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PARTY DETERMINANTS OF FORMATION, FUNCTIONING AND STABILITY OF GOVERNMENTAL CABINETS IN PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACIES: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CUT

W artykule na poziomie teoretycznym i metodologicznym omówiono czynniki partyjne powstawania, funkcjonowania i stabilności gabinetów rządowych w demokracjach parlamentarnych. Zadanie to okazało się istotne ze względu na to, że w krajach, które są instytucjonalnie definiowane jako demokracje parlamentarne, przy czym niezależnie od systemów rządów, zazwyczaj powstają i funkcjonują partyjne gabinety rządowe. Biorąc to pod uwagę, gabinety rządowe jako szczyty władzy wykonawczej w takich krajach najczęściej określone są wpływem czynników partyjnych, które wyznaczają parametry tworzenia, funkcjonowania i stabilności gabinetów rządowych w różnych demokracjach parlamentarnych. Stwierdzono, że wśród czynników partyjnych na kształtowanie, funkcjonowanie, odpowiedzialność i stabilność rządów najbardziej wpływają atrybuty systemów partyjnych, w szczególności zmienność wyborcza i podział partii na frakcje, a także chęć osiągnięcia przez partie statusu minimalnie zwycięskich w gabinetach rządowych. Jednocześnie stwierdza się, że partyjna determinacja procesów powoływania, funkcjonowania, odpowiedzialności i stabilności rządów, chociaż podlega ocenie, nie powinna być jednokierunkowa, ponieważ jest określona przez specyfikę krajową i regionalną, w tym instytucjonalną.

Słowa kluczowe: *partia, system partyjny, podział na frakcje systemów partyjnych, rząd, gabinet rządowy, status minimalnie zwycięski, zmienność wyborcza.*

The article is theoretically and methodologically dedicated to analyzing party factors of formation, functioning and stability of governmental cabinets in parliamentary democracies. This task proved to be relevant at the background of the fact that party governments are usually formed and function in countries that are institutionally defined as parliamentary democracies, even regardless of their systems of government. In view of this, governmental cabinets as the top executive in such countries are inevitably and typically marked and characterized by the influence of party factors that outline the parameters of formation, functioning and stability of governments in different parliamentary democracies. The author found that the attributes of party systems, including electoral volatility and party fractionalization, as well as the desire of parties to achieve the status of minimally winning governmental cabinets, have the greatest impact on the formation, functioning, responsibility and stability of governments. At the same time, it was stated that the party determination of the processes of government

formation, functioning, responsibility and stability, although it is amenable to averaging, should not be unidirectional, as it is additionally determined by national and regional, including institutional, specifics.

Keywords: *party, party system, fractionalization of party systems, government, governmental cabinet, minimum-winning status, electoral volatility.*

Party government cabinets are usually formed and function in the countries that are institutionally defined as parliamentary democracies, and almost independently of the systems of government that have been tested in them. In view of this, government cabinets as the top executive in such countries inevitably, in addition to the institutional factor and the influence of inter-institutional relations, are typically marked and characterized by the influence of party factors that outline the formation, functioning and even stability of government cabinets in different parliamentary democracies. This, in turn, is an extremely important research problem, at least in theoretical and methodological terms, as it allows identifying and clarifying the functional and operational attributes and roles of parties in the context of inter-institutional relations, which, in particular, give some idea of the nature of governments and governance in parliament democracies.

This can be judged from a number of scientific works, which consider and even systematize the functional attributes of parties and inter-party competition in democratic systems, which, among other things, determine the parameters and conditions of formation, functioning and stability of government cabinets. In particular, the stated scientific issues of different times were presented in the studies of such scientists as K. Beyme[1], J. Blondel[2], I. Budge and H. Keman[3], L. Dodd[4], M. Duverger[5], V. Goati[6], R. Katz[7], M. Laakso and R. Taagepera[8], S. Lipset and S. Rokkan[9], P. Mair[10], W. Muller[11],

[1] Beyme K., Party Leadership and Change in Party Systems: Towards a Postmodern Party State?, *"Government and Opposition"* 1996, vol 31, nr. 2, s. 135–159

[2] Blondel J., Party Systems and Patterns of Government in Western Democracies, *"Canadian Journal of Political Science"* 1968, vol 1, nr. 2, s. 180–203

