.

party resistance than minority governments. Therefore, namely minority governments and not majority ones are less dangerous in questions referring to escalation of institutional conflicts.

In addition, among the advantages of minority governments in European parliamentary democracies scientists name institutional sensitivity, accountability, transparency and responsibility. Thus, theoretically it is clear and not occasionally observed that minority government cabinets are very sensitive to the views of individual deputies of legislature. As policy in minority cabinets is outlined, carried out and determined not independently or directly by prime-ministers and members of their cabinets (as in cases with majority governments), but by prime-ministers, members of cabinet and government, situational and oppositional parties of legislature<sup>66</sup>. Besides, in particular situational and opposition parties, which formally comprise majority in legislature can effectively check or introduce issues of votes of no-confidence in minority governments making them work more responsibly<sup>67</sup>. In its turn, accountability of minority governments before parliamentary parties reveals in the fact that government legislations must be obligatory and in time presented to all oppositional and situational parties, because namely on them it depends whether laws and regulations would be adopted or not. Finally, public disclosure and transparency of minority governments' policy are based on constant communication between governments, oppositional and situational parties of legislature. On average as P. Thomas<sup>68</sup> states it means that namely minority governments and not majority governments implement practice of more democratic and effective legislatures. Because government parties do not really possess potential to personalize power, but always look for a consensus and compromise while contacting oppositional and situational (I total non-government) political forces<sup>69</sup>. First of all it reveals in the fact that within the frames of minority governments much used and effective are procedures of parliamentary debates. Besides, from the perspective of minority governments legislatures are more open and democratic in the light of non-government parties and individual deputies of legislature, as the latter are not only authorized, but are also interested in introducing own legislative initiatives<sup>70</sup>. It contributes to the growth in efficiency of minority governments, as the search for support helps not only implement "good and clever things", but also prevent "bad and ill-considered things"<sup>71</sup>.

On average, it means that types of government are not an obligatory predictor of their social-economic and political effectiveness. Thus, minority governments can be effective or ineffective, and the key question is what exerts influence on this and on what depends social-economic

<sup>66</sup> Dobell P., What could Canadians expect from a minority government?, *"Policy Matters"* 2000, vol 1, nr. 6, s. 1–20.

<sup>67</sup> McCandless H., Public Accountability in a Minority Government, *"Canadian Parliamentary Review"* 2004, vol 27, nr. 3, s. 31–39.

<sup>68</sup> Thomas P., *A Working Minority?*, Wyd. Institute On Governance 2006; Thomas P., Measuring the effectiveness of a minority parliament, *"Canadian Parliamentary Review"* 2007, vol 30, nr. 1, s. 22–31.

<sup>69</sup> Forsey E., The Problem of "Minority" Government in Canada, *"Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science"* 1964, vol 30, nr. 1, s. 4.

<sup>70</sup> Strahl C., Politics and Procedure in a Minority Government, *"Canadian Parliamentary Review"* 2004, vol 27, nr. 4, s. 7–9.

<sup>71</sup> Forsey E., The Problem of "Minority" Government in Canada, *"Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science"* 1964, vol 30, nr. 1, s. 4.

and political effectiveness of minority governments. On this account K. Strom<sup>72</sup> states that minority governments are socially and economically and politically effective only in case, when legislatures, within which they are formed and function, and their individual party actors are united and characterized by stimuli for cooperation. That is when the problems referring to coordination of inter-institutional executive-legislative relations could be overcome. Additional, but ambiguous importance in this context has stability of minority governments, as it predictably influences or at least can exert influence on minority government effectiveness. The same opinion is shared by M. Benner and T. Vad<sup>73</sup>. They state that only institutionally and behaviourally flexible minority governments, which can “maneuver” in the process of searching support for their own political (legislative) initiatives in legislatures, can be effective. In other words as C. Green-Pedersen<sup>74</sup> puts it, effective are those minority governments, which operate different variants of formal or situational support of legislature. On the analogy, more effective are those minority governments which in their parliamentary support and legislative activity (or governing in general) rely on and make agreements (conduct negotiations) not with one party, but with several parties in legislatures. The point is that when a minority government has only one variant of constructing the majority support, then non-government party or parties, which provide support only to governments’ initiatives, have too significant influence on the political course and functioning of the government cabinet. That is why, effectiveness of taking government’s initiatives in legislature, and consequently effectiveness of a government cabinet largely depends on closeness of such initiative to an ideal position of a non-government party or parties, which support minority governments.

