

THE FEATURES OF THE METHOD AND METHODOLOGY OF STUDYING THE STABILITY AND EFFICIENCY OF GOVERNMENTS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SCIENCE: THEORETICAL CUT

The article is devoted to systematization and generalization of the peculiarities of method and methodology of studying stability and efficiency of governments in comparative Political Science. It is based on an appeal to available studies of stability and efficiency of governments that do apply different methodological approaches. It was argued that the problems of stability and efficiency of governments were reflected on the basis of the use of methods and methodology of not only Political Science, but also of Law, Sociology, History, Economics, etc. Nevertheless, it was stated that the problems of stability and efficiency of governments are primarily an interest, which is solved by methods and methodology of comparative Political Science, and thus a comparative method of research. In general, the author found that the issues of stability and efficiency of governments are interdisciplinary, and therefore there is a need for a comprehensive disclosure due to the methods of comparative analysis.

Keywords: government stability, government efficiency, method, methodology, comparative Political Science.

CECHY METODY I METODOLOGII BADANIA STABILNOŚCI I EFEKTYWNOŚCI RZĄDÓW W POLITOLOGII PORÓWNAWCZEJ:

PRZEKRÓJ TEORETYCZNY

Artykuł poświęcony jest usystematyzowaniu i uogólnieniu cech metody i metodologii badania stabilności i efektywności rządów w politologii porównawczej. Opiera się ona na odwołaniu do istniejących badań stabilności i efektywności rządów, które już stosują różne podejścia metodologiczne. Argumentowano, że problematyka stabilności i efektywności rządów znalazła swoje odzwierciedlenie w oparciu o stosowanie metod i metodologii nie tylko nauk politycznych ale także prawa, socjologii, historii, ekonomii itp. Stwierdzono jednak, że sama w sobie problematyka stabilności i efektywności rządów jest głównym przedmiotem zainteresowania, które interpretuje się poprzez metody i metodologię politologii porównawczej, a zatem i metodą porównawczą badań. Ogólnie stwierdzono, że problematyka stabilności i efektywności rządów jest uznana za interdyscyplinarną i dla tego wymaga kompleksowego badania za pomocą metod analizy porównawczej.

Słowa kluczowe: stabilność rządów, efektywność rządów, metoda, metodologia, politologia porównawcza.

Contemporary comparative Political Science is characterized by a considerable amount of research that focuses on the issues of the stability and efficiency of governments. Moreover, these studies are both theoretical, and also practical and empiric, since they concern individual countries¹, as well as entire regions and even parts of the world, including Western Europe², Central and Eastern Europe³, Eastern Europe⁴, Asia⁵, etc. In this respect, Political Science has accumulated an enormous array of theoretical, statistical and empirical data on the stability and efficiency of governments. However, a variety of methods and methodologies for investigating and comparing the governments' stability and efficiency has remained quite diffuse, liberal and not systematized. Eventually, various researchers have suggested very different approaches not only to theoretical aspects, yet to the toolbox and ways (methods and methodologies) of comparing the stability and efficiency of governments. Therefore, the proposed study primarily focuses on the theoretical definition and systematization of the peculiarities of the method, and respectively methodology of studying the governments' stability and efficiency in comparative Political Science.

This theme is utterly topical, given that Political Science is by default not research-oriented from the perspective of using the methods and methodology of cognition and obtaining reliable

¹ Например: Cox G., *The Efficient Secret: The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 2005.; Grofman B., van Roosendaal P., Toward a Theoretical Explanation of Premature Cabinet Termination with Application to Post-War Cabinets in the Netherlands, *European Journal of Political Research* 1994, vol 26, s. 155-170.; Huber J., Martinez-Gallardo C., *Cabinet Instability and the Accumulation of Experience in the Cabinet: The French Fourth and Fifth Republics in Comparative Perspective*, Wyd. Instituto Juan March de Estudios e Investigaciones 2002.; James O., Boyne G., Moseley A., Petrovsky N., *Performance, Stakeholder Stability and the Survival of UK Executive Agencies*, Paper presented to Public Management Research Conference, Maxwell School of Syracuse University, June 2011.; Protsyk O., Troubled Semi-Presidentialism: Stability of the Constitutional System and Cabinet in Ukraine, *Europa-Asia Studies* 2003, vol 55, nr. 7, s. 1077-1095.; Wolf P., A case survey of bureaucratic effectiveness in U.S. cabinet agencies: Preliminary results, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 1993, vol 3, nr. 2, s. 161-181.