[3] Budge I., Keman H., *Parties and Democracy: Coalition Formation and Government Functioning in Twenty States*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 1993

[4] Dodd L., *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government*, Wyd. Princeton University Press 1976.; Dodd L., Party Coalitions in Multiparty Parliaments: A Game Theoretic Analysis, *"American Political Science Review"* 1974, vol 68, nr. 3, s. 1093–1117

[5] Duverger M., *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, New York 1963

[6] Goati V., *Savremene političke partije. Komparativna analiza*, Belgrad 1990

[7] Katz R., *Party Governments: European and American Experiences*, Wyd. Walter de Gruyter 1987

[8] Laakso M., Taagepera R., Effective Number of Parties. A Measure with Application to West Europe, *"Comparative Political Studies"* 1979, vol 12, nr. 1, s. 3–27

[9] Lipset S., Rokkan S., *Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction*, [w:] Lipset S., Rokkan S. (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, Wyd. Free Press 1967, s. 1–64

[10] Mair P., *The Electoral Universe of Small Parties in Postwar Western Europe*, [w:] Müller-Rommel F., Pridham G. (eds.), *Small Parties in Western Europe: Comparative and National Perspectives*, Wyd. Sage 1991, s. 41–70

[11] Muller W., Political parties in parliamentary democracies: Making delegation and accountability work, *"European Journal of Political Research"* 2000, vol 37, nr. 3, s. 309–333

D. Rae[12], W. Riker[13], A. Romaniuk[14], D. Russell and M. Wattenberg[15], G. Sartori[16], M. Taylor and V. Herman[17] and many others.

Their monitoring and systematization make it possible to state that political parties are typically ascribed such two the most important functions within parliamentary democracies as the expression of citizens' interests and representative activities, mainly in legislatures and cabinets. In this context, the function of expressing the interests of citizens is particularly interesting, because it generates or restores the strategies of parties to promote political, social and cultural objections, etc. into the demands of political action. In this context, the explanation of S. Lipset and S. Roccane regarding socio-political divisions in most parliamentary democracies adds to this argument and the phenomenon of manifestations of a kind of the "split structure"[18]. The fact is that, according to researchers, the struggle between political parties is the main arena of conflict in democracies, as other interested political and parapolitical groups play an extremely insignificant and indirect role in politics. After all, if they want to increase their influence on the formation of political programs, they must become political parties. Thus, political parties and their relative strength in the political process, and in the case of parliamentary democracies – the power in the legislature, can be seen as a reflection of socio-cultural processes, because they transfer the main problems of local people in the debate in parliament. This process depends to a certain extent on the peculiarities of one or another type of electoral system, which can inevitably and directly transform the votes of the electorate into parliamentary seats, and through them – in the portfolio in government offices. On the other hand, it is clear that not every political concern is expressed by existing political parties, which is why the process of party formation in most parliamentary democracies is ongoing. This is true even against the background of the fact that the formation of new parties is considered to be a difficult process, but it is not impossible. In general, against this background, it is quite obvious that political parties are institutions of social and political life virtually of all parliamentary democracies, which significantly influence other institutions, such as parliaments and government cabinets, etc.

In view of this, it is well known that one of the most important variables in identifying and measuring the functionality of government cabinets is taking into account their party composition and the involvement of political parties in the processes of formation, functioning, responsibility, and thus stability of government cabinets. Probably the first attempts to explain the functionality and stability of government cabinets through the prism of parties and the

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[12]   Rae D., *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*, Wyd. Yale University Press 1967

[13]   Riker W., *The Theory of Political Coalitions*, Wyd. Yale University Press 1962

[14]   Romaniuk A., *Politychni partii ta partiini systemy*, [w:] *Osnovy politychnoi nauky. Chastyna 2*, Wyd. Kalvariia Romaniuk A., *Porivnialnyi analiz politychnykh instytutiv krain Zakhidnoi Yevropy*, Wyd. LNU imeni Ivana Franka 2007.

[15]   Russell D., Wattenberg M., *Parties without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2001.

[16]   Sartori G. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework of Analysis*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1976.

[17]   Taylor M., Herman V., Party Systems and Government Stability, *"American Political Science Review"* 1971, vol 65, nr. 1, s. 28–37.

