

THE PRINCIPLES AND MECHANISMS OF PORTFOLIO ALLOCATION AND MAINTAINING BALANCE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT COALITIONS' PARTNERS: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTEXTS

Artykuł analizuje teoretyczne zasady i praktyczne przejawy oraz mechanizmy alokacji tek i utrzymania równowagi pomiędzy partnerami w koalicjach rządowych. Ustalono, że takie zasady i mechanizmy, zwłaszcza na tle stosunków nie tyle międzyinstytucjonalnych, co międzypartyjnych, są ważne w kontekście powoływania i funkcjonowania oraz odpowiedzialności rządów koalicyjnych, a co za tym idzie ich stabilności i skuteczności. Problem wynika z tego, że partyjne koalicje rządowe potrafią wynegocjować kompromis w sprawie obecności polityki koalicyjnej w ramach określonego typu gabinetu wielopartyjnego, ale nie są w stanie ufać ministrom z różnych partii, a tym samym jak najskuteczniej realizować proces rządzenia. Stwierdzono, że sytuację tę mogą korygować zmienne zasady i mechanizmy alokacji i równoważenia tek w rządach koalicyjnych. Ich uwzględnienie jest ważne nie tylko dla zapewnienia formowania rządów koalicyjnych, ale także dla przedłużenia ich funkcjonowania. Jednak są one zupełnie inne i dlatego są przedmiotem badań.

Słowa kluczowe: rząd, gabinet rządowy, rząd koalicyjny, koalicja rządowa, minister, teki, partia, podział portfela.

The article is devoted to analyzing theoretical principles and practical manifestations and mechanisms of portfolio allocation and maintaining balance between partners in government coalitions. The author found that such principles and mechanisms, especially at the background of inter-party relations rather than inter-institutional relations, are important in the context of the formation, functioning and responsibility of coalition governments, and hence their stability and effectiveness. The problem stems from the fact that government coalitions of parties are able to negotiate on a compromise on the essence of coalition policy within a particular type of multi-party government cabinet, but are unable to trust ministers from different parties to each other, and thus to implement the process of governance as effectively as possible. It was found that the situation can be corrected by variable principles and mechanisms of portfolio allocation and portfolio balancing in coalition governments. Taking them into account is important not only for ensuring the formation of coalition governments, but also for prolonging their functioning. However, they are quite different, and therefore they are the focus of the study.

Keywords: government, government cabinet, coalition government, government coalition, minister, portfolio, party, portfolio allocation.

Coalition government cabinets are statistically the most common type of government in most representative democracies, not only in Europe but in the world at large. Therefore, in the context of their formation, functioning and responsibility, the principles and procedures of portfolio allocation and maintaining balance between partners in government coalitions are of extreme importance, especially in parliamentary democracies, which are mainly determined by attributes not so much inter-institutional as inter-party relations. However, the stated issues are relevant both in theoretical and practical-empirical contexts, because, on the one hand, it testifies to the mechanics and dynamics of coalition and actions and positions of governmental and non-governmental parties, and, on the other hand, deepens the understanding of the phenomenon of coalition government offices as such.

This is manifested in the fact that the research topic presented in the proposed scientific article has previously found, and still reflects the whole array of scientific works of various scholars who address the nature and features of delegation and balance of positions and powers in multi-party / coalition government cabinets, especially to the issue of portfolio allocation and management of members of government coalitions. Among the most famous among them are researchers such as R. Andeweg (author of “Ministers as Double Agents? The Process of Delegation Between the Cabinet and Ministers”¹), M. Hallerberg (author of “The Role of Parliamentary Committees in the Budget Process Within Europe”² as part of a collective monograph), W. Mueller (author of “Political Parties in Parliamentary Democracies: Delegation and Accountability”³), L. Martin and G. Vanberg (author of the article “Coalition Politics and Legislative Review”⁴) and others. They argue on average that government coalitions of parliamentary parties are able to negotiate a compromise on the nature of coalition policy within a particular type of multi-party government cabinet, but are unable to trust ministers from different political parties to each other, and thus the most effective (as in the case of single-party governments) to implement the governance process. This is the case, for example, when the efforts of individual ministers of certain government parties significantly affect the effectiveness of the coalition government, in particular when such ministers do not go beyond their functional jurisdiction.