² Например: Browne E., Frensdreis J., Gleiber D., The Process of Cabinet Dissolution: An Exponential Model of Duration and Stability in Western Democracies, *American Journal of Political Science* 1986, vol 30, nr. 3, s. 628-650.; Héritier A., *New Modes of Governance in Europe: Increasing Political Capacity and Policy Effectiveness?*, [w:] Börzel T., Cichowski R. (eds.), *The State of the European Union: Book 6 – Law, Politics, and Society*, Oxford 2003, s. 105-126.; Lee S-Y., Whitford A., Government Effectiveness in Comparative Perspective, *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 2009, vol 11, nr. 2, s. 249-281.; Lijphart A., Measures of Cabinet Durability: A Conceptual and Empirical Evaluation, *Comparative Political Studies* 1984, vol 17, nr. 2, s. 265-279.; Maoz Z., Somer-Topcu Z., *Political Polarization and Cabinet Stability in Multiparty Systems: A Social Networks Analysis of European Parliaments 1945-1998*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, 2009.; Sanders D., Herman H., The Stability and Survival of Governments in Western Europe, *Acta Politica* 1977, vol 12, nr. 3, s. 346-377.; Scharpf F., *Governing Europe: effective and democratic?*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 1999.; Warwick P., The Durability of Coalition Governments in Parliamentary Democracies, *Comparative Political Studies* 1979, vol 11, s. 465-498.; Zimmerman E., Government Stability in Six European Countries During the World Economic Crisis of the 1930s: Some Preliminary Considerations, *European Journal of Political Research* 1987, vol 15, nr. 1, s. 23-52.

³ Например: Conrad C., Golder S., Measuring government duration and stability in Central Eastern European democracies, *European Journal of Political Research* 2010, vol 49, nr. 1, s. 119-150.; Harfst P., *Government Stability in Central and Eastern Europe: The Impact of Parliaments and Parties*, Paper prepared for the ECPR Joint Session of Workshops Copenhagen, 14-19 April 2000.; Lytvyn V., *Porivniabnyi analiz stabilnosti uriadiv kraїн Tsentralnoi Yevropy ta Ukraїny*, Wyd. Lvivskiyi natsionalnyi universytet imeni Ivana Franka 2010.; Müller-Rommel F., *Types of Cabinet Durability in Central Eastern Europe*, Paper posted at the eScholarship Repository, University of California Irvine, 2005.; Nikolenyi C., Cabinet Stability in Post-Communist Central Europe, *Party Politics* 2004, vol 10, nr. 1, s. 123-150.; Toole J., Government Formation and Party System Stabilization in East Central Europe, *Party Politics* 2000, vol 6, s. 441-461.

⁴ Białobłocki Z., *Stabilność i efektywność rządów u politycznych systemach kraїн Skhidnoi Yevropy*, Wyd. Wydawnictwo centr LNU imeni Ivana Franka 2013.

⁵ Например: Brewer G., Choi Y., Walker R., Accountability, Corruption and Government Effectiveness in Asia: an Exploration of World Bank Governance Indicators, *International Public Management Review* 2007, vol 8, nr. 2, s. 200-219.

knowledge, generally applied to exact sciences. Accordingly, one of the main peculiarities of Political Science, particularly comparative political studies, is the fact that in its evolution it cannot rely solely on experimental research data and experimentally verify the conclusions and results obtained⁶. Researchers, for instance, cannot propose a particular country to change its electoral system to a mixed, majoritarian or, say, proportional in order to see whether it would increase the number of parties in the relevant parliament⁷, or “ask Mrs. Margaret Thatcher to resign in 1983, in order to find out whether any other Conservative party leader or the prime minister himself would have pursued a less radical policy than Mrs. Thatcher did under similar political and economic circumstances»⁸. Therefore, comparative methods, pivotal in the formation of scientific knowledge of political institutions and processes, or of political life on the whole, are rarely realised in the form of experimentation. Instead, their essence is limited to detection of common and peculiar features of phenomena, institutions and processes under consideration. This is of utter importance, since in the process of comparing “things or phenomena are placed aside..., then “made equal”, i.e. they are being compared. Meanwhile, there arise similarities («moving towards one point»), coincidences («overlapping each other»), along with differences («multiplication of points», that is, masks, or semblances of the single⁹»). For this reason most Political Science comparisons are made on the basis of a single principle: correlation of phenomena with a certain standard that may reveal concepts, ideal structures or models, etc.