[18]   Lipset S., Rokkan S., *Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction*, [w:] Lipset S., Rokkan S. (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, Wyd. Free Press 1967, s. 50

effects of the size and complexity of party systems appear in the middle – second half of the 20th century. This is especially relevant in the case of multiparty systems, which most researchers believe quite often (though not always) run functionally limited and relatively unstable governments because they lack a majority party capable of forming a one-party government cabinet. By this logic, the result of such a political process is the formation of government coalitions of parties, continuous trade and compromises in competition between parties, which, in turn, can significantly destabilize government cabinets. In this context, one of the simplest but also the strictest ways to link party composition to the functioning and stability of government cabinets is to include in the count all political parties that support a particular government cabinet, regardless of whether they are represented by positions in the office or not. However, even in this case, especially in parliamentary democracies, one must consider the wide variety of possible options for supporting government cabinets by different governmental and non-governmental parties in the legislature.

For example, A. de Swan states[19] that the nature of support for government cabinets by parties in legislatures is due to a kind of "the exhaustive lists of support". The problem with these lists is that information on the voting behavior of certain parties or individual representatives of these parties is quite difficult to understand. Therefore, according to the researcher, the definition of ruling / government parties should include only parties that are represented in the government or cabinet. This means that only parties that are unquestionably and directly part of a government cabinet, which in the case of parliamentary democracy is in fact defined as the summation of all current parliamentary political forces, which are endowed with ministerial and government portfolios, and not only provide government cabinets support of parliaments are positioned as governmental ones. Against this background, A. Romanyuk believes that the main indicators through which distinguish political parties from other political and social institutions, are the presence of organization, attraction to power and ideological nature[20]. This is clear from the consideration of the main tasks of political parties proposed by R. Dalton and M. Wattenberg: simplification and structuring of electoral processes; organization and mobilization of election campaigns; articulation and unification of disproportionate socio-political and other interests; communication, consultation and debate on political and managerial issues; structuring of constituencies; think tanks of politics; organization of government policy[21].

Accordingly, political parties act and are positioned as an immanent institution of any democratic regime, especially parliamentary democracies. In this regard, R. Katz emphasizes that the phenomenon of party governments, and thus the involvement of parties in the processes of formation, functioning and responsibility of government cabinets, is quite often synonymous

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[19] De Swaan A., *Coalition Theories and Cabinet Formations. A Study of Formal Theories of Coalition Formation Applied to Nine European Parliaments after 1918*, Wyd. Elsevier 1973, s. 26–33

[20] Romaniuk A., *Politychni partii ta partiini systemy*, [w:] *Osnovy politychnoi nauky. Chastyna 2*, Wyd. Kalvariia.1997, s. 232–233

[21] Russell D., Wattenberg M., *Parties without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2001.

with representative democracy. Against this background, the researcher notes[22], the phenomenon of party government is inevitably characterized by such attributes as the presence within the political community and political system of a competitive party system, which is a consequence of the principle that declares the freedom to form political parties. This model of competitiveness of the party system is equally the result of the influence of the values of liberal democracy, but at the same time determines it. Another attribute is the existence of a competitive party system, which inevitably institutionalizes the freedom of political choice exercised within society and the right of the opposition to put forward alternative options for the development of the political process and government. Accordingly, the effect of the competitiveness of political parties is that the party that wins the election is rewarded with complete control over the governance process, although this is mostly the case in the format and composition of the governing coalition. It is in this way that the state power allocated through the party or parties gains democratic legitimacy, because the party or parties implement in practice the will of the sovereign – the people – expressed in relation to the parties in the election act. All this means that according to the outlined logic, the state power is responsible to the society, because it is entrusted to persons who are organized into political parties, who owe their position in the process of governing to electoral approval. And this is manifested mainly in the fact that there is certainly a group of politicians loyal to the government party or parties and responsible to the electorate, which plays a special role in the process of socio-political bargaining and negotiations between political parties.

