

## Minority governments in the systems of positive and negative parliamentarism: emphasis on the features of European systems of negative parliamentarism

The article is dedicated to analyzing the features of formation, principles of functioning and stability of minority governments in European systems of negative parliamentarism. The author identified the role of governments in the systems of inter-institutional relations in European parliamentary democracies, specified the nature parliamentary democracies distribution into the systems of positive and negative parliamentarism, outlined minority governments role and variations in the systems of negative parliamentarism, tested the hypothesis that the negative parliamentarism promotes the formation of minority governments, detailed the history of minority governments in the European systems of negative parliamentarism, outlined the key reasons/motives of formation and resignations of minority governments in the systems of negative parliamentarism, characterized the features of minority governments' stability in European systems of negative parliamentarism.

*Keywords:* minority government, parliamentary democracy, positive and negative parliamentarism, positive confidence, negative confidence, silent confidence, investiture, the moment of investiture, single-party and coalition minority governments, opposition, government stability.

As the practice of state-building shows, steady trends in relation to the development of *parliamentary democracy* and *parliamentarism* can be observed in modern European constitutional systems (parliamentary monarchies, parliamentary and semi-presidential republics), as well as an increase of their role in the management of social processes, and a revival of the idea of legislature priority in state mechanism<sup>1</sup>. The parliament activity facilitates application of the system of checks/balances not only between separate elements of state mechanism, but also inside of legislative body. But in conditions of parliamentary democracy the role of parliament institute and the phenomenon of parliamentarism are particularly important in the context of *inter-institutional relations*, particularly the impact of parliament on the process of formation, functioning and early termination of the *government* powers. The implementation

---

<sup>1</sup> What is usually meant under the parliamentary democracy is a democratic political system and a democratic political regime (which subject to the constitutional system of the government can be a parliamentary republic, parliamentary monarchy or semi-presidential republic), in which the government/executive power is formed, supported, and also tolerated by the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament. Refer to: V. Bogdanor, *The government formation process in the constitutional monarchies of North-West Europe*, [w:] D. Kavanagh, G. Peele, *Comparative Government and Politics*, Wyd. Westview Press 1984.; A. Brusewitz, *Vad menas med parlamentarism?*, "Statsvetenskaplig Tiakkrift" 1929, vol 32, s. 323–334.

of this phenomenon occurs in the case of minority governments, since they are presented by parties, which jointly do not have any permanent majority in the parliament, and thus depend on situational arrangements between various parties and deputies in the parliament. It means that in conditions of minority governments the formal and actual parameters of the parliament and government inter-institutional relations assume particular significance, that is, the role of the institution of parliament and parliamentarism phenomenon.

Parliamentary democracies are divided into the systems of positive and negative parliamentarism<sup>2</sup> by the mechanisms of the parliaments impact on formation/termination of governments power. In the systems of *positive parliamentarism* the formation of government directly depends on positive (that is, such that is supported by a vast/relative majority of parliament deputies<sup>3</sup>) vote of confidence in the government on the part of parliament. It means that the government cabinet commences its activity only after provision (to him, his prime-minister, personnel, program) of the vote of confidence/investiture by a vast or relative majority of the parliament deputies (depending on a specific analyzed case). Accordingly, the government cabinet should be deemed to be operational for the time it enjoys confidence of the parliament or until a positive vote of no confidence is expressed (that is, such that is supported by the vast or relative majority of parliament deputies). It means that in conditions of the systems of positive parliamentarism the confidence/investiture in the government is permanent and is provided both at the stage of its initiation/formation, and in the process of its functioning. It also contemplates that the tool of positive parliamentarism incorporates the mechanism of impact on formation of the government, vote of confidence/investiture, duration of the government formation, role of a founder and anticipated consequences of the early termination of governments powers. *The examples of positive parliamentarism systems* among European parliamentary democracies are presented by Belgium (in which the peculiarities of vote of confidence/investiture are not delineated formally, but are used in practice), Bulgaria, Greece, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania,