In this light worth mentioning is the fact that existence of more than two hundred independent states, and consequently their accumulated political experience of both successful and problematic development, is the backbone that allows to test existing theoretical concepts, produce new interdependencies on the basis of practical analysis and comparison, identify trends, formulate theories, and seek solutions to current political situations. Thus, the comparative method is one of the components of modern Political Science which, undoubtedly, focuses on comparison itself, as well as the manner and reasons for making correlations between political phenomena¹⁰. Moreover, a brief review of the comparative Political Science history illustrates that, given the significant value of its results, the research method and methodology remain the major systemic and determinant components of such a field of research as comparative Political Science (including related disciplines, employing an array of comparison methods and tools). Highly overlooked is the fact that Political Science has almost always taken advantage of methods of comparative political studies with a purpose similar to the manner the exact sciences exploit the experiment as such. The reason lies in the fact that comparative method

⁶ Romaniuk A., *Porivniabnyi analiz politychnykh institutiv krain Zakhidnoi Yevropy*, Wyd. LNU imeni Ivana Franka 2007.

⁷ Hague R., Harrop M., *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*, Wyd. Palgrave 2001, s. 23.

⁸ March D., Stoker G., *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Wyd. Macmillan Press and St.Martin's Press 1995, s. 174.

⁹ Ilin M., *Sravnitel'naya politologiya: nauchnaya komparativistika v sisteme politicheskogo znaniya*, „*Polis*“ 2001, vol 4, s. 164.

¹⁰ Mair P., *Comparative Politics: An Overview*, [w:] Goodin R., Klingemann H-D. (eds.), *A New Handbook of Political Science*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 1998.

in Political Science provides opportunities to describe and classify, organize and explain various combinations of events and phenomena that either have occurred or are under way in the politics of different countries¹¹.

With regard to comparative method and methodology in the study of the governments stability and efficiency, the authors of most papers on the subject have adopted the ideas of the 1955 Evanston Seminar. In this respect, comparison is made at an abstract level, as a rule. Respectively, particular situations and processes are not typically comparable and cannot be compared as standalone objects. Each phenomenon is regarded as one of a kind, each discovery is considered unparalleled, and each process and institute is treated as unique. Otherwise, to compare them means to select certain types and concepts, thus interfering with their authenticity and specificity. Secondly, researchers typically assume that prior to establishing specific comparison categories and concepts, it is necessary to identify hallmarks, indicators, markers of components of a particular political situation or institute, related to the governments stability and efficiency in a certain analytical case. Thirdly, scholars are attempting to establish criteria and parameters to adequately reflect those components, which are part of the overall analysis of the stability and efficiency of governments. Fourthly, scholars make hypotheses, arising directly out of their own or already existing and adopted conceptual scheme, as well as from the formulation of the problem posed. Fifthly, understanding that linking hypotheses and means of their research may find no evidence whatsoever, researchers frequently insist that hypotheses or hypothetical relationships, concerning the contemplated objects should be considered proved until denied or falsified. Penultimately, scholars endeavour to formulate lists and sets of hypotheses, rather than put forward individual ones, since in each and every case, the connecting link between the list of hypotheses and related political relations and institutions is formed by means of clarifying the conditions, stipulating some of or even the entirety of the possibilities listed in the proposed hypotheses set. Last but not least, scholars have traditionally been aware that comparison, collation and opposition, even failing to meet the expectations of a current theory, can create favourable conditions for consistent development of a theory with the help of other tools of hypotheses-making, as well as means of testing them. Simultaneously, researchers have generally realised that one of the dangers in creating lists of hypotheses is the unlimited plane of presumable interrelations between political institutions and processes¹². Hence, scholars should by all means avoid this by proposing samples and collections of facts, contributing to creation of hypotheses lists before they are actually formulated.

However, it is of utmost importance to compare the stability and efficiency of governments in the light of an array of additional features of the comparative method and methodology of Political Science. Among them connotations should be given priority, in accordance with those: political structures (institutions and processes) constantly reveal fluctuating and complex

¹¹ Almond G., Powell B., *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, Wyd. Little, Brown and Company 1984, s. 15.

¹² Macridis R., *A Survey of the Field of Comparative Government*, Wyd. The Free Press 1969.

pictures of political reality; political views appear to be complicated, variable and probabilistic, so explanatory questions put focus primarily on the likelihood of peculiarities, attending certain political phenomena, institutions and processes; the impact of the environment and political networks being rather complex and interactive than simple and straightforward, interaction between citizens is characterized by a non-linear nature of communication; determinant criteria and features of political institutions, processes and decisions hinder further results of the political process; political protests, revolutions, and crises reveal the political process instability, often describing their emergence in the political picture as unpredictable and nondeterministic; a determinant of a particular case has a significant impact upon the overall political picture and actual political process, because a particular case is an inherent part of the political process, to always take into account¹³.