V. Goati approaches the definition of the functional significance of political parties within representative democracies somewhat slightly, arguing that all functions of political parties can be structured into manifest (available, open, which can be identified and traced) and latent (hidden, which are not advertised by the party or parties, but are implemented in society)[23]. The defining manifest functions of modern political parties include: articulation, selection and aggregation of interests of various social and socio-political groups; development of ideologies and political doctrines; control over the activities or determination of the main activities of state bodies and institutions, and under certain conditions – the tendency to control and direct the activities of state bodies and institutions; promoting and ensuring the activities of institutions and mechanisms of a democratic society and government; training and nomination of candidates for senior government positions, including within government institutions; activation and integration of social and socio-political groups; formation of public opinion, etc. Against this background, W. Mueller notes that political parties contribute to the electoral process in a given state and the functioning of parliaments and government cabinets, which is especially relevant in the case of parliamentary democracies. Accordingly, without political parties, these

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[22] Katz R., *Party Governments: European and American Experiences*, Wyd. Walter de Gruyter 1987, s. 12

[23] Goati V., *Savremene političke partije. Komparativna analiza*, Belgrad 1990, s. 253

institutions of state power cannot actually perform their functions in a democratic society[24]. Instead,to the latent functions of political parties W. Goati usually includes: guaranteeing privileges to members of political parties and their supporters, especially in the event of victory of parties in elections or their membership in government teams or coalitions; promoting and providing opportunities for social uplift to members of underprivileged social groups through party careers; providing privileges for business representatives who provided sponsorship to the party or parties, especially in the case of coming to power or conducting / lobbying business interests; reservation of unpaid work, when party activists and sympathizers perform various actions, which is especially noticeable during election campaigns[25].

However, the influence of parties and party systems on the peculiarities of the formation, functioning, responsibility, and thus the stability of government cabinets in parliamentary democracies is quite different and differently dependent. On the one hand, the parameters of consolidation of party systems and their fractionalization influence, however, on the other hand, party-determined attributes of the size of government cabinets. In political science, the direct criteria for the consolidation of party and political systems are often considered to be a measure of electoral variability and fragmentation of party systems[26]. On this basis, party systems in which a large proportion of voters change their electoral preferences between consecutive elections are considered unstable, while fragmented or fractionalized party systems consist of a large number of parties, mainly relevant, i.e. represented in the legislatures. It is interesting that such party systems, of course, are not always the case, but in most cases they are characteristic of quite a few countries that are parliamentary democracies. It is also important that electoral variability and factionalization of party systems are indicators that systematically testify to the features, roles and influences of parties on inter-institutional relations in a given country, as well as reveal the signs and attributes of party systems in them. Thus, the degree of fractionalization indicates the degree of dependence or independence of a party system of a country from the power of one or more parties, as opposed to being equally divided among all parties in the system. The traditionally used measure of factionalization of party systems was developed by D. Rey[27] and is based on the assumption that two legislators or two parliamentary parties, which are chosen at random in a particular legislature, should represent different political forces. It is with this in mind that M. Taylor and W. Herman note that the increasing factionalization of party systems usually complicates the process of forming government cabinets, and is negatively correlated with the stability of governments[28]. This conclusion is clarified by D. Sanders and W. Herman, who note that the phenomenon and features of the factionalization of party systems

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[24] Muller W., Political parties in parliamentary democracies: Making delegation and accountability work, *"European Journal of Political Research"* 2000, vol 37, nr. 3, s. 312

[25] Goati V., *Savremene političke partije. Komparativna analiza*, Belgrad 1990, s. 253

[26] Golosov G., Formaty partiynyh sistem v novyh demokratiyah, *"Polis"* 1998, nr. 1

[27] Rae D., *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*, Wyd. Yale University Press 1967.

[28] Taylor M., Herman V., Party Systems and Government Stability, *"American Political Science Review"* 1971, vol 65, nr. 1, s. 28–37.

become particularly important explanatory variables in the formation and responsibility of governments, even when the size and representation of anti-system parties in a country increase[29].

And this, in turn, puts on the agenda the issue of relevance or materiality of political parties in a country. In this context, J. Sartori's clarification has become a classic remark or rule, according to which only those political forces that are endowed with either "coalition potential" or "blackmail potential" should be taken into account in the identified influences of political parties on government cabinets. At the same time, a party has the potential for coalition if it participates in the formation of the government cabinet or if it is regarded as a possible partner of hypothetical government coalitions by other parties. On the other hand, political forces that are unacceptable to other parties in parliament but regularly receive a significant percentage of seats and even ministerial portfolios have the "potential for blackmail"[30]. Although, in contrast, more and more often today, especially in parliamentary democracies, all political parties represented in the legislatures are considered relevant or significant. However, the problem with this counting rule is mainly that all batches, once considered relevant or substantial, are taken into account equally, and their relative size is not always taken into account. Therefore, the best way to classify party systems and the influence of parties on the formation, functioning and responsibility of government cabinets, in our opinion, is to follow the scheme, for example, J. Blondel, who distinguishes four types of party systems in representative democracies: bipartisan systems, systems with two and a half parties, multiparty systems with a dominant party, real multiparty systems without dominant parties, including the so-called "atomized" party systems. It is important that the main criterion in this case is a quantitative cut, according to which the basis for the division of party systems into separate types, in particular in determining their influence on government cabinets, is the number of political parties operating in the country. M. Duverger notes in this regard that the difference on the basis of "one-party, two-party, multi-party system" can be the main way to classify modern political regimes, as all other differences are superimposed on it or combined with it[31].