<sup>2</sup> T. Bergman, *Formation rules and minority governments*, "European Journal of Political Research" 1993, vol 23, nr 1, s. 55–66; T. Bergman, *Constitutional rules and party goals in coalition formation*, Wyd. Umeå University Press 1995, s. 41–43; L. De Winter, *The Role of Parliament in Government Formation and Resignation*, [w:] H. Döring, *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe*, Wyd. St. Martin's Press 1995, s. 115–151.; L. De Winter, P. Dumont, *Uncertainty and Complexity in Coalition Formation*, [w:] K. Strøm, W. C. Müller, T. Bergman, *Government and Coalition Bargaining: The Democratic Life Cycle in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2008, s. 123–158.; U. Sieberer, *The Institutional Power of Western European Parliaments: A Multidimensional Analysis*, "West European Politics" 2011, vol 34, nr 4, s. 731–754; F. Russo, L. Verzichelli, *The Adoption of Positive and Negative Parliamentarism: Systemic or Idiosyncratic Differences?*, ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Salamanca, April 2014.; J.A. Cheibub, S. Martin, J.A. Rasch, *The Investiture Vote and the Formation of Minority Parliamentary Governments*, Presented at the workshop on The Importance of Constitutions: Parliamentarism, Representation, and Voting Rights, Istanbul 2013.; M. Molder, *Coherence of Coalition Governments Across Types of Parliamentarism*, Paper prepared for the 2014 ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops in panel "The Evolution of Parliamentarism and its Political Consequences"; T. Louwse, *Unpacking "positive" and "negative" parliamentarism*, Paper presented at the workshop „The Evolution of Parliamentarism and Its Political Consequences“ of the European Consortium of Political Research, Salamanca, April 10–15, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> I. Budge, M. Laver, *Office seeking and policy pursuit in coalition theory*, "Legislative Studies Quarterly" 1986, vol 11, s. 485–506.; M. Laver, *Between theoretical elegance and political reality: Deductive models and government coalitions in Europe*, [w:] G. Pridham, *Coalitional Behavior in Theory and Practice: An Inductive Model for Western Europe*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1986, s. 32–44.; M. Laver, N. Schofield, *Multiparty Government: The Politics of Coalition in Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 1990.; M. Laver, K. A. Shepsle, *Coalitions and government government*, "American Political Science Review" 1990, vol 84, s. 873–890.; K. Strom, *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990.

Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Finland (since 2000), Croatia and the Czech Republic<sup>4</sup>.

In the systems of *negative parliamentarism* government formation does not directly depend on the positive vote of confidence (supported by the vast or relative majority of parliament deputies) or depends on the negative vote of confidence in the government on the part of parliament. The negative vote of confidence in the government means that for the government to start functioning it should receive the vote of confidence/investiture, the essence of which consists in the fact that the vast majority of parliament deputies should not vote against the prime minister, composition or program of the government. It means that the government cabinet in conditions of the system of negative parliamentarism commences its activity after it or its prime minister is nominated by the head of state or by the parliament without the support (vote of confidence/investiture) of prime minister, personnel or government program by the vast or relative majority of parliament deputies or provided that the vast majority of parliament deputies does not vote against the prime minister, composition or program of the government. Accordingly, it is believed that the government cabinet receives confidence in the parliament by a mere fact of nomination of its prime minister or government composition or by non-objection of the candidature of prime minister or government composition by the vast majority of deputies in the parliament. The government cabinet is deemed to be effective until a positive vote of no confidence (such that was supported by the vast or relative majority of parliament deputies, depending on a specific analyzed case) is expressed to it or until a silent or negative confidence is denied to it. And it means that in conditions of negative parliamentarism systems the confidence/investiture in the government is not always based on parliamentary majority, because it can fail to be provided or can be provided negatively in the process of government formation. Instead, a denial to the positive confidence in the government or failure to meet the requirements of negative confidence in the government in the process of government functioning is a reason for early termination of government powers. Actually it means that the system of negative parliamentarism is an institutional and constitutional scenario, which is based on a permanent silent confidence in the government cabinet, supported by the majority of parliament deputies (when the parliament does not deny confidence to the government or does not express the vote of no confidence in the government) or under a permanent negative confidence in the government cabinet, against which fact the vast majority of the parliament deputies raises no objections. A failure to adhere to or loss of positive confidence by the government or a failure to provide the government with a negative confidence in the parliament in the systems of negative parliamentarism causes resignation of the government, or resignation of the government and dissolution of the parliament