This suggests that in the political comparative studies of the governments stability and efficiency, the political world, being not fully embraced by a simple ontology of cause-effect relationships, yet involving a variety of cases as products of objective and subjective factors instead, must be investigated and coherently determined. Therefore, a proper and systematic comparative study of the governments stability and efficiency should combine common characteristics and specific / deviant details / cases to the fullest extent, and the use of formal benchmarking models should require a combination of abstract theoretical constructs contemplation with simultaneous explanations of specific examples and individual (even deviant) cases, illustrating these examples. Consequently, upon such a comparison, there should necessarily follow identification and comparison of the nature, determinants and parameters of the stability and effectiveness of governments with a particular (specifically defined) class and cluster of tangent phenomena, as well as outlining their common and distinct characteristics. It is therefore quite obvious that the process of constructing a theory on the basis of comparative studies is utterly complex. For, on the one hand, it is impossible to carry out a comparative study without the theory, but on the other hand, it is absolutely impossible to create a theory without the operational data obtained as a result of such a comparative analysis. In addition, there is a whole range of methodologic and methodical properties and parameters to address in the course of comparative political analysis of the governments' stability and efficiency.

Alongside, it is advisable to understand that the comparative method in the Political Science of the governments stability and efficiency not only creates new typologies, but also corrects existing ones. For instance, in the scientific literature there are many classifications of forms and systems of government, with further differentiation of numerous types and subtypes, ranging from two to several dozen. A similar logic applies to outlining the number of government types and dimensions of such typologies. The reasons for such ambiguity are hidden not as much in the classified object itself, as in the "traps" that scholars, ignoring logical rules

¹³ Zukerman A., Reformulating Scientific Understanding and Advancing Theory in Comparative Politics, "Newsletter of the APSA Organized Section in Comparative Politics" 1997, vol 8, nr. 1.

and procedures, frequently fail to avoid. It is therefore of utmost importance that the choice of irrelevant criteria of any typology, the coincidence of the distribution objects, the “leap” in the course of abstraction, distribution mismatch, strained interpretations of concepts and substitution of classification logic for the gradation logic can significantly affect the comparative results obtained. Thus, a thorough analysis of previous errors is a prerequisite for creating a new typology¹⁴”.

Moreover, it should be noted that comparison as a method of Political Science is of axiological value. In various countries objects of study are judged against the background of perfect ideas, while deviations from certain norms give impetus for further studies of political institutions and phenomena, including the stability and efficiency of governments. Thus, a researcher investigating only one country may interpret as normal something that seems to be anomalous from a comparative perspective¹⁵. In addition, comparative analysis plays a significant role in the political projects evaluation, as it helps to understand advantages and disadvantages of varied attributes of institutions and processes in the political system, consequently identifying the potential pros and cons of hypothetical change¹⁶ more accurately.

Accordingly, the applied value of comparative method and methodology is indisputable in the study of the governments stability and efficiency. Analysing and taking into account the accumulated world experience enables us to make the best possible, reliable and effective administrative and political decisions, avoid mistakes in the construction of political and social institutions and processes, create an appropriate form and system of government, as well as an effective system of power distribution. Therefore, constitutional engineering presupposes borrowing the best practices of other systems, provided they are applicable and adaptable to the country under analysis. However, even though comparative research, including the governments stability and efficiency, gives the opportunity to imitate the valuable experience of other foreign countries, especially those more advanced and relatively “exemplary”. It is fair to mention that in real life there always exist limits to justifiableness of these borrowings and the boundaries that set the specific historical environment in which the social system operates|громадська|¹⁷. A striking example of this is the fact that in numerous countries around the world there occur instances of direct replicating of institutions, processes and norms without evaluating the possibility of their “transplantation and implantation” into national systems, such as mechanistic implementation of the separation of powers principle at all levels up to local self-government|самоуправління|¹⁸, or imitation of certain types of governments, regarded as optimal. Moreover, the authors of such “transplants” do not actually take into account that

¹⁴ Zaznayev O., *Tipologiya form pravleniya: rabota nad oshibkami*, „*Polis*” 2006, vol 1, s. 92-103.

¹⁵ Dogan M., *Sravnitel'naya politicheskaya sotsiologiya*, Moskva 1994, s. 19.

¹⁶ Bari D., *Poverkh granits: praktika sravnitel'nykh issledovaniy*, [w:] Mangeym D., Rich R. (eds.), *Politologiya. Metody issledovaniya*, Wyd. Ves mir 1997.

