

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS AND DIMENSIONS OF STABILITY OF GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Artykuł analizuje czynniki instytucjonalne i poziom stabilności rządów i systemów politycznych w kontekście teoretycznym i metodologicznym. Wśród nich uwaga skupia się głównie na istocie korelacji stabilności politycznej i rządowej z parametrami oraz typami ustrojów politycznych (demokratycznych, autokratycznych i hybrydowych), formami i systemami rządów (w tym prezydenckimi, parlamentarnymi i mieszanymi), partyjnymi i systemami wyborczymi. Ogólnie przyjmuje się, że spośród czynników, które bezpośrednio i pośrednio wpływają na stabilność rządów oraz na stabilność systemów politycznych, należy wyróżnić polityczne, społeczno-ekonomiczne, moralne, ideologiczne, społeczno-kulturowe oraz te, które można uznać jako instytucjonalne i nieinstytucjonalne.

Słowa kluczowe: rząd, system polityczny, stabilność, stabilność rządów, ustrój polityczny, forma i system rządów, system partyjny, instytucja polityczna.

The article is dedicated to theoretical and methodological analysis of the institutional factors and dimensions of stability of governments and political systems. Among them, attention was mainly focused on the peculiarities of the correlation of political and governmental stability with the parameters and types of political regimes (i.e. democratic, autocratic and hybrid ones), forms and systems of government (including presidential, parliamentary and mixed ones) and party and electoral systems. In general, it was found that among the factors that directly and indirectly affect the stability of governments and the stability of political systems in general, it is necessary to distinguish political, socio-economic, moral, ideological, socio-cultural ones, which can be combined and structured into institutional and non-institutional based on the variability of their relationship and mutual influence.

Keywords: government, political system, stability, stability of governments, political regime, form and system of government, party system, political institution.

As noted in a number of scientific studies, the stability of governments is one of the determinants and indicators of assessing the stability and even the effectiveness of political systems in general, and in different countries and regions of the world. However, in the study of the stability of governments and political systems, in addition to its indicators and methods

of measurement, it is quite important to take into account the factors and measurements of the stability of governments, at least in the theoretical and methodological context. In this regard, researchers note that among the factors that directly and indirectly affect the stability of governments, it is necessary to distinguish political, socio-economic, moral, ideological, socio-cultural, which based on the variability of their relationship and mutual influence can be combined in institutional and non-institutional. Therefore, their selection, research and systematization are the task of the presented scientific article, though mainly in the context of appealing to the factors of institutional content and content.

The stated problem was revealed in the works of quite a number of scientists, including S. Barbera and M. Jackson¹, B. De Mesquita, J. Morrow, R. Siverson and A. Smith², L. Diamond³, H. Eckstein⁴, T. Gurr⁵, S. Huntington⁶, G. Luebbert⁷, E. Muller, and E. Weede⁸, G. O'Donnell⁹, A. Przeworski¹⁰. Based on the achievements of these and other researchers, it is established that the main factors of stability of governments are traditionally considered: the effective functioning of the political system and all its subsystems; consent of leading political groups and actors of the political process; the necessary level of public confidence in the activities of governments / cabinets, in particular on the basis of the ability of the former to adequately represent the interests of the latter; high efficiency and legitimacy of the political regime and legality of power; availability of an adequate legal system; reasonable and rational distribution of powers between central and local government, and thus optimizing the number of political subsystems and the level of their autonomy; leadership of the country in accordance with the basic traditions, norms of morality, ethics and religion; lack of acute social, national-ethnic and religious conflicts; effectiveness of political communication; the presence of common elements of political culture in political leaders and subordinates.

However, according to scientists, some of these factors are decisive, and some instead additional or situational. At the same time, perhaps as the most relevant researchers traditionally and unreasonably consider institutionally, first of all rationally, conditioned factors of

¹ Barbera S., Jackson M., Choosing How to Choose: Self Stable Majority Rules, *"The Quarterly Journal of Economics"* 2004, vol 119, nr. 3, s. 1011–1048.

² De Mesquita B., Morrow J., Siverson R., Smith A., *The Logic of Political Survival*, Wyd. MIT Press 2003.

³ Diamond L., Towards Democratic Consolidations, *"Journal of Democracy"* 1994, vol 5, nr. 1, s. 3–17.

⁴ Eckstein H., Authority Patterns: A Structural Pattern for Inquiry, *"American Political Science Review"* 1973, vol 47, nr. 1, s. 1142–1161.