In this regard, the political science literature identifies and suggests at least three basic ways in which government coalition partners gain and pass fairly effective mechanisms to control each other and, as a result, reduce the consequences of “agency loss” when each partner

¹ Andeweg R., Ministers as double agents? The delegation process between cabinet and ministers, *“European Journal of Political Research”* 2000, vol 37, s. 377–395

² Hallerberg M., *The Role of Parliamentary Committees in the Budgetary Process within Europe*, [w:] Strauch R., von Hagen J. (eds.), *Institutions, Politics and Fiscal Policy*, Wyd. Kluwer 2000, s. 87–106

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

⁴ Martin L., Vanberg G., Coalition Policymaking and Legislative Review, *“American Political Science Review”* 2004, vol 99, s. 93–106

of a hypothetical government coalition and the impact of delegating of the another partner. Thus, first, L. Martin and G. Vanberg⁵ note that partners in any government coalition can use the parliamentary process and the general parliamentary arena as a tool through which they are able to obtain information about each other's actions and positions. In contrast, second, W. Müller, K. Strom⁶, and M. Zaiss⁷ argue that junior ministers or assistant ministers from one party within a government coalition are able to assist in overseeing cabinet members and ministers from another or other parties within the same government coalition.. Finally, and thirdly, M. Hallerberg⁸, D. Kim and G. Loewenberg⁹ note that parliamentary committees and their direct members can also control the ministers of coalition government cabinets, in particular by influencing their tenure in office and the stability of coalition government cabinets in general. At the same time, it is quite important to take into account which specific ministries or departments in each specific government coalition are subject to inter-party control and / or balancing / counterbalance procedures. So, if members of government coalitions distribute positions mainly crosswise and alternating, and each government coalition partner also chooses which positions will belong to him within a particular government cabinet, in particular with a view to minimize "agency losses", than it is clear that each government coalition minister is likely to be in the shadow of the distribution of seats in parliamentary committees, especially if: the functional jurisdiction of a particular ministry is more important for certain partners; a certain ministerial / government party has serious differences in policy over the functional jurisdiction of the ministry with other ministerial / government parties; positions in profile parliamentary committees are more influential than the corresponding positions in ministries.

In this context, it is important to outline the features and parameters of the "chain" of the powers delegation and responsibilities, which in a representative democracy not only determine the formation of government cabinets, including coalition, but also outline the role and importance of election procedures, who, through parties as political principals, delegate to members of parliaments the opportunity to elect appropriate government cabinets as a whole and individual ministers and other employees of such government cabinets, including coalition ones¹⁰. The fact is that at each stage of the "chain" of the authority and responsibility delegation there is a question about what the principals (in this case, the party and the legislature) can do to ensure the fulfillment of their political and electoral interests by their agreed agents. This

⁵ Martin L., Vanberg G., Coalition Policymaking and Legislative Review, "American Political Science Review" 2004, vol 99, s. 93–106

⁶ Müller W., Strom K., *Schlu.: Koalitionsregierungen und die Praxis des Regierens in Westeuropa*, [w:] Müller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Koalitionsregierungen in Westeuropa*, Wyd. Signum 1997, s. 736

⁷ Thies M., Keeping Tabs on Partners: The Logic of Delegation in Coalition Governments, "American Journal of Political Science" 2001, vol 45, nr. 3, s. 580–598

⁸ Hallerberg M., *The Role of Parliamentary Committees in the Budgetary Process within Europe*, [w:] Strauch R., von Hagen J. (eds.), *Institutions, Politics and Fiscal Policy*, Wyd. Kluwer 2000, s. 87–106.