¹⁷ Farukshin M., *Sravnitel'naya politologiya i sravnitel'nyy metod*, [w:] *Metodologicheskiye problemy politicheskoy nauki*, Kazan 1996, s. 9.

¹⁸ Tikhomirov Y., *Kurs sravnitel'nogo pravovedeniya*, Wyd. Norma 1996, s. 5.

these structures, norms, institutions and processes, formed over long historical periods and having originated in a different political culture, belong to another stage of socio-economic development. Therefore, the comparative method enables us to avoid negative outcomes in the creation of new political institutions, including governments, because by comparing, correlating and contrasting the peculiarities of various mechanisms, a researcher can gain an insight into problems, typical of a particular country¹⁹.

In addition, a prognostic value of the comparative method and methodology for the governments stability and efficiency investigation should not be underestimated. The fact is that comparison, correlation and contrasting help to predict the potential results of the transition to one or the other form of existence and performance of political systems on the whole, and political institutions, government offices, in particular; to the introduction of political and constitutional innovations, especially concerning relations in the triangle «Head of the State - Government - Parliament», including the introduction of restrictions on parliamentary votes of confidence / investiture and no-confidence in the government. Despite a number of problems, arising in the course of any comparative Political Science study, the nature of these, as well as ways of their solution is thoroughly described in the comparative Political Science methodology. In this particular case, we will only briefly focus on the methodological and methodical difficulties, most peculiar for the analysis of the stability and efficiency of governments.

Ideally, an expert in comparative studies should select countries, identical in all aspects, except for the one that he intends to explore. However, this is hardly feasible in practice, as we have to compare countries with both common and distinct features. As a result, the question is whether the analysed phenomena, institutions and processes, especially those government-related, should be either similar or different. From such an angle, the majority of scholars in the domain of the governments stability and efficiency adhere to the largest similarity approach, based on the fact that comparing indicators of the governments stability and efficiency may suggest “blurring” of individual differences between countries in order to better analyse other cases²⁰. Thus, the solution to the problem of comparability lies in the fact that phenomena, institutions and processes can be compared with each other with at least one common feature available, for instance, positioning of an analysed country as democratic or autocratic, or the practice of either parliamentary or presidential government formation, etc.

Another problem of comparative Political Science research methodology is the ratio of a multitude of variables to a small number of cases. It may seem that two hundred world countries, or all countries of a particular part or region of the world, present a sufficient number of cases for political comparison. However, it poses a difficulty to find countries similar in all respects except for the one or several, being actually studied. This suggests that there are always

¹⁹ Riggs F., *Sravnitel'naya otsenka prezidentskoy formy pravleniya*, [w:] *Sravnitel'naya sotsiologiya. Izbrannyye perevody*, Wyd. Academia 1995, s. 152.

²⁰ Dogan M., *Sravnitel'naya politicheskaya sotsiologiya*, Moskva 1994, s. 19.

too many factors, affecting a researcher's scientific interest, while the case studies for identifying relationships between particular variables under study are partly or completely missing. Therefore, in the case of investigating the stability and efficiency of governments against the background of individual countries, parts or regions of the world (there are no universal studies in this context), the traditional problem is generally treated in the following ways: a direct increase in the number of cases on account of time, that is by means of inclusion of countries at different historical intervals; "largest similarity" strategies to reduce the number of variables in the study; reducing the number of variables by focusing on the most significant factors; "Models of economy", in particular the use of ideas of the rational choice theory²¹.

Simultaneously, the existing studies of the governments stability and efficiency often pose a reverse problem of availability of too many cases with few variables. Its solution requires the opposite action: reducing the number of cases to the most relevant while increasing the number of indicators to a minimum sufficient set and list of values, without which the analysis will be incomplete²². In addition, it seems quite logical to apply the strategies of largest similarity or greatest difference.

Further on, within comparative studies there also arises a problem of biased selection. In frequent cases, a researcher appears to be arbitrary while selecting cases. These may present countries that randomly fall within the scope of a research scheme or some kind of borrowed comparative theory. However, the distortion in the case selection often leads to erroneous results of the comparative study. Therefore, in the course of researching the stability and efficiency of governments of individual countries, parts or regions of the world, it is advisable to bear in mind the necessity to select dependent variables (indicators / markers), whose distinct indicators enable grouping and subsequent selecting of the analyzed countries. In addition, in the choice of countries it is worth remembering parallel cases. For instance, when examining the stability and efficiency of governments in Central and Eastern Europe or exclusively Eastern Europe, one should rely on similar practices in other world countries, specifically Western Europe²³. There occur incidents when a researcher interprets concepts, selects variables and comparison criteria according to his or her own values and beliefs. For example, in defining the "strength" of presidents and prime ministers, many authors mainly emphasize their formal authority, given the absence of a serious gap between the law and its actual implementation in developed democracies. This poses a problem of value neutrality, whose solution is either on the way of changing the relation to the historical method and history in general, or on the way of being introduced into political studies of the scientific realism methods.