As a result it is obvious that political and social-economic effectiveness of minority governments is the bases for consideration, referring the question how minority governments are interpreted by public and electorate. In this context, it is obvious that in political science there is no unified theory, devoted to explanation why public may support or protest against minority government phenomenon and activity. However, there are some theoretical assumptions, in this or that way concerning it, which could disclose how electorate perceives minority governments. It is notable that such reflections are rather numerous, referring to the countries, where minority governments are formed more often<sup>75</sup>. However, distinctive studies are too few or they are prejudiced in some cases, which are not characterized by minority governments (which are not regularized or even prohibited) or are formed rather seldom.

<sup>72</sup> Strom K., *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990, s. 129.

<sup>73</sup> Benner M., Vad T., *Sweden and Denmark: Defending the Welfare State*, [w:] Scharpf F., Schmidt V. (eds.), *Welfare Work in the Open Economy: Vol. II. Diverse Responses to Common Challenges in Twelve Countries*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 399–466.

<sup>74</sup> Green-Pedersen C., *Minority Governments and Party Politics: The Political and Institutional Background to the ‘Danish Miracle’*, *Journal of Public Policy* 2002, vol 21, nr. 1, s. 53–70.

<sup>75</sup> Artés J., Bustos A., *Electoral promises and minority governments: An empirical study*, *European Journal of Political Research* 2008, vol 47, nr. 3, s. 307–333; Russell P., *Two Cheers for Minority Government: The Evolution of Canadian Parliamentary Democracy*, Wyd. Emond Montgomery Publications 2008.; Godbout J.-F., Hoyland B., *Voting Coalitions and Minority Governments in Canada*, Paper presented at the American Political Science Association Meeting Toronto, September 5, 2009.

The majority of early scientific studies concerning the problem of perceiving minority governments by public and electorate follow the scenario, according to which such cases of institutional design are instable and ineffective and thus their perception must be negative. For example, E. Forsey states that perception of minority governments is predominantly negative, as the phenomena described by this notion are traditionally “incompetent, weak, indecisive, if not worse”<sup>76</sup>. Similar opinion is shared by L. Leduc, who assumes that voters are traditionally inclined to support majority governments in accordance with “the British tradition of parliamentary policy”<sup>77</sup>. Finally, H. Cody argues that parties, public and mass media perceive minority government cabinets and expect their operationalization as “fragile structures”, which, on the one hand, are able to build a short bridge to the majority, and, on the other hand, act as “unreliable instruments of governing”<sup>78</sup>.

On average, critical perception of minority governments by public and electorate is presupposed by the following: a) these constructions of institutional design predictably limit direct accountability of government cabinets before people, and thus are “less democratic” (at least in terms of people’s influence on composition of minority governments); b) these scenarios of inter-institutional relations are interpreted as the least transparent among other party governments<sup>79</sup>, as they often function on the basis of informal and situational agreements, which are not always known to the public; c) such government cabinets, being dependent on support provided by non-government (situational and oppositional) parties, are less capable of performing their obligations; d) these executive structures are restricted in their ability to find and implement innovation political and managerial decisions, as they, on the one hand, are less responsible and, on the other hand, are less accountable. However, distinctively it is clear that minority governments are much popular in “old” and consolidated democracies than in “young” democracies, which are in the process of consolidation. Moreover, minority governments are more positively perceived in the countries, which test proportional and not majority election systems and formulas.