<sup>4</sup> C. R. Conrad, S. N. Golder, *Measuring Government Duration and Stability in Central Eastern European Democracies*, "European Journal of Political Research" 2010, vol 49, nr 1, s. 119–150.; K. Armingeon, D. Weisstanner, S. Engler, P. Potolidis, M. Gerber, P. Leimgruber, *Comparative Political Data Set 1960–2009*, Wyd. University of Berne 2011.; T. Louwse, *Unpacking 'positive' and 'negative' parliamentarism*, Paper presented at the workshop „The Evolution of Parliamentarism and Its Political Consequences” of the European Consortium of Political Research, Salamanca, April 10–15, 2014.

and its early elections. It means that the institution of parliament is less significant than in the systems of positive parliamentarism in the process of formation and determination of governments type and composition in the negative parliamentarism systems. Instead, the power of parliament in the systems of negative parliamentarism manifests itself particularly in the course of the government functioning, since a denial to the silent confidence in the government or failure to provide negative confidence in the government on the part of parliament on practically any issue of the government cabinet competence is a direct reason for the government resignation (a denial to the confidence in government or the government loss of confidence in the parliament in the systems of negative parliamentarism is actually associated with the vote of no confidence in the systems of positive parliamentarism)<sup>5</sup>. It means that as opposed to the systems of positive parliamentarism, where a government has to permanently and actively depend on the support of majority in the parliament, in the systems of negative parliamentarism the majority in parliament should not permanently and actively oppose the government. That is, the systems of negative parliamentarism initially sort of indicate that the government used a silent confidence of the parliament, as a result of which it is not the government that has to prove its support to the parliament, but the parliament should prove that it “can not stand the government any longer”<sup>6</sup>. *What presents classic examples of the system of negative parliamentarism* are the countries, where the formation of government cabinets does not depend on the parliamentary positive vote of confidence. We can single out such European democracies among them as Austria, Denmark, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland (before 2000) and France<sup>7</sup>.

Instead, *specific cases* are presented by the systems of negative parliamentarism in Sweden and Portugal. In these countries the vote of confidence/investiture in governments is provided for, but it is *negative*. It means that for the government to function, it should receive a vote of confidence/investiture, the essence of which consists in the fact that the vast majority of parliament deputies should not vote against the prime minister, composition or program of the government. It is called a *negative majority* and outlined by a technique of combining the principles of negative and positive parliamentarism<sup>8</sup>. As a matter of fact, the mentioned rule serves as formalization of the

<sup>5</sup> T. Bergman, *Formation rules and minority governments*, “European Journal of Political Research” 1993, vol 23, nr 1, s. 55–66.; L. Martin, R. Stevenson, *Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies*, “American Journal of Political Science” 2001, vol 45, nr 1, s. 33–50.; K. Ström, W. C. Müller, T. Bergman, *Governments and Coalition Bargaining. The Democratic Life Cycle in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2008.; T. Bergman, *Constitutional Design and Government Formation: The Expected Consequences of Negative Parliamentarism*, “Scandinavian Political Studies” 1993, vol 16, nr 4, s. 285–304.

<sup>6</sup> O. Khomenko, *Vykonavcha vlada za umov parlamentskoi respubliki ta monarkhii (parlamentskoi demokratii)*, “Forum prava” 2012, vol 1, s. 1042.; I. Protsiuk, *Status uriadu v parlamentskii respubliki*, “Derzhavne budivnytstvo i mistseve samovriaduvannia” 2011, vol 21, s. 27.

<sup>7</sup> M. Molder, *Coherence of Coalition Governments Across Types of Parliamentarism*, Paper prepared for the 2014 ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops in panel “The Evolution of Parliamentarism and its Political Consequences”.; T. Louwse, *Unpacking “positive” and “negative” parliamentarism*, Paper presented at the workshop “The Evolution of Parliamentarism and Its Political Consequences” of the European Consortium of Political Research, Salamanca, April 10–15, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> T. Bergman, *Constitutional rules and party goals in coalition formation*, Wyd. Umeå University Press 1995, s. 45.; T. Bergman, When minority governments are the rule and majority coalitions the exception, [w:] W. C. Müller, K. Ström, *Coalition governments in Western Europe*, Oxford University Press 2000, s. 193–225.; T. Bergman, *Constitutional Design and Government Formation: The Expected Consequences of Negative Parliamentarism*, “Scandinavian Political Studies” 1993, vol 16, nr 4, s. 285–304.