⁵ Gurr T., Persistence and Change in Political Systems, 1800–1971, *"American Political Science Review"* 1974, vol 68, nr. 4, s. 1482–1504; Gurr T., *Why Men Rebel*, Wyd. Princeton University Press 1970

⁶ Huntington S., *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Wyd. Yale University Press 1968

⁷ Luebbert G., Social Foundations of Political Order in Interwar Europe, *"World Politics"* 1987, vol 39, s. 449–478.

⁸ Muller E., Weede E., Cross-National Variations in Political Violence: A Rational Action Approach, *"Journal of Conflict Resolution"* 1990, vol 34, nr. 4, s. 624–651

⁹ O'Donnell G., Horizontal Accountability in New Democracies, *"Journal of Democracy"* 1998, vol 9, nr. 3, źródło: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/16904>; O'Donnell G., *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics*, Wyd. University of California Press 1973; O'Donnell G., Schmitter P., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions and Uncertain Democracies*, Wyd. Johns Hopkins University Press 1986

¹⁰ Przeworski A., *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1991.; Przeworski A., *Sustainable Democracy*, Cambridge 1995.; Przeworski A., Alvarez M., Cheibub J., Limongi F., *Democracy and Development*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 2000

government stability. This is quite obvious against the background of a broad understanding of institutions and institutional policy, which in terms of research absorbs the various currents of neo-institutionalism¹¹. The main thing is that the main function of institutions, including political ones, is to ensure stability by smoothing changes in the ratio of the rules of the game. In this regard, D. North emphasizes that “institutions are the rules of the game in society or, formally speaking, man-made rules that limit their interaction”¹². Instead, A. Stepan defines institutions as rules of decision-making, S. Crawford – as rules, norms and compatible political strategies; P. Hall – as formal rules and procedures for reaching political agreement and standard political practices that structure relations between individuals; G. O’Donnell – as a collective action to implement management and expand the field of individual action, as well as patterns of interaction that regulate the political system. Thus, despite the external differences in the definitions of political institutions, it is clear that all representatives of institutional methodology agree that institutions are a set of formal rules, informal restrictions and mechanisms for their enforcement. Therefore, the main function of institutions is to ensure stability by smoothing out changes in relative political values for various actors in the political process.

It is extremely important that institutional stability enables the exchange of political activity and its results. But it should be emphasized that stability does not mean functional efficiency. Stability is rather a necessary condition for the complex interaction of political actors, and efficiency is one of the mechanisms for assessing stability. In this context, the basic factors of institutional efficiency should include rules and regulations, competition and decentralization of decision-making. In this regard, D. North emphasizes that effective rules are those that block unsuccessful actions and support successful actions¹³. However, the choice of institutions does not always contribute to the growth of social capital, and competition does not always ensure the rejection of ineffective “rules of the game”. This statement is equally true for political institutions and can be used to outline and detail the factors of stability of governments and political systems in general. Thus, it is obvious that the political evolution and functioning and stability of individual political institutions depend on the once chosen institutional trajectory. After all, new, more effective, rules games may remain idle because their introduction requires significant initial contributions, from which entrenched traditional institutions are exempt. This means that the institutions seem to push the country into a certain path from which it is difficult to get out. Accordingly, a mixture of effective and ineffective institutions is always formed, and their ratio determines the trajectory of the country’s development.

However, the question always arises: which institutions tend to provide stability. To answer it, at least within the framework of game theory, it is necessary to establish the spectrum

¹¹ Riker W., Implications from the Disequilibrium of Majority Rule for the Study of Institutions, *“American Political Science Review”* 1980, vol 75, nr. 2, s. 432–446

¹² North D., *Instituty i ekonomicheskiy rost: Istoricheskoe vvedenie*, “Thesis” 1993, vol 1, s. 3

¹³ North D., *Instituty, institucionalnyye izmeneniya i funkcionirovanie ekonomiki*, Moskva 1997, s. 86

of the game in which political institutions are endogenous. The structure of the process in which any political institution is located has three critical peculiarities. Initially, the process is recursive, and the rules for choosing solutions are direct. Eventually, the process becomes conducive, as institutions do not affect political benefits. Finally, a wide and disparate choice of institutional procedures – types of rules – is established. Such a process is traditionally called dynamic political games in terms of political institutions. Interestingly, the recursive stage of formation of political institutions is related to the “self-selected rules” of static political models, which is reflected, for example, in studies by S. Korea¹⁴, S. Berber and M. Jackson¹⁵, as well as in the model of infinite regressive choice of institutional rules Lagunoff¹⁶. The proposed approaches establish social orders of institutional rules, directly based on the results that these rules nominate and promote. And such rules operate on the basis of selection of a constant result. Accordingly, the recursive model of formation of political institutions usually has two peculiarities: the established choice of institutes takes place in real time; the real model of the establishment and functioning of political institutions is more specific than the nominal one.