⁹ Kim D.-H., Loewenberg G., The Role of Parliamentary Committees in Coalition Governments: Keeping Tabs on Coalition Partners in the German Bundestag, "Comparative Political Studies" 2005, vol. 38, s. 1104–1129

¹⁰ Andeweg R., Ministers as double agents? The delegation process between cabinet and ministers, "European Journal of Political Research" 2000, vol 37, s. 377–395

is manifested in the fact that principals (those who in this case delegate power to individual government ministries, and thus distribute and balance positions in a coalition) must bear the costs of losing control of their agents (governments and individual ministers), for only then will the reasons and mechanisms for the distribution of portfolios and the maintenance of balance between partners in governmental coalitions become apparent, and thus in the inter-party control system within coalition governments. In purely theoretical terms, this means that any coalition government cabinet is formed and functions as a tool to ensure the mutual costs and dividends of the parties that make it up, including the mutual distribution and control of their and not necessarily their ministerial positions. In this regard, M. Laver and K. Shepsl argue that when each particular ruling party of the governing coalition is aware of the ideal policy and position of its coalition partner, then the “mutual loss of control” over certain aspects of government can lead to stable results of the coalition government cabinet¹¹. In addition, the researchers note, this event is a good recipe for the financial problems solution of the powers and responsibilities delegation which otherwise lead to excessive losses¹². In other words, this means that all members of the governing coalition must, in principle, be provided with their own and quite relevant dividends if the governing coalition is able to “punish” the mistakes of the compromise policy.

At the same time, some researchers, in particular W. Mueller, W. Philipp, P. Gerlich¹³, R. Andeweg¹⁴ and M. Hallerberg¹⁵ emphasize that the position of the head of the government – the prime minister – is quite problematic in such a construction, because it is not known how strongly he should be authorized and in the hands of which of the parties of the government coalition. The fact is that in any coalition government, the prime minister cannot a priori be as “strong” as in the case of a one-party government, especially of the majority and therefore cannot “place” and subordinate government ministers cabinet linearly. In addition, the position of prime minister is not collegial, but rather individual, so when the head of government is a representative of one of the parties in the coalition cabinet, other political forces are driven to simply believe him, because they naturally have no good reason to believe that the head of government will certainly act exceptionally sincerely and for the purposes of the entire government coalition. Instead, they are convinced that even more important in this case are the matrices of the political interests of individual political forces of the government coalition. Similar situation characterizes the procedures and consequences of the coalition government

¹¹ Laver M., Shepsle K., *Making and breaking governments*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1996

¹² Bawn K., Rosenbluth F., Short versus Long Coalitions: Electoral Accountability and the Size of the Public Sector, *American Journal of Political Science* 2006, vol 50, nr. 2, s. 251–265; Persson T., Roland G., Tabellini G., How do electoral rules shape party structures, government coalitions, and economic policies?, *NBER Working Paper* 2003, nr. 10176.

¹³ Muller W., Philipp W., Gerlich P., *Prime ministers and cabinet decision-making processes*, [w:] Blondel J., Muller-Rommel F. (eds.), *Governing together. The extent and limits of joint decision-making in Western European cabinets*, Wyd. Macmillan 1993, s. 232–236

¹⁴ Andeweg R., Ministers as double agents? The delegation process between cabinet and ministers, *European Journal of Political Research* 2000, vol 37, s. 377–395

¹⁵ Hallerberg M., *The Role of Parliamentary Committees in the Budgetary Process within Europe*, [w:] Strauch R., von Hagen J. (eds.), *Institutions, Politics and Fiscal Policy*, Wyd. Kluwer 2000, s. 87–106

delegating a person to the post of finance minister, as the latter is positioned as extremely important against the background of other portfolios and in the context of inter-party disputes in the coalition government¹⁶. All this means that even the understanding of coalition government only in a narrow sense, i.e. as a coalition government cabinet or a kind of “government coalition committee”, does not solve the problem of collective governance due to the unresolved dilemma of collective leadership and the gravity of political coalition / government, and to individual / party goals. This is reflected in the fact that any format of collective leadership in any example and type of coalition government will not be able to provide constructions when all ministerial proposals, without exception, are considered and resolved and appropriate decisions and actions will be taken. Moreover, as M. McCubbins and T. Schwartz¹⁷, L. Martin and G. Vanberg¹⁸ note such a design of a kind of comprehensive “police patrol car” can be extremely erroneous and very expensive. In contrast, collective leadership in government coalitions is designed in such a way that a kind of system of mutual control is established, on the basis of which any ministerial proposals should authorize key agents in the government to delay certain legislation, thus giving time to collective leadership as such to consider those parts of legislation that do not provoke mutual resistance, neither in terms of their support, nor in terms of their denial.