negative parliamentarism, since the government functions until the vast majority of parliament deputies votes against it. If the relative majority of parliament deputies votes against the vote of confidence in the government, the latter shall retain its authority, because the threshold of negative vast majority has not been achieved. A peculiarity of Sweden consists in the fact that a specific vote of confidence in the government in the country has a *prognostic value*. The parliament of Sweden has to approve the candidature of prime minister, proposed by the talman (speaker). Such candidature should be deemed to have been approved provided that the vast majority of the Riksdag members does not vote directly against it.<sup>9</sup> A rather interesting event occurred in 1978, when the head of the Liberal People's Party (FP) O. Ullsten was elected as the Prime Minister of Sweden by votes of only 39 deputies representing his party (their number amounted to a little more than 1/10 of parliament members), whereas 55 conservatives and 17 communists had voted against him. The remaining parliamentarians abstained from voting<sup>10</sup>. Instead, a peculiarity of Portugal consists in the fact that a specific vote of confidence in the government in the country has an *actual or true value*, because the government, appointed by the president, should within ten days face the parliament with a program, which will be accepted if the vast majority of parliamentarians does not vote against it. The United Kingdom also presents an interesting case of the synthesis of positive and negative parliamentarism. This country formally does not provide any vote of confidence in the government cabinet, a candidature for the prime minister of which is offered by the Crown. At the same time, the vote of confidence in the government cabinet actually takes place, which is basically the vote of confidence in the speech of a candidate for prime minister at the opening session of newly-elected parliament. But it does not correspond to a classical understanding of the vote of confidence/investiture, which is interpreted as the stage of government cabinet formation, at which the parliament has a possibility to express its opinion with regard to feasibility of the government formation, in view of the results of which a

<sup>9</sup> In Sweden the government is formed by way of the Riksdag electing the prime minister and by way of approving the composition of cabinet (investiture), formed by the prime minister. If it is necessary to elect the prime minister the talman convenes representatives of each party group (faction) in the Riksdag. He consults with a vice-talman and after that he transfers the stipulated candidature to a plenary meeting of the Riksdag without advance preparation of this issue in a commission. The prime minister is deemed to have been chosen provided that the vast majority of parliament deputies does not vote for him. A person, elected as the prime minister, has to form his cabinet and present it for approval of the Riksdag together with a government program. The situation in Denmark is somewhat similar, but controversial at the same time. If allocation of seats in the parliament after elections clearly points to a certain party or parties (usually with the largest number of seats), then a monarch appoints them as the country government. In case if the result of parliamentary elections is indefinite, the monarch should convene a range of meetings, at which the elected parties formulate their wishes with regard to the composition of the government, its head and program. Then the monarch appoints an agent, so that he conducted negotiations with elected parties on formation of the government. After the end of negotiations one more meeting is held by the monarch himself, following which he appoints the new Prime Minister of Denmark. A key difference from Denmark is just that the parliament should not affirm the candidature of prime minister by a negative vote of confidence. Instead, in Denmark a principle of silent confidence in the government cabinet on the part of government is regulated. In fact, Denmark and Sweden demonstrate two versions of the European systems of negative parliamentarism in correlation.

<sup>10</sup> I. Protsiuk, *Status wriadu v parlamentskii respubliki*, "Derzhavne budivnytsvo i mistseve samovriaduvannia" 2011, vol 21, s. 28; V. Bogdanor, *The government formation process ill the constitutional monarchies of North-West Europe*, [w:] D. Kavanagh, G. L., Peele, *Comparative government and politics: Essays in Honor of S.E. Finer*, Wyd. Heinemann 1984, s. 56; J.A. Cheibub, S. Martin, J.A. Rasch, *The Investiture Vote and the Formation of Minority Parliamentary Governments*, Presented at the workshop on The Importance of Constitutions: Parliamentarism, Representation, and Voting Rights, Istanbul 2013; A. Cherkasov, *Hlava hosudarstva y pravytelstvo v stranakh sovremennoho myra (Konstitutsyonno-pravovoe rehulyrovanye y praktyka)*, Moskva 2006, s. 149.