In view of this, it should be noted that the institutional stability of governments / cabinets makes it possible to make a complex exchange between political activity / reality and its results. Nevertheless, the institutions of executive power are by no means limitless. After all, even in democracies, their borders are not positioned as democratically legitimized, constitutionally fixed and legally protected norms, and their observance is not controlled from the outside. However, the penetration of informal practices into formal legal institutions can add relative stability to the political system, but to strengthen it is problematic, as stability depends primarily on the specific configurations of political actors and their strategies¹⁷.

When considering the institutional factors of government stability, it is necessary to appeal to the issue of political regimes, which in this context are probably decisive. Democratic governments and political regimes are much less likely to use violence against their citizens than autocrats. Democracies also create common channels for expressing dissent and opposition within the political system. As a result, both the government and the opposition have less motivation to use violence against each other. Democracy also contributes to stability by providing the opportunity for regular change of political leaders and public policy. At the same time, in democracies with political stability, the situation is quite interesting. For example, A. Przeworski believes that democracy evokes a generalized consensus, which is self-implemented when all important political forces and actors have little minimum confidence and probability

¹⁴ Koray S., Self-Selective Social Choice Functions verify Arrow and Gibbard-Satterthwaite Theorems, “*Econometrica*” 2000, vol 68, nr. 1, s. 981–996

¹⁵ Barbera S., Jackson M., Choosing How to Choose: Self Stable Majority Rules, “*The Quarterly Journal of Economics*” 2004, vol 119, nr. 3, s. 1011–1048

¹⁶ Lagunoff R., Fully Endogenous Mechanism Selection on Finite Outcomes Sets, “*Economic Theory*” 1992, vol 2, s. 465–480

¹⁷ O'Donnell G., Horizontal Accountability in New Democracies, “*Journal of Democracy*” 1998, vol 9, nr. 3, s. 120, źródło: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/16904>

to succeed in a specific system of political institutions¹⁸. B. Weingast expands A. Przeworski's model, including the role of the population. Thus, in A. Przeworski's model, the stability of democratic regimes depends on the consent of officials. Instead, B. Weingast further notes that the restriction of the ruling political elites may require the consent of the citizen to react to officials if they try to rig the election¹⁹. Since democracy is an established and institutionalized aspect of civil society, the value of consent to the representation of elites increases. As a result, democratic institutions inevitably limit the executive branch and institutionalize political participation, thus strengthening each other. Moreover, the citizen's consent to support constitutional restrictions increases, in particular, the cost of election results²⁰. L. Diamond mainly summarizes this feature of democracies and notes that political elites choose democracy in instrumental execution, because they feel that the cost of trying to suppress their political opponents will exceed the cost of recognizing them and involving them in a constitutionally regulated competition²¹.

As a result, political science mainly uses the incorporated understanding of the relationship between the stability of political institutions and the political regime, which is reflected in the concept of indices of democracy and autocracy. Thus, in order to assess the degree to which the state is democratic or autocratic, T. Gurr once proposed to measure the "scale" of democracy and the "scale" of autocracy. States are considered fully democratic if they recruit to the executive only in the form of competitive elections, executive parity and institutionalized participation.

Instead, successive autocracies recruit to the executive branch in the form of prescriptions, designations, or combinations thereof, unlimited executive power, suppressed political participation²². As a result of theoretical and methodological strengthening of such a scientific position on the combination of stability and political regime, D. Rastow in one of his works justified the need to take into account differences between the processes of genesis and functioning of democracies, as well as between stable political systems and their formation.

The fact is that the factors that ensure the stability and stability of democracy are not necessarily equivalent to the factors that give rise to this type of political regime, and therefore in explaining democracy it is necessary to distinguish between its functioning and genesis. The reason is very logical, because correlation is not the same as causation. The vector of causality is not always directed from social and economic factors to political and does not always lead from positions to actions. The process of the emergence of democracy and the transition to a phase of political stability does not necessarily have to be uniform in all hypothetical points of any spatial model of the political game, as many paths can lead to democracy and stability.