The situation is complemented by the fact that, as noted above, especially in the case of minority coalition governments that the distribution and balancing of portfolios between government coalition partners is significantly affected by the role of positions in parliamentary committees, which can be positioned as a counterweight to the governments and the cabinet members. This is due to the fact that more specialized, better informed and more influential and powerful portfolios and seats in parliamentary committees are positioned as expected to be more promising, sometimes even compared to the portfolios of ministers in coalition government cabinets. In this regard, D. Kim notes that if there is an established and institutionalized system of control based on the distribution of portfolios or mandates, then each of the members of a government coalition expects a distinctive or separate pattern of control by parties of such a government coalition or parties outside it, especially when mandates in committees are delegated to a greater extent to non-governmental parties¹⁹. It has been established on this basis, that there are at least two defining or general potential counterbalances to members of coalition government cabinets, in particular, the availability of junior ministers or deputy ministers and the specifics of the distribution of seats in parliamentary committees. Depending on them, the parameters of control and monitoring of the activities of representatives of different

¹⁶ Hallerberg M., *The Role of Parliamentary Committees in the Budgetary Process within Europe*, [w:] Strauch R., von Hagen J. (eds.), *Institutions, Politics and Fiscal Policy*, Wyd. Kluwer 2000, s. 87–106

¹⁷ McCubbins M., Schwartz T., Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols vs. Fire Alarms, *American Journal of Political Science* 1984, vol 28, s. 165–179.

¹⁸ Martin L., Vanberg G., Coalition Policymaking and Legislative Review, *American Political Science Review* 2004, vol 99, s. 93–106

¹⁹ Kim D.-H., Loewenberg G., The Role of Parliamentary Committees in Coalition Governments: Keeping Tabs on Coalition Partners in the German Bundestag, *Comparative Political Studies* 2005, vol 38, s. 1104–1129

parties of coalition cabinets may change, as well as access to information and powers due to potential counterbalances of coalition (and sometimes non-governmental) parties, but one. In so doing, these factors can be considered both as completely separate and as complementary, as a result of which they differently balance and counterbalance of the procedures of distribution and control of portfolios within the coalition government cabinets.

On this basis, political science has developed a consolidated position that in various representative, however, mainly parliamentary democracies, there are different (separate or related) commonly used principles and mechanisms for allocating and balancing / counterbalancing of all or key government portfolios between government coalition partners. Against this background, let's focus on the most common and not more effective among them. One of the procedures stipulates that the post of prime minister receives the party that receives and enjoys the largest number of votes of the electorate or the mandates of deputies in the legislature, at least against the background of other governmental political forces. This means that the practice of forming a coalition government cabinet is typically considered to be the consolidation of the position of the head of government by a relatively strongest partner in the government coalition, since the leader of a political party with support and parliamentary representation (this almost always occurs in a directly proportional correlation) is usually recognized and appointed by the prime minister of the new government. In addition, W. Mueller notes that quite often this is not necessarily a formal rule (although this happens), but rather an informal inter-party and political agreement (often institutionalized), which, however, is followed or is being tried in most countries, mainly with a multiparty system²⁰. Another fairly common mechanism is giving the post of a deputy prime minister or speaker of parliament or its leading chamber in the case of bicameralism to the representative of the another partner in relative strength and representation in the government coalition. This is according to the determination, on the basis of which the appointment of a representative of the strongest / most represented coalition partner by the Prime Minister does not mean that this partner and his party are given all or absolute power in the coalition government cabinet. After all, the second or third largest party in a coalition government usually receives a quota for the post of Deputy Prime Minister or Speaker of the Legislature. Thus, it ensures the impossibility of concentrating power in the hands of one political force within the government coalition. This is accompanied by a third principle, according to which the most important positions are distributed among the relatively strongest partners in the government coalition. In particular, special attention is paid to the distribution of such important government positions as Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Defense, etc. This is especially evident against the background of the fact that in many cases countries also hold separate negotiations on each specific position in the coalition government cabinets. For example, in Germany, the

²⁰ Muller W., *Austria: Tight Coalitions and Stable Government*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000

largest government party typically receives the posts of Chancellor and Minister of Finance and Defense, and other members of government coalitions are usually Deputy Chancellors and Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Economy²¹. Although, on the contrary, in some countries of the world there are no clear models of distribution of government portfolios, instead it is more not systematized, but situational.