Research practice, however, proves that for the best result of the comparative method and Political Science methodology in the study of the governments stability and efficiency, scholars

²¹ March D., Stoker G., *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Wyd. Macmillan Press and St.Martin's Press 1995, s. 174.

²² Ilin M., Osnovnyye metodologicheskiye problemy sravnitel'noy politologii, „Polis“ 2001, vol 6, s. 140-143.

²³ Landman T., *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*, Wyd. Routledge 2003.

often employ such comparison variants within comparative studies, as the case method, binary analysis, comparison of similar and contrasting states in terms of systemic parameters, etc.²⁴

The case study method is used to study countries, presenting peculiar or, on the contrary, deviant instances of a standard situation. Complementarily, this method is applied to verify formulated generalizations as well as theories, based on a variety of similar countries. Correlation of the findings obtained by comparing a plethora of similar states with the exception of a deviant state allows not only to reexamine previously accepted generalizations, but to better explore a range of other parameters, including the indicators of the governments stability and efficiency. This type of comparison is employed to test, intensify and further develop the scientific hypothesis. The study of the stability and effectiveness of governments typically embraces all kinds of definitions of single comparative cases, such as: an explanatory case study, involving application of the existing theory to explain a specific case; case study for hypothesis generation; case study to question or verify a scientific theory; case study for consolidation of a scientific theory; case study, deviating from a scientific theory (demonstrative, prototype, deviant, decisive and typical cases²⁵). At the same time, case studies of the governments' stability and efficiency are mostly treated as comparative, since the data, valid for one country are presented in a broad comparative context, the identification of which is not outlined as a separate research task [задача]²⁶. Besides, the study of governments identifies and evaluates usefulness of concepts, designated in other cases (other countries in respect to other objects in given countries at different time periods), tests the general theory or hypothesis, creating concepts that can be applied to other testable theories and hypotheses.

Instead, binary analysis involves exploring two countries or two country samples. Hence, it is advisable to apply direct and indirect binary analysis. Indirect comparison implies that a particular country is analysed through the prism of another country. This could be, for instance, Poland at the background of all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, or Germany at the background of all the countries of Western Europe, or Europe as a whole. In such a manner, the "ideal" model of the state is not applied.

In its turn comparison of similar countries provides prolific material to explain cause and effect relations, find out the impact of indicators, and highlight peculiarities of the governments stability and efficiency, detected in similar systems. Conversely, comparing contrasting countries involves juxtaposing political systems with opposite political, legal, economic, and other characteristics. These distinctions are of utter significance, hence comparing them suggests that one of the study objectives is to analyse countries with divergent indicators of the governments' stability and efficiency. Therefore, it is feasible to find out the influence of the essential features

²⁴ Dogan M., *Sravnitel'naya politicheskaya sotsiologiya*, Moskva 1994, s. 168-207.

²⁵ Lijphart A., Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method, *"American Political Science Review"* 1971, vol 65, nr. 3, s. 691-693.

²⁶ Golosov G., *Sravnitel'naya politologiya*, Wyd. Izd-vo Novosib. un-ta 1995.

of different political systems on the governments stability and efficiency, as well as determine the nature and direction of development of political institutions and processes.

According to another approach to the study of the governments' stability and efficiency, it is prudent to use such varieties of comparisons as: single-country and case analysis; analysis of similar institutions and processes of a limited range of countries, shortlisted by analytical criteria of the governments' stability and efficiency research; typological and classification schemes to compare, collate and contrast the governments stability and efficiency indicators in particular groups of states; a statistical and descriptive study of a particular sample of states in a certain part or region of the world, pointed out in terms of geographical and social and evolutionary markers, verification of hypotheses about the change in the stability and efficiency of governments; global statistics analysis to identify structures and validate relationships for a specific sample of political systems²⁷. It is noteworthy that regional and cross-temporal comparisons are absolutely appropriate in the study of the governments' stability and efficiency. The primary reason behind the application of these methods is a peculiar source of conceptual and methodological problems in comparative Political Science, related to the expansion of a range of political systems²⁸. However and most interestingly, a spectrum of political systems includes diffuse polities, being at different stages of their differentiation, liberalization and consolidation, or contrarily, authoritarianism and deconsolidation.