¹⁸ Przeworski A., *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1991

¹⁹ Weingast B., The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law, *"American Political Science Review"* 1997, vol 91, nr. 2, s. 255

²⁰ Weingast B., The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law, *"American Political Science Review"* 1997, vol 91, nr. 2, s. 245–263.

²¹ Diamond L., Towards Democratic Consolidations, *"Journal of Democracy"* 1994, vol 5, nr. 1, s. 3–17.

²² Gurr T., Persistence and Change in Political Systems, 1800–1971, *"American Political Science Review"* 1974, vol 68, nr. 4, s. 1482–1504.

Therefore, the process of the emergence of democracy and the acquisition of political stability does not necessarily have to be uniform in length of time: the duration of each of the transition phases can be determined by various institutional and non-institutional factors. In addition, the process of achieving stability does not necessarily have to be monotonous in socio-economic terms, because even when it comes to a common place and the same amount of time, the stimulating positions of politicians and ordinary citizens can differ significantly. Therefore, the empirical data that underlie the theory of the genesis of a political regime, in particular a democratic one should cover for each country the period from the moment immediately preceding the beginning of the transition process to the moment of its final completion. This means that in the study of the logic of political and systemic transformations within political systems can be left behind the brackets of the country, the main impetus to the transformation and stabilization of which was given from abroad. The model or ideal type of transit process can be obtained on the basis of careful study of two or more empirical examples, and then tested by applying to other cases²³. In addition, D. Rastow quite rightly notes the necessary conditions for the creation of a theory of transition to a stable democracy: we need diachronic data that do not relate to a single point, but instead cover a certain time continuum. In addition, such a theory should be constructed on the basis of the analysis of those cases where the process of genesis is already essentially complete²⁴.

It follows from this statement that the construction of the stable democracy model in relation to an individual country or group of countries is possible only after the completion of the transition process and is unlikely to be the time of its implementation. Moreover, the chronological duration of the process of transition to a stable democracy may be different, even in the case of the same region or group of similar countries.

Studying the processes of democratization in different countries and regions of the world, researchers believe that the process of democracy and the formation of stable political institutions does not have to be uniform and universal in time and various dominant factors, as the behavior and actions of political actors in democratic periods transit is largely determined by a combination of endogenous and exogenous factors. In other words, the algorithm for a successful transition to an institutionally stable democracy for each period of democratization and each region (or even country) is separate.

In general, there are many considerations about the dependence of the stability of political institutions on the type of political regime. However, most of them appeal to various expressions of consolidated democracy. In particular, one line of research emphasizes the class of political behavior of political actors and is presented by M. Berrington²⁵, S. Lipset, S. Rokkan²⁶, G.

²³ Rastou D., Perchodyi k demokracji: popyitka dinamicheskoy modeli, "Polis" 1996, vol 5, s. 5.

²⁴ Rastou D., Perchodyi k demokracji: popyitka dinamicheskoy modeli, "Polis" 1996, vol 5, s. 5

²⁵ Barrington M., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of Modern Europe*, Wyd. Beacon Press 1966

²⁶ Lipset S., Rokkan S., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, Wyd. Free Press 1967.

Luebbert²⁷, or suggests to consider the influence of democratic “civic culture” as a major factor promoting political stability, as, for example, in the works of G. Almond, S. Verba²⁸ and R. Putnam²⁹, or even considers the influence of the level of wealth endowed by individual citizens or their groups, as in the works of A. Przeworski, M. Alvarez, H. Cheibub³⁰. Instead, another line of comparative political science studies focuses on the analysis of the elitist behavior and the creation of pacts on successful transitions to democracy. It is represented by the names of such researchers as G. O’Donnell³¹, T. Carl, F. Schmitter³², A. Przeworski³³. Finally, the third line of research focuses on cultural and socio-economic factors that divide the population and can lead to civil and political conflicts. It is represented by such well-known names as S. Huntington³⁴, T. Gurr³⁵, A. Rabushka, K. Shepsle³⁶, T. Skokpol³⁷ and others.