On the other hand, less important portfolios in government coalitions are typically distributed among coalition members in proportion to the electoral support of parties in such coalitions, although weaker partners in government coalitions often receive slightly more representation in government cabinets and parliamentary committees. This is due to the fact that the distribution of less important portfolios in coalition government cabinets allows to “encourage” smaller parties for their consent to cooperate with the new government coalitions²². Considering, that most (if not all) leadership positions in coalition government cabinets are typically filled by members of the strongest government parties, smaller coalition parties traditionally receive a relatively large share of “sub-par” positions²³, what, according to P. Mitchell, gives them even more representation than can be calculated on the basis of a purely proportional distribution²⁴, in particular based on the votes of voters and seats in parliaments²⁵ obtained by such and all government political forces. Because such a mechanism for distributing and balancing of portfolios and maintaining counterbalance between partners in government coalitions is positioned as quite relevant and widespread in various countries around the world, it is traditionally called the “relative weakness effect”²⁶. Nevertheless, very important is the principle according to which the distribution of portfolios within government coalitions usually takes place on the basis of coordination with the party interests of the members of such coalitions. In this regard, T. Saalfeld emphasizes that, in addition to the principle of proportionality, the distribution of government portfolios within coalitions traditionally takes into account the specific political interests of the parties that form such coalitions²⁷. As a result, if a coalition party is interested in a particular area of politics and government, a representative of such a party is often appointed to the specific ministry it targets. This conclusion is supplemented by E. Damgaard, who believes that in fact the practice of distribution of government portfolios by political significance for parties, represented in coalition governments is very common, as it

²¹ Saalfeld T., *Germany: Stable Parties, Chancellor Democracy, and the Art of Informal Settlement*, [w:] Müller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 67–70.

²² Saalfeld T., *Germany: Stable Parties, Chancellor Democracy, and the Art of Informal Settlement*, [w:] Müller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 67–70.

²³ Müller W., *Austria: Tight Coalitions and Stable Government*, [w:] Müller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000.

²⁴ Mitchell P., *Ireland: From Single-Party to Coalition Rule*, [w:] Müller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000.

²⁵ Damgaard E., *Denmark: The Life and Death of Government Coalitions*, [w:] Müller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000.

²⁶ Browne E., *Coalition Theories: A Logical and Empirical Critique*, Wyd. Sage 1973.

²⁷ Saalfeld T., *Germany: Stable Parties, Chancellor Democracy, and the Art of Informal Settlement*, [w:] Müller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 67–70.

promotes open consideration of the interests of various political forces, which, in turn, contributes to the stabilization of coalition government cabinets and greater inter-party trust within them²⁸. After all, this is mechanically complemented by the fact that a mechanism, on the basis of which the distribution of the ministerial and other portfolios that reflects the distribution of ministerial and other portfolios is used, reflects the desire of political actors to balance power and representation between government coalition partners. As a result, as can be seen from the above principles and mechanisms for portfolio allocation within coalition governments, this means that the process of allocating positions is based on the principles of balancing and / or equality of parts / parties in government coalitions. This is especially important at least because it is a manifestation of the natural desire of any government coalition that wants to maintain unity and stability in its ranks. At the same time, member parties of the governing coalition must see that their contribution is valued and that they play an important role in policy-making and governance. This is complemented by the fact that today, in addition to the principles and mechanisms for the distribution of portfolios between the partners of coalition government cabinets, there are quite strong and proven principles for achieving and maintaining balance between parties in the coalition governments.

It is important that all the mechanisms that coalition governments can use to balance power and representation between members of government coalitions are certainly seen as a factor in increasing government stability. Interestingly that one of the most logical, at first glance; ways to balance government power between members of government coalitions is to divide government portfolios between different coalition parties. However, this method is characterized by obvious limitations, as the number of ministerial positions in coalition governments is limited, and therefore this tool is not suitable or not always suitable for achieving a representative balance. On this basis, other, more sophisticated, methods and means of distribution of power within coalition governments have been developed and tested at various times. In general, the methods described below involve the division of control over positions in coalition governments, either by creating additional positions within existing ministerial or departmental portfolios, or by dividing traditional areas of responsibility into narrower segments and clusters. Such approaches are sometimes referred to as the “heterogeneity principle”, where no partner in the governing coalition has sole control over a particular area of the political process and governance²⁹.