Based on the quantitative criterion, there are one-party, two-party and multi-party systems. However, many scholars, agreeing with the importance of this criterion, emphasize its inadequacy in the classification of party systems. Thus, J. Sartori in his study of party systems came to the conclusion that it is necessary to take into account not all political parties operating in a particular country, but only a certain part of them, as determining the number of political parties between which there is competition within the party and political system, allows us to see "... the level to which political power is fragmented or fragmented, concentrated or scattered"[32]. In view of this, the scholar proposed the following criteria for selecting political parties, which

[29]   Sanders D., Herman V., The Stability and Survival of Governments in Western Europe, *"Acta Politica"* 1977, vol 12, nr. 3, s. 371.

[30]   Sartori G., *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework of Analysis*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1976, s. 122–123.

[31]   Duverger M., *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, New York 1963, s. 393.

[32]   Sartori G., *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework of Analysis*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1976, s. 120

should be considered as elements of the party system: first, parties that have a "mandate force"; second, parties that have "coalition potential"; third, parties that have the "potential for black-mail." Based on the selected criteria, he developed a typology of party systems, which today is considered by most researchers as basic. It distinguishes such types of party systems as one-party systems, systems with a hegemonic party, systems with a dominant party, bipartisan systems, systems of moderate pluralism, systems of polarized pluralism, and atomized systems, which are defined as a residual type[33]. At the same time, J. Sartori singles out "a system with a dominant party" as an independent category, understanding by this phenomenon party systems in which many political parties can compete with each other, but during a number of election cycles (up to four times in a row) / government power comes the same party. Although, instead, it happens that less than two cycles of domination of one political force are enough to de facto classify a party system of a country as a system with a dominant party.

Quantitative criterion as a basis for characterizing party systems and determining their impact on government cabinets used and P. Meyer, who proposed to take them into account structuring and clustering into "large" and "small" parties. He refers to "small" parties as those that receive 1 to 15 percent of the vote in the election, and "large" parties should have the support of more than 15 percent of voters. At the same time, according to the scientist, the amount of party support should in no way be associated with the weight and influence of parties[34]. On this basis, the scientist identified four types of party systems: systems of large parties, in which large parties together receive a significant advantage of votes; small party systems, where small parties together gain a greater advantage than large parties; medium-party systems, where large and small parties receive an approximately equal number of votes; transitional party systems, which are characterized by the transition from the first group of party systems to the second and vice versa. The advantage of the outlined theorizing and operationalization is that the size of some parties is weighted relative to the size of other parties in the system, but still one important problem remains: this classification is made "manually" and therefore risks being shifted based on the subjectivity of one or another researcher.

However, this problem can be solved with the help of the often used in political science index of the effective number of parties, as one of the measures of party factionalization, which directly affects the role of parties in determining the formation, functioning and responsibility of governments and thus their stability. Being proposed in the late 70's of the 20th century. M. Laakso and R. Taagepera[35], the index of the effective number of parties is a mathematical reflection of the votes or shares of the parliamentary mandates of the parties and thus helps to prevent classification failures. The index is calculated on the basis of determining the relativity

[33] Sartori G., *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework of Analysis*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1976, s. 125

[34] Mair P., *The Electoral Universe of Small Parties in Postwar Western Europe*, [w:] Müller-Rommel F., Pridham G. (eds.), *Small Parties in Western Europe: Comparative and National Perspectives*, Wyd. Sage 1991, s. 47

[35] Laakso M., Taagepera R., Effective Number of Parties. A Measure with Application to West Europe, *"Comparative Political Studies"* 1979, vol 12, nr. 1, s. 3–27.