Based on the achievements of these researchers, it is necessary to propose two models of institutional stability, in particular governments and political systems in general, for transition countries. The first model is a stability scenario and is characterized by the fact that the defects of democracy are more functional in terms of system stability. This is due to both the government’s ability to solve problems and the underdevelopment of civic culture and the strengths of the ruling elites. Accordingly, the intertwining of formal democratic institutions, as well as informal democratic defects, turns into an equilibrium that reproduces itself and leads to the stabilization of defective democracy. Such stability is maintained as long as the specific defects of democracy guarantee the domination of the ruling elites and contribute to the interests of the part of the population supporting the system. Instead, the second model is a scenario of progress and manifests itself in the fact that informal structures in a democracy are positioned incompatible with formal democratic structures and become an obstacle to the government’s fulfillment of social demands. Elites are gradually becoming accustomed to the fact that informal practices that restrict democracy are increasingly giving the way to a permanent constitution and projected rules and patterns of decision-making. As a result, defective informal institutions are losing their influence, and more and more attention is being paid to constitutional and legal institutions. Therefore, in such a scenario, a defective democracy is

²⁷ Luebbert G., Social Foundations of Political Order in Interwar Europe, “*World Politics*” 1987, vol 39, s. 449–478.

²⁸ Almond G., Verba S., *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Wyd. Sage 1963

²⁹ Putnam R., *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Wyd. Princeton University Press 1993

³⁰ Przeworski A., Alvarez M., Cheibub J., Limongi F., *Democracy and Development*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press

³¹ O’Donnell G., *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics*, Wyd. University of California Press 1973; O’Donnell G., Schmitter P., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions and Uncertain Democracies*, Wyd. Johns Hopkins University Press 1986.

³² Karl T., Schmitter P., Modes of Transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe, “*International Social Science Journal*” 1991, vol 128, s. 267–282

³³ Przeworski A., *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1991

³⁴ Huntington S., *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Wyd. Yale University Press 1968.

³⁵ Gurr T., *Why Men Rebel*, Wyd. Princeton University Press 1970

³⁶ Rabushka A., Shepsle K., *Politics in Plural Societies: A Theory in Democratic Instability*, Wyd. Charles E. Merrill 1972

³⁷ Skokpol T., *States and Social Revolutions*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1979.

transformed into a constitutional-legal democracy. In this context, it is interesting that the experience of the first and second “waves” of democratization has demonstrated the fact that “sustainable” democracies are only viable if they become liberal and constitutional and legal³⁸. However, this has not always been achieved in the third “wave” of democratization, as many democracies have destabilized, not consolidated or even deconsolidated over time. All this argues that constitutional-legal and liberal democracy is stronger than illiberal and purely electoral, not only normatively but also functionally. Although illiberal democracies have won over the constitutional and legal political regimes in many third-wave democratization countries, they cannot be considered equivalent alternatives to liberal democracies, including in terms of the stability of governments and political systems.

It is also important that in the categories of political, in particular governmental, stability, the distinction between autocracies and democracies is based on taxonomy in three dimensions, such as the election of leaders, restrictions on the executive in decision-making, and the degree of political participation. Thus, autocracies are defined as political regimes that experience shortcomings in elected or elected leadership, restrictions on the executive branch, and enormous effective political participation. Instead, democracies, in turn, are political regimes and systems that have effectively elected and elected leadership, restrictions on the executive branch, and enormous effective political participation. It theoretically follows that strong autocratic and resolute democratic regimes demonstrate the greatest political and institutional stability, which comes from institutional and socio-political balance, according to which the maintenance of the established state structure is in the interest of political elites, including through autocratic or democratic control. Instead, institutionally and politically contradictory political regimes (those that show a combination of democracy and autocracy) or, in other words, hybrid political regimes, experience imbalances and exist for less time. Thus, in general, this shows that institutionally consistent states are much more stable than institutionally inconsistent states. Moreover, one of the most stable political systems is dictatorships with high degrees of political participation. Instead, the most volatile configuration is inherent in states whose leadership is situational or coercive, and the electorate is described as very small.

Accordingly, the combination of autocratic and democratic institutions and establishments in one or another state creates an extremely complex and even “explosive” connection. Not without reason many comparative and political studies, including the works of G. Eckstein³⁹, T. Gurr⁴⁰, R. Senhuesa⁴¹, show that successive states (i.e., states with consistent democratic or autocratic regimes) are the most stable political systems. In general, both democratic and autocratic governmental and political stability in general depend on a balance of institutional

³⁸ Przeworski A., *Sustainable Democracy*, Cambridge 1995.; Putnam R., *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Wyd. Princeton University Press 1993

³⁹ Eckstein H., Authority Patterns: A Structural Pattern for Inquiry, *American Political Science Review* 1973, vol 47, nr. 1, s. 1142–1161.