Among all the existing ways and mechanisms to ensure a balance between the coalition parties, the instrument of appointing junior ministers, which are called differently in different countries is often used, in particular secretaries of state, deputy ministers with broad powers or simply deputy ministers, into important or most important ministries. Thus, if, for example, the Ministry of Finance is headed by a representative of Party A, then the junior ministers within

²⁸ Damgaard E., *Denmark: The Life and Death of Government Coalitions*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000

²⁹ Saalfeld T., *Germany: Stable Parties, Chancellor Democracy, and the Art of Informal Settlement*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 67–70

that Ministry may be representatives of Party B and / or Party C. Some junior ministers may have their own responsibilities and perform, for example, broad oversight and control functions, while other such positions are assigned mainly to specific policy areas within the ministry that they have significant influence over. In addition, the procedure for appointing junior ministers differs from country to country. In many countries, junior ministers are appointed only to specific key ministries. In other countries, on the other hand, each minister receives several junior ministers, in particular one position for each coalition party in each government ministry, government agency or department³⁰. However, in any case, using the tools of junior ministers as a “counterweight” has several important advantages. For example, W. Mueller in his work “Coalitions Management in Western Europe” argues that this mechanism not only helps to balance the distribution of government representation among coalition parties, but also generates “an important mechanism by which coalition agreements are implemented in individual ministries”³¹. However, even despite the popularity of the coalition balancing method, it should be noted that not all junior ministers serve this purpose. Thus, in some cases, as in Sweden and Belgium, the positions of junior ministers are not taken into account at all to balance the powers in the ministries of coalition governments. The fact is that they are appointed by the ministers themselves and they represent the same political party as full-fledged ministers. Moreover, in Belgium, where junior ministerial positions were once used to balance coalition representation, it was decided that this system led to unnecessary conflicts between ministries, and thus in the early 1990s of the 20th century it was abandoned³².

The next tool to ensure balance between coalition parties is considered to be holding different ministerial positions as an important way of dividing leading positions in the government among members of government coalitions. For example, in the same Sweden where the junior ministers do not perform the function of a “counterweight”, some important ministerial and departmental positions are held or have been previously held by several full-fledged ministers at the same time. T. Bergman emphasizes that this was the case, for example, with the Ministry of Finance and Budget in the coalition governments of Sweden in the period 1976-1979³³. Another rather interesting example is Belgium, where, as mentioned above, there are no junior ministers at all, but quite often two ministers from different parties are appointed to occupy their “the most important ministries”. In this context, J. Nouziainen reports that each of these ministers receives its functional jurisdiction within the relevant ministry, but there is no clear hierarchical relationship between the ministers of the coalition government cabinets and in

³⁰ Muller W., *Austria: Tight Coalitions and Stable Government*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 108–109.

³¹ Muller W., Strom K., *Coalition Governance in Western Europe: An Introduction*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 24–25

³² De Winter L., *Belgium: On Government Agreements, Evangelists, Followers and Heretics*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 325–326.

³³ Bergman T., *Sweden: When Minority Cabinets are the Rule and Majority Coalitions the Exception*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 217

general³⁴. It happens, however, that the two mechanisms of balancing the parties of coalition government cabinets are used in parallel and as complementary. In contrast, a slightly different mechanism for the power balancing between members of coalitions is the creation and separation of positions of so-called “ministers without portfolios”. This method is also widely practiced in Sweden, where cabinet ministers are often responsible for a particular area of policy and governance, but do not have control over the specific institutional apparatus and the entire sector³⁵. Interestingly that the advantages of this approach are that the participants in the negotiation process receive or hypothetically can get more freedom to meet the interests of coalition parties, mainly at the stage of the coalition government cabinet forming. However, the obvious disadvantage of this method and tool is that ministers without portfolios often face significant difficulties in implementing their initiatives and goals, as they do not have the institutional support at the same level as “ordinary” ministers. Quite often this shortcoming is compensated by another tool for achieving a representative balance within the coalition government cabinets – the creation and testing of new ministries and, accordingly, new ministerial positions. For example, in Denmark For example, in Denmark, the number and functional jurisdiction of major government ministries is not fixed. That is why they can be changed to reflect the interests of the parties, especially in the case of the formation and functioning of government coalitions. Thus, during the formation of a government coalition, the structure of the government cabinet can be the subject of inter-party “bidding”, which significantly increases the flexibility of the political process³⁶. A somewhat less radical example is the case of Ireland, in which the number and functional jurisdiction of government ministries and departments is enshrined in the constitution. Thus, for example, during negotiations to form a governing coalition in 1994, the position of the so-called “senior junior minister” was created, specifically for the smaller party of the governing coalition, which required two ministerial posts, although the coalition could allocate only one³⁷.