of the amount of support for all parties in the system during and after the election results. At the same time, there are two options for determining the amount of such support: the first is based on the results of parliamentary elections, i.e. based on the percentage of votes received by parties; the second is on the basis of indicators of the number of deputy / parliamentary mandates of parties based on the election results. It is important that the presence of two approaches to calculating the index of the effective number of parties is due to the fact that quite often the first and second indicators differ. The main reason for the difference is the impossibility to ensure the 100% transformation of the votes received by the parties in the elections into the appropriate share of parliamentary seats. In general, this means that the index of the effective number of parties is the number of hypothetical parties of equal size that would have the same effect on fractionalized party systems as the actual parties of unequal size[36]. The most interesting thing in this regard is that the index is an effective quantity parties are very clearly correlated with the most common classifications of party systems, including those mentioned above, and can therefore be used as an effective tool for defining the real role of parties in structuring the processes of formation, functioning and accountability of governments in parliamentary democracies.

In this regard, A. Leiphart takes an interesting and well-argued point of view, emphasizing that the index of the effective number of parties is inversely proportional to the degree of factionalization of party systems[37]. This is due to the fact that the degree of factionalization of party systems explains the relationship between the number of parties and the stability of government cabinets, which is affected by inter-party relations, in particular through changes among political authors. It is on this basis that the position that, on equal terms, the number of potentially viable government cabinets is directly proportional to the number of parties is quite relevant. In turn, the greater the feasible options of government cabinets, the more complex is the desire for political parties to agree with each other, and therefore it is likely that slight unrest in inter-party relations is more likely to lead to the termination of a government cabinet[38]. All this means that the larger is the number of parties, the less is lasting the "power" and thus the stability of any government cabinet. As a result, the effective number of parties and the degree of fragmentation / fractionalization of the legislature are based on parameters that are always taken into account as determinants of the formation of government cabinets, especially coalition ones. Therefore, all parties with parliamentary representation, and not just partners in a hypothetical government coalition, should be included in the study of the influence of parties on the processes of formation, functioning and responsibility of governments. The fact is that more fragmented parliaments typically hold more factionalized government

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[36] Laakso M., Taagepera R., Effective Number of Parties. A Measure with Application to West Europe, *"Comparative Political Studies"* 1979, vol 12, nr. 1, s. 4.

[37] Lijphart A., *Democracies: Patterns of Majority and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*, Wyd. Yale University Press 1984.

[38] King G., Alt J., Burns N., Laver M., A unified model of cabinet dissolution in parliamentary democracies, *"American Journal of Political Science"* 1990, vol 34, nr. 6, s. 848

cabinets, especially coalitions. In addition, a large number of effective parties implies that several different viable and hypothetical government coalitions can be formed at any time. The existence of a large number of alternatives can make a real government cabinet "fragile" in the sense of increasing the likelihood of such a parliamentary vote of no confidence due to the threat of partners to withdraw their support for the government and participate in other possible government cabinet options.

In a purely political dimension, the growth of the index of the effective number of parties can be influenced by a number of factors. Quite important among them is traditionally considered to be the limitation of the fierce ideological confrontation between, for example, "capitalist" and "communist" (as in the post-communist space), liberal and conservative, or any another antagonistic party system, which certainly leads to overcoming the dichotomy "us" – "them" in the perception of voters of their own states political parties the nature of political competition and national political process. Accordingly, it fosters ideological pluralism, giving voters the opportunity to opt out of mandatory or result-oriented voting and to prefer voting according to their real / actual preferences. It is also important that large parties claiming power / cabinet are often forced to focus on broad electorate groups and on more general public or socio-political interests in order to gain the support of the maximum number of voters. As a result, particular interest groups are not taken into account or cannot even be taken into account and, accordingly, they are mostly represented by other – typically smaller parties. It is also important that new internal and / or global societal challenges emerge: the threat to the environment, the problems of war and peace, the need to ensure the equal status of different kinds of minorities, and a focus on values different from those accepted by the majority. The "promoters" of these problems are usually not large and not the main parties that focused on the whole population, but smaller political forces that target specific social or socio-political groups. In addition, it often happens that the factionalization of party systems increases when voters feel tired of traditional or "old" political parties that have been in power many times and have not borne any real political responsibility for shortcomings in various spheres of public life and government of their own states, and hence for their isolation from society, inability to effectively perform the functions that belong to them or belonged before[39]. Interestingly, this phenomenon mainly concerns political parties of the mass type, which form or have previously formed a stable "core group" of parties. Finally, the introduction of a system of state funding of political parties at the legislative level also contributes to the transformation of party work, if not profitable, then into one that ensures a sufficient standard of living and proper social status of party functionaries and activists. And this, of course, contributes to improving professionalism in party work and political responsibility. As a whole, public funding becomes an additional