⁴⁰ Gurr T., Persistence and Change in Political Systems, 1800–1971, *American Political Science Review* 1974, vol 68, nr. 4, s. 1482–1504

⁴¹ Sanhuesa R., The Hazard Rate of Political Regimes, *Public Choice* 1999, vol 98, nr. 3–4, s. 337–367

and socio-political factors, and the service of the established power structure in a state is in the interests of officials through despotic or democratic control. Accordingly, where such a balance is lacking, political regimes are characterized mainly by political and governmental instability. In the end, this confirms the preliminary conclusion that purely democratic or autocratic, but not hybrid, political regimes are more stable⁴².

However, it is certainly important to destroy the two-dimensionality of the political regimes interpretation as democratic or autocratic, as it significantly limits the understanding of the functioning and reality of political institutions. In addition, the appeal to the simple dichotomous distinction between democracies and autocracies is also imperfect. By overcoming it, we can better differentiate some institutionalized arrangements from others. In addition we can differentiate between autocracy, democracies and institutionally inconsistent and hybrid states, as well as differentiate between different types of inconsistent and hybrid political regimes, thus providing additional understanding of the implications of different political institutions, in particular for their stability. In this context, G. Eckstein⁴³ and T. Gurr⁴⁴ clearly argue that institutions can be grouped on the basis of different dimensions, among which are important regulation of the way the executive is formed, the degree of privileges and nature of institutions that provide balances, checks and balances. However, the most important of these additional indicators is the primary incentives for political leadership and political actors to maximize their current and future power and authority.

It is also interesting in this context to answer the question of what makes the institutions of an ideal autocracy stable. It is an institutional arrangement that hinders the competitive access of elites to the political power. The elected elite assign and determine the dictator in terms of positions of complete control without challenging his power from another political actor or from civil society. Loss of such control typically means complete exclusion from political positions in the future. Accordingly, the incentive to maximize political power ensures that the dictator necessarily protects and safeguards his power and authority. Such a system is characterized by a narrow concentration of significant political power, which determines how political institutions and institutions affect the distribution of power in the political system and within interinstitutional relations. That is why the ideal autocracy concentrates power in the hands of the political leadership, thus limiting the access of potential contenders to the channels of political power and competition. When the executive branch is limited by other establishments and institutions, potential candidates for dictators have access to channels for nominating candidates for positions of power. Thus, without access to such channels, the expected costs of refuting the shortcomings of autocratic regimes outweigh the expected

⁴² Gurr T., Persistence and Change in Political Systems, 1800–1971, *American Political Science Review* 1974, vol 68, nr. 4, s. 1482–1504; Muller E., Weede E., Cross-National Variations in Political Violence: A Rational Action Approach, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 1990, vol 34, nr. 4, s. 624–651.; Sanhueza R., The Hazard Rate of Political Regimes, *Public Choice* 1999, vol 98, nr. 3–4, s. 337–367.

⁴³ Eckstein H., Authority Patterns: A Structural Pattern for Inquiry, *American Political Science Review* 1973, vol 47, nr. 1, s. 1142–1161

⁴⁴ Gurr T., Persistence and Change in Political Systems, 1800–1971, *American Political Science Review* 1974, vol 68, nr. 4, s. 1482–1504

benefits of narrowing the power potential. And this, in turn, stabilizes the political system and its institutions. The fact is that the opening of alternative channels of power – either through the powers of competing institutions to recruit leaders or through an increase in the number of people involved in the executive – gives the opposition a better basis and opportunities for further decentralization. Thus, the autocrat has strong incentives not to leave power on any of these dimensions and seeks to ensure that the cost of maintaining the power of the political regime is sufficient to prevent political challenges from the opposition. The political system is thus self-determined, and the dictator's interest in maximizing and retaining power becomes an instrument for the long-term existence of autocratic political institutions.

In this regard, B. Bueno de Mesquita and J. Morrow⁴⁵ argue that the cabinets of autocratic states tend to stay in power much longer than their counterparts in democracies, but this does not mean that autocracy as a type of political regime is more stable, than democracy. The main problem facing autocracy is consistency. Autocracy is able to survive the decline of dictatorship. For example, absolute monarchies partially solve this problem on the principle of birthright and the succession of the throne. Some despotic non-monarchies (such as North Korea and Syria) also used this practice. Therefore, even cases of family “regicide” tend to affect the duration of the head of state / autocrat, rather than the entire political system.