completeness of the government formation is checked. Instead, in case of the United Kingdom this refers more likely to the “*moment of investiture*”, because the vote of confidence in the candidate’s speech, as practice shows, is a symbolic and affirmative-positive procedure (for which the vast majority of the parliament composition votes). More than that, the “*moment of investiture*” in the United Kingdom has no “constitutional mandate,” but it is regulated in sub-constitutional documents, and in parliament regulations in particular. Therefore it is obvious that the moment of investiture here is a subject of arrangements, and accordingly the United Kingdom is conditionally assigned to the system of negative parliamentarism<sup>11</sup>. That is why a viewpoint has been accepted in general that the systems of negative parliamentarism among European parliamentary democracies are represented by Austria, Denmark, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom, Finland (before 2000), France and Sweden.

Distinguishing of the systems of positive and negative parliamentarism is particularly topical in the context of minority governments. Scientists usually believe that one of the results of negative parliamentarism is the formation of *minority governments*, which occurs more often than in conditions of positive parliamentarism systems. That is why the analysis of minority governments is particularly important in terms of the negative parliamentarism systems. It will help to determine whether the negative parliamentarism actually facilitates formation of minority governments in a consolidated way, or the negative parliamentarism is a category, separated for the types of governments based on consequences. This in parallel will facilitate determination of the key causes of formation and attributes of minority governments in negative parliamentarism systems. In order to resolve the problem encountered, we should primarily address the theoretical and methodological specification of the concept of minority governments, and then proceed to the assessment of minority governments in the European systems of negative parliamentarism.

We understand “*minority governments*” as the term, which in conditions of multiparty system reflects the government cabinets, the party or parties of which (that is, the parties that form part of governments, and that is why they receive portfolios) do not constitute a vast majority of seats/mandates in the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament. It means that the *minority government* is such a formal and institutional case, when a parliamentary party independently or in coalition with other parties of the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament, the share of mandates of which amounts to less than half of complete composition of the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament, forms a government. Accordingly, the share of parliamentary parties, which do not form part of the minority government, amounts to more than fifty percent of the total number of the parliament mandates or the leading chamber of the parliament mandates. But what constitutes grounds for formation or further functioning of the minority government (as well as of the majority government or any other government) in conditions of negative parliamentarism is a permanent silent confidence in the government cabinet, which is supported by

<sup>11</sup> J.A. Cheibub, S. Martin, J.A. Rasch, *The Investiture Vote and the Formation of Minority Parliamentary Governments*, Presented at the workshop on The Importance of Constitutions: Parliamentarism, Representation, and Voting Rights, Istanbul 2013.

the majority (vast or relative majority depending on the analyzed case) of the deputies of parliament/leading chamber of the parliament (when the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament does not deny confidence to the government or does express the vote of no confidence to the government)<sup>12</sup>, or a permanent negative confidence in the government cabinet, to which the vast majority of the deputies of parliament/leading chamber of the parliament do not oppose. Although a format of providing confidence in the minority governments in the systems of negative parliamentarism has been determined constitutionally (in each country in its own way), after all it comes down to the presence of silent confidence in the nominated candidature for the prime minister or its non-denial by the vast majority of mandates in the parliament or leading chamber of the parliament. It means that in conditions of minority governments formation in the systems of negative parliamentarism the governmental and some/all non-governmental parties of the parliament should support the government cabinet by vast or relative majority of its composition (depending on specific country), or not to deny the feasibility of the government cabinet formation by a vast majority. But it all takes place formally provided that except for the government parties all other parties supporting the government cabinet do not form its part and do not receive portfolios in it.

Minority governments, as well as other party governments, are divided into two varieties – single-party and coalition governments. *Single-party minority government* is such a government cabinet, the party of which (which forms part of the government, and thus receives portfolios) does not constitute the vast majority of mandates in the parliament, that is, independently has support of less than fifty percent of the deputies of complete composition of the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament (formal or informal silent confidence in the government cabinet is additionally guaranteed by another/other party/parties of the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament or non-party deputies in general). *Coalition minority government* is such a government cabinet, the parties of which (which form part of the government, and that is why they receive portfolios) do not constitute the vast majority of mandates in the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament, and independently have