After all, some representative, mainly parliamentary democracies have developed and successfully used an additional tool called the scoring system. Through this mechanism, each party of the governing coalition receives proper representation in the government cabinet. Such a system, for example, was being used in Romania, where coalition partners agreed on a kind of “exchange rate” in 2004. Thus, under this system, one full ministerial position corresponded to three positions of state secretaries (equivalent to junior ministers) and so on. A more complex example of its time was Belgium, where the “counting rule” has been used to allocate government

³⁴ Nousiainen], *Finland: The Consolidation of Parliamentary Governance*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 283

³⁵ Bergman T., *Sweden: When Minority Cabinets are the Rule and Majority Coalitions the Exception*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000

³⁶ Damgaard E., *Denmark: The Life and Death of Government Coalitions*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 250

³⁷ Mitchell P., *Ireland: From Single-Party to Coalition Rule*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 143

positions since 1980³⁸. According to this rule, each position in the coalition government receives a share: three points – for the post of Prime Minister, two points – for a ministerial position, as well as for the positions of Speakers of the Lower House and Senate (two chambers of the bicameral parliament), one point – for the position of Secretary of State (analog of the junior minister). At the same time, during the negotiations, the coalition parties first determine the same number of points for the Flemish and French-speaking communities, as the Belgian Constitution requires equal or equivalent rights for both ethno linguistic groups. Points are then distributed among each party on the basis of its electoral support and parliamentary representation, and party leaders take turns choosing the portfolios in which they are interested. Moreover, in this case, the right to choose the first has the relatively strongest party, and instead the last chooses the party with the smallest number and share of votes and mandates. Finally, after the completion of the initial selection procedure, a second round of negotiations begins, during which parties can “exchange” their portfolios.

Against this background, in the context of systematizing the principles and mechanisms of portfolio allocation and maintaining balance between partners in government coalitions is a rather interesting issue is the stability of coalition governments. It would be plausible to assume, and so it is averaged, that the most stable should be one-party majority governments, but it does not always happen and sometimes, in some countries, it happens that coalition governments last longer than one-party governments. A good and theoretically sound explanation for this result is that prime ministers in the countries where one-party majority governments are formed are often endowed with the authority and right to dissolve legislatures and call early parliamentary elections, even when they are, especially in parliamentary systems of government consider it expedient purely for political reasons. Accordingly, early parliamentary elections, followed by the formation of new governments in such countries, take place quite often, as in the United Kingdom,

Spain, and Greece, etc. Against this background, it is argued that a small number of major political parties have traditionally had a positive effect on government stability, however, as the number of political parties increases, so do the number of factors on which government stability will depend. In this regard, D. Diermeier and P. Van Rosendaal note that the higher the effective number of political parties, the greater the possibility of forming coalition governments, although, in their opinion, we must take into account the prospect of longer formation of a coalition government³⁹. However, from the same perspective, the principles and mechanisms of portfolio allocation and maintaining the balance between government coalition partners mentioned above are very important, though not the only one, important for stabilizing coalition governments.

³⁸ De Winter L., *Belgium: On Government Agreements, Evangelists, Followers and Heretics*, [w:] Muller W., Strom K. (eds.), *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 333

³⁹ Diermeier D., Van Rosendaal P., The Duration of Cabinet Formation Processes in Western Multi-Party Democracies, *British Journal of Political Science* 1998, vol 28, nr. 4, s. 622–623

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