On the contrary, positive perception of minority governments by public and electorate is presupposed, in particular on the bases of including party expectations, stipulated by the fact that these institutions serve as peculiar “information labels”, which assist society to neglect absence of necessary political knowledge. The point is that electoral results of minority governments give a possibility to introduce a row of complex challenges, which require certain level of political

<sup>76</sup> Forsey E., The Problem of “Minority” Government in Canada, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 1964, vol 30, nr. 1, s. 3.

<sup>77</sup> Leduc L., Political Behaviour and the Issue of Majority Government in Two Federal Elections, *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 1977, vol 10, s. 311.

<sup>78</sup> Cody H., Minority Government in Canada: The Stephen Harper Experience, *American Review of Canadian Studies* 2008, vol 38, nr. 1, s. 27.

<sup>79</sup> Gallagher K., Laver K., Mair P., *Representative Government in Modern Europe: Institutions, Parties, and Governments*, Wyd. McGraw-Hill 2005, s. 383.

competence to operate party-oriented problems, incorporated in them<sup>80</sup>. It is important that comprehension of minority governments is determined on the basis of voters' corrections of their own attitude towards these institutional scenarios, at least on the basis of strategic voting, as a result of which the electorate's choice can be motivated by expecting the results of voting. It is especially traced when are formed minority governments, which lack just a bit to achieve the status of minimally victorious coalitions or single-party majority governments. As in such cases voters feel that they are represented by electorally successful parties<sup>81</sup>.

To positive perception of minority governments contributes the fact that being less democratic accountable and responsible they are characterized by a more "opened style" of procedural democracy. The point is that under conditions of minority governments much more influential become uncharacteristic for the bigger part of majority governments veto-authority in executive-legislative relations, as non-government parties do not just have a right but are also interested in limiting resources of government parties, restricting hypothetical (but permanent for most parliamentary democracies) growth in concentrating power by government cabinets<sup>82</sup>. And this, though being contradictory, enhances legislative-negotiating "power" of non-government parties, on the basis of which there is a non-institutional increase in minority governments accountability<sup>83</sup>. Thus, people understand that minority governments, being dispersive representations of executive power, are or at least can be more "sensitive" to voters' preferences. As they, in particular to engage support on the part of legislature, may offer more variable scenarios of solving different legislative/managerial coalitions<sup>84</sup>. Especially, it can be observed due to the fact that minority governments, in comparison with majority governments, pay excessive attention to small parties, what causes such drawback of minority governments as blurring of the locus of responsibility for government's actions, as a result of which minority governments are more able, in contrast with majority governments, to solve "short-term" problems of state management and achieve short-term electoral successes.

To conclude, we state that support of minority government cabinets can be led by electoral preferences and expectations of more dispersed authority and more flexible reaction to public requests; reaction to minority governments can be predetermined by more pragmatic economic expectations, reflections and calculations; party expectations of minority governments may be motivated by voters' desire to serve and have a liking for the interests of the parties they support. In other words, it means that voters, who support small parties or voters, who support big parties, but hope they do not win the elections, consistently prefer minority governments;

<sup>80</sup> Dufresne Y., Nevitte N., Why do Publics Support Minority Governments? Three Tests, *Parliamentary Affairs* 2014, vol 67, s. 825–840.

<sup>81</sup> Artés J., Bustos A., Electoral promises and minority governments: An empirical study, *European Journal of Political Research* 2008, vol 47, nr. 3, s. 307–333.

<sup>82</sup> Forsey E., The Problem of "Minority" Government in Canada, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 1964, vol 30, nr. 1, s. 1–11.

<sup>83</sup> McCandless H., Public Accountability in a Minority Government, *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 2004, vol 27, nr. 3, s. 31–39.

<sup>84</sup> Forsey E., The Problem of "Minority" Government in Canada, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 1964, vol 30, nr. 1, s. 1–11.

voters who are concerned with social-economic policy, are less inclined to support minority governments; and voters who do not tend to concentration of power, support the idea of minority governments.

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