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[39] Beyme K., Party Leadership and Change in Party Systems: Towards a Postmodern Party State?, *"Government and Opposition"* 1996, vol 31, nr. 2, s. 149–150.

incentive for political parties to work better, focusing on the interests of voters, this leads to an increase in the factionalization of party systems[40].

On this basis, as noted above, political science has stated that parties influence the formation, functioning, responsibility and stability of governments mainly on the basis of the party dimension of government cabinets, in particular the number of parties within government cabinets and their ability to achieve the status of minimally victorious. Thus as it was as mentioned above, M. Taylor and W. Herman[41] once concluded that the number of parties in government, as well as the factionalization of the government cabinet on the basis of parliamentary representation of political forces negatively affects the likelihood of a hypothetical government and its stability. This was confirmed by D. Sanders and W. Herman, who stated that the relative party dimension of government cabinets is decisive in the formation and survival of the latter[42]. A similar conclusion is reached by J. Blondel[43], who, for example, notes that a one-party government cabinet is a probabilistic factor that brings the greatest determination to the expected stability of party governments, which is the norm in parliamentary democracies. All this proves the relevance of the conclusion that the government cabinets of the majority last longer than the government cabinets of the minority, and in general government stability is negatively related to the growing degree of party factionalization of legislatures and government cabinets.

In this perspective, the scientific conclusion of L. Dodd[44] and W. Riker[45] that the influence of parties and inter-party relations on the formation and functioning of governments depends on the party composition of the latter is quite important. Thus, it is clear that minimally victorious government cabinets (given the one-party majority governments, which by this logic are also minimally victorious) are and should be much more stable than minority government cabinets and / or "oversized" or so-called over-victorious government offices. This means that the status of "minimum victory", especially against the background of inter-party competition, is one of the most powerful explanatory variables of the influence of parties and party systems on the processes of formation, functioning, responsibility, and thus stability of governments. Especially given that the minimum-victorious status of a hypothetical government cabinet is directly related to the form and type of party system, because, following a clear logic, it is clear that more divided and polarized party systems are likely to lead to the formation of governments that are more likely to deviate from the status of minimally victorious[46]. As a result, the stability of governments is necessarily a function of the extent to which government cabinets

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deviate from the conditional minimum sufficient to win (gain a majority in the legislature), in particular by overcoming their previous status[47].

However, in this context, the question remains as to why minimally victorious government cabinets, especially if they are in coalition, are positioned as longer than any other type of party governments. In this regard, P. Van Roosendaal emphasizes that if government cabinets are minimally victorious, then each party in the government is likely to have an equally imminent threat of losing parliamentary support. Conversely, a party whose votes are not critical to parliamentary support for the government can afford to leave the cabinet, thus technically accelerating its disintegration and resignation[48]. In contrast, some scholars, including B. Groffman, argue that the relationship between the minimally victorious cabinets and their stability is quite artificial[49]. To demonstrate this, the scholar notes that the hypothesis of a minimum victory or a minimum-victorious status cannot explain the significant change in the length of government cabinets in most parliamentary democracies. Instead, B. Groffman suggests that the relationship between the stability of government cabinets and their minimum winning status, which arises from specific national specifics, is largely the result of the high average length of government cabinets in countries where there are only two or three significant / relevant political parties, that is, where exactly the minimum-victorious government cabinets are the norm. This view is shared by J. Budge and H. Keman, who believe that not in all countries that are parliamentary democracies, victorious government cabinets are the most stable[50]. After all, it often happens that the most stable in one or another sample of countries in general are, if not the government cabinets of the minority, then the overly victorious government cabinets. All this means that the party determination of the processes of formation, functioning, responsibility and stability of governments, although easily averaged, should not be unidirectional, as it is additionally determined by either national or regional, including institutional, specifics. Therefore, parties in parliamentary democracies are important "principals" of government processes, but they are not the only ones in this context.

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