The identical problem of maximizing the current and future power and authority is the reason for maintaining the stability of political institutions in a democracy. However, the anomaly is the fact that democratic states and institutions are long-lasting and democratic leaders are not. The reason is that democratic institutions ensure that power and authority are dispersed, thus incurring the costs of adjusting electoral results and the expected profits from the next election, which are likely to exceed the opposition's expected dividends from overthrowing the current democratic political regime. It is on this occasion that A. Przeworski⁴⁶ theoretically models democratic institutional balance and notes that democracy evokes generalized agreement when all political forces have little minimum probability of succeeding in a specific system of institutions. In other words, there are more options to benefit in the distant future by extending the power of democratic institutions rather than undermining or overthrowing them. In addition, constitutional restrictions also increase the cost of removing democratic institutions from power and ensure that the “fate of political battles” will be preserved⁴⁷. And the consent of citizens in a democratic political regime, in turn, is to support constitutional restrictions on further increasing the value of the election results⁴⁸. In this regard, as noted above, L. Diamond⁴⁹ concludes that the elites choose democracy in the

⁴⁵ De Mesquita B., Morrow J., Siverson R., Smith A., *The Logic of Political Survival*, Wyd. MIT Press 2003.

⁴⁶ Przeworski A., *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1991, s. 30–31

⁴⁷ Przeworski A., *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1991, s. 36

⁴⁸ Weingast, Barry R. 1997. “The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law.” *American Political Science Review* 91(2):245-63

⁴⁹ Diamond L., *Towards Democratic Consolidations*, *Journal of Democracy* 1994, vol 5, nr. 1, s. 3.

instrumental sense, because they feel that the cost of trying to overcome their political opponents will exceed the cost of changing institutional norms and rules.

Finally, as for inconsistent and hybrid political regimes, they are not and cannot be balanced and stable, as their power is not sufficiently monolithic, on the one hand, and democratized, on the other, to ensure that the political process will not be blocked. In this mode, political elites experience a desire to gain more power for themselves and to compete with each other, creating a volatile system of functioning of political institutions and establishments. Tracking each dimension set of thus established the institutional and political inconsistencies; the source of instability becomes apparent. The fact is that, unlike ideal autocracies, institutionally contradictory and hybrid regimes lack the degree of concentration of power that ensures the stability of governments and the political system as a whole. However, the government is concentrated enough to encourage groups or people to challenge it. On the other hand, unlike ideal democracies, institutionally inconsistent and hybrid regimes lack incentives for people to work for and maintain a system of democratic institutions.

On this basis, it is theorized that there are two stable equilibriums that come from a set of inter-institutional relations, institutional structure and political regime of a state. The first equilibrium concerns the democratic type of stability of governments and political systems and is characterized by recruitment to the executive branch through regulated, open and competitive elections; parity of executive power with legislative, as well as open and competitive participation. In contrast, the second equilibrium boils down to the autocratic type of stability of governments and political systems, characterized by recruitment to the executive through regulated but closed procedures, voluntary executive, and extremely limited and non-competitive participation.

At the same time, the institutional determination of the stability of governments and political systems is due not only to the correlation with the types of political regimes, but also to factors that take into account the peculiarities and specifics of forms and systems of government. Against this background, in modern political science there are many developments that relate to the stated issues and correlations. Thus, comparativists very often state that the parliamentary system of government is more optimal and stable as compared to the presidential or mixed / semi-presidential one, because it contributes more to the development of the party system. Instead, it has been found that the presidential system more often than the parliamentary system contributes to the collapse of democracy or hinders the consolidation of democracy⁵⁰. In addition, it is comparatively established that presidential and mixed / semi-presidential systems are more vulnerable in the context of government stability and efficiency if they (other things being equal) are characterized by such features as: the president has a large amount of power over the formation of the government cabinet, the legislative process and the institutionalization

⁵⁰ Di Palma G., *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions*, Berkeley 1990

of parliament; simultaneous holding of presidential and parliamentary elections on the basis of different procedures; presidential elections by an absolute rather than a relative majority⁵¹.