From such a perspective, a regional study involves comparing a group of countries in a particular region or part of the world according to certain indicators of the governments stability and efficiency (for instance, Western European countries relevant to Central European countries, or Central European countries relevant to Eastern Europe). Scholars emphasize the viability of this research type that provides an opportunity to solve a whole range of problems, existing in scientific comparisons. The fact is that all the analysed countries are selected on the basis of similarity of their economic, social and political characteristics. Unlike other types of comparisons, this research method involves a larger number of cases, thus being less detailed and more versatile. Instead, the so-called cross-temporal comparisons involve the study of objects, phenomena, and processes over time, i.e. by comparing the characteristics of the analysed states or groups of states at different time periods²⁹. In this regard they fall into two types: synchronous and asynchronous. A synchronous comparative study of the governments stability and efficiency involves correlation and measuring the stability and efficiency of governments in one or more countries at different time periods. Asynchronous comparison involves the study of indicators and measurements of the governments stability and efficiency in relevance to different countries or groups of countries at different time intervals.

²⁷ Hempel C., *Fundamentals of Concept Formation in Empirical Science*, Wyd. University of Chicago Press 1952, s. 10.

²⁸ Braibanti R., Comparative Political Analytics Reconsidered, *"The Journal of Politics"* 1968, vol 30, nr. 1, s. 36-37.

²⁹ Smorgunov L., *Sovremennaya sravnitel'naya politologiya*, Wyd. ROSSPEN 2004.

On the whole, it should be noted that virtually all of the traditionally outlined types of comparisons are system-integrated by nature, since they cover internal and external environment of the governments stability and efficiency study to the fullest extent, comprehensively assess the nature and extent of the impact of various phenomena, institutes and processes on the government and other institutions under consideration³⁰. Generally speaking, a comparative analysis of the governments stability and efficiency involves examining this problem, firstly, in a particular sample of countries, and subsequently, in a particular country in relation to a pre-determined sample of countries. It should be borne in mind that the number of countries, selected for comparative analysis is a limiting factor in the comparative study of the governments' stability and efficiency.

Simultaneously, it should not be neglected that among the priority tasks of the methodology of the governments stability and efficiency comparative study, is to identify the current trends in the development of the institute of government and the cabinet, regardless of the country, parts or regions of the world. For this purpose, comparative studies should make use of the analysis of structural components, mechanisms and functions of the Heads of State, Parliaments, Governments and political parties as leading political institutions of the countries analysed. In addition, elections are a key driving force of the political process, related to the main activities of parties, as parliaments and governments are formed through their mechanism. It should also be noted that comparisons of political systems are usually conducted at the macrolevel of national states, regarded as sovereign entities. Therefore, a comparative study of the governments stability and efficiency in a particular country or region helps distinguish between common and different governmental cabinet systems, point out indicators for their determination, formation and functioning, as well as identify common ground in activities of various political structures and processes. This presupposes that in the course of a comparative study of the governments stability and efficiency, review of the constitutions of countries under analysis should receive considerable attention, due to the fact that fundamental laws are documents or groups of documents, designating structures of the political systems in these countries. The constitutions define the main political institutions of states, including governmental ones, their competence and functions, as well as systems of interrelations and control.

In turn, to determine factual characteristics of government cabinets, designated in the political systems of the countries under study, it is essential to process a wide array of statistical information, directly relevant to the categories and phenomena under study. However, given that not all political phenomena and processes relevant to the study of the governments stability and efficiency can be analysed by means of bare facts, it is also useful to use index-mathematical comparisons, accumulated and applied by Political Science over the recent decade, and refine the comparative political analysis methodology to better understand the relevant political institutions and processes from the research viewpoint. In such a case, the comparative method

³⁰ Ilin M., Osnovnyye metodologicheskiye problemy sravnitel'noy politologii. „*Polis*“ 2001, vol 6, s. 140-143.

in the study of the governments stability and efficiency best of all synthesizes the methodologies of behaviourism and neo-institutionalism. Although, by way of contrast, too superficial and nebulous use of the mode of quantitative comparisons stipulates exsession of the level to which comparative Political Science is subject to quantification. So, there arises a necessity to use a kind of conventional demarcation line between quantification and the use of appropriate classification language, according to which quantitative analysis begins with numbers and occurs only in the case of the appropriate application of numbers, according to their arithmetic properties³¹. As a rule, three options for the meaning of quantification are commonly used in the studies of the governments stability and efficiency: metering (calculations), statistical operation, and formal mathematical processing. However, among those, the first two options are most frequently employed in the practice of analysing the stability and efficiency of governments. The point is that researchers have traditionally applied the metering. This means that quantification of the governments stability and efficiency lies in the following: providing internal and external indicative governments' positions (i.e. net metering) with numerical / quantitative values; using numbers and scale rankings to indicate positions in terms of certain aspects and dimensions of the stability and efficiency of governments (i.e. order scale); measuring discrepancies or distances between positions in individual cases of government offices as well as their stability and fictitiousness (i.e. interval scale).

In addition to simple metering techniques, experts in the governments stability and efficiency comparisons have at their disposal statistical techniques that not only help avoid errors in sample selection and metering, but also allow us to identify meaningful relationships between analytic variables. However, the process of statistical processing of the governments stability and efficiency can begin exclusively after a sufficient number of numerical / quantitative indicators have been obtained for the required number of items and indicators that need metering. These conditions are rather complicated to comply with, since a thorough analysis of statistical "discoveries" in terms of their theoretical significance and Political Science relevance illustrates a huge gap between relativities and the real state of affairs³². However, processing of numerical / quantitative indicators of the government stability and efficiency must be based on and tackle evidence, valid merely within conceptual reflections and refinements, only to hint scholars what constitutes the "reality" of the stability and efficiency of governments. Therefore, researchers cannot measure absolutely anything without pre-awareness of what an object of metering is. The degree of any indicator presence neither carries information about an object of analysis. Therefore, prior to detection of availability or absence of any properties, as well as classifying and metering them in terms of a variable, a researcher must elaborate a concept for that variable³³. The main problem is that a quantitative analysis of the stability and efficien-

³¹ Sartori G., Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics, *"The American Political Science Review"* 1970, vol 64, nr. 4, s. 1033-1053.

³² Lijphart A., Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method, *"American Political Science Review"* 1971, vol 65, nr. 3, s. 691-693.

³³ Lazarsfeld P., Barton A., *Qualitative Measurement in the Social Sciences: Classifications, Typologies and Indices*, [w:] Lerner D., Lasswell H. (eds.), *The Policy Sciences*, Wyd. Stanford University Press 1965, s. 155.

cy of governments should only be applied, following the formation of both a concept of the governments stability and efficiency, as well as their analytical variables. It is worth considering that material for quantitative analysis (objects, supported by figures and facts), cannot be collected by quantification alone. Respectively, the rules for generating concepts are irrespective of those for processing quantitative data and quantitative ratios, thus being impossible to be derived from them.

After all, it is fair to argue that in the analysis of the methodology of the governments' stability and efficiency comparative studies, one cannot dispense with the methodology of classifications. Classifications, despite numerous restrictions, have remained a prerequisite for any scientific discourse. Classification concepts can be used to describe the data obtained during the observation phase and formulate primary empirical generalizations³⁴. Besides, creation of classifications is regarded as a mainstream tool for bringing analytical clarity to indicators of the governments stability and efficiency, because classifications compel scientists to speak the same at one and the same time, and about different things at different times. It is precisely through classifications and the synthesis of qualitative and quantitative comparisons that cause and effect relationships, used in comparative political studies, should be successfully ensured. According to these, correlations should be verified in case (of): there are many / few reasons for the same comparative effect; there exists or does not exist dependency of causes on time; validity or invalidity of the principle, according to which identical reasons lead to different results; validity or invalidity of the principle, according to which results are indeed effects of various causes, depending on each other³⁵.

Concludingly, it is a valid proof that, based on the analysis and comparison of a number of scientific advances on the issues of the governments stability and efficiency, it can be argued that this scope of scientific interests of many political scientists makes impact on the application of not only Political Science methodology, but also Law, Sociology, History, Economics, etc. However, the stability and efficiency of governments is primarily an interest that can be solved by the comparative Political Science methodology, and hence by the comparative research method, particularly by the single-case method, binary analysis, regional comparisons and comparison of similar and contrasting countries, use of typological and classification schemes, statistical and descriptive study of country samples, cross-temporal comparisons, appropriate for implementation when based on qualitative and quantitative analysis methods, including those in the form of quantifications and statistical operations. Although, this does not contradict the view that problems of the governments stability and efficiency can be solved by means of functional, institutional, systemic, structural, cybernetic methods, etc. In general, the issues of

³⁴ Hempel C., *Fundamentals of Concept Formation in Empirical Science*, Wyd. University of Chicago Press 1952, s. 54.

³⁵ Hall P., *Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research*, [w:] Mahoney J., Rueschemeyer D. (eds.), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 2003, s. 373-404.

the stability and efficiency of governments are multidisciplinary, therefore requiring comprehensive exploration through comparative methods.

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