At the same time, in this case it is necessary to note a rather important role of the contextual conditions of institutional choice. Thus, in many cases, the choice in favor of semi-presidential / mixed systems of government is dictated by rational considerations. After all, in different historical conditions, semi-presidential / mixed systems were certainly more stable and efficient than even parliamentary, in particular due to the fragmentation of the party systems of the latter and the unwillingness of most political parties to work in coalition governments. However, in this case, the correlation of the stability of governments and political systems with government systems is largely conditional, as it always and inevitably depends on the type of political regime in which the patterns of interinstitutional relations are institutionalized in the triangle “head of state – government – parliament”. The fact is, for example, that the penetration of informal practices into formal legal institutions can add to the political system’s relative stability of its institutions, but also create much more institutional problems for it. Thus, the stability of governments in this context depends primarily on the specific configurations of political actors and their strategies, and they, according to G. O’Donnell⁵², can be changed because they are not established through formal institutions in the long run. Thus, in the medium and long term, such survival of governments and other political institutions, mainly due to informality, has a negative impact on their ability to reform and function effectively.

Accordingly, the choice of system of government is largely due to the ratio of forces of the democratic opposition and the ruling elite in the process of democratization or autocratization. The institutionalization of institutional choice and the way of inter-institutional relations largely depends on the cognitive abilities of political actors. This dependence, as A. Przeworski⁵³ argues, is determined, in particular, by the knowledge of political actors, firstly, the balance of power at the time when the institutional structure is adopted, and secondly, the result of this relationship, which may be equilibrium or no equilibrium. Based on knowledge and assessments of the institutional environment and taking into account their own institutional preferences, political actors choose specific types of institutions, while consciously or unconsciously determining how stable and effective such institutions will be in the future. Thus, a particular state chooses “its type” of government by resolving the dilemmas outlined above and by choosing the procedures. However, each state always considers that in case of failure, the risk of regression, hybridization and lack of any type of political regime consolidation increases significantly.

⁵¹ Shugart M., Kerri J., *Prezidentskie sistemy*, [w:] Golosov G., Galkina L. (eds.), *Sovremennaya sravnitel'naya politologiya*, Moskva 1997, s. 198–246.

⁵² O’Donnell G., Horizontal Accountability in New Democracies, *Journal of Democracy* 1998, vol 9, nr. 3, s. 120, źródło: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/16904>

⁵³ Przeworski A., *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1991, s. 107–138

At the same time, the institutional factors of stability of governments and political systems revolve not only around the parameters of state and regime significance, but also around party and electoral systems.

Therefore, in determining the factors of governmental and political stability, attention should be paid to party systems. In this regard, scholars state that among the criteria for the consolidation of parties in political science use the degree of electoral instability and fragmentation. Unstable are those party systems in which a large proportion of voters who change preferences in the intervals between elections⁵⁴, and fragmented – those party systems that consist of a significant number of elements, including parties, coalitions or blocs, etc⁵⁵. At the same time, the differences between the institutional preconditions and the institutional framework for the consolidation of party systems are important. The first are the necessary but not sufficient conditions for consolidation; they arise in the initial phase of transit of any political regime. Instead, the second are typically necessary and sufficient parameters for the consolidation of any political regime, a positive result of the transition to a democratic or autocratic political regime and a certain system of governance. This approach and indicators allow us to assess with a certain degree of confidence and reliability the results of inter-institutional relations in the context of development towards the consolidation and stabilization of political systems and their individual institutions.

At the same time, it is important that in considering the factors of stability of governments and political systems in general, as noted above, there is a non-institutional component, in which a special place is occupied by socio-cultural and structural factors. Thus, the dependence of governmental and political stability on the socio-cultural equipment of political actors significantly clarifies the understanding of the conditions of its definition, support and prospects for use. In this sense, even institutional factors find a sufficient level of problems, because the protest activity of the population, for example, can destroy or shake the functional-role foundations of political power – mainly due to unmotivated events. This is manifested, in particular, in the fact that the effectiveness of government in some cases is not a sufficient condition for the preservation of a government, and hence political stability. In turn, the structural factors of stability of governments are manifested mainly in the fact that stability must combine such parameters of the executive branch, which reflect the style of government (given by the preferences of the ruling circles) and real sentiments and values of the public, what ultimately implies one or another degree of integration of the executive branch and society, and hence one or another level of governmental and political stability. However, such non-institutional factors require detailed consideration, which should be the subject of a separate study.

⁵⁴ Pedersen M., *Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility in European Party Systems, 1948–1977: Explorations in Explanation*, [w:] Daalder H., Mair P. (eds.), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*, Wyd. Beverly Hills 1993

⁵⁵ Laakso M., Taagepera R., Effective Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to West Europe, *“Comparative Political Studies”* 1979, vol 12, s. 3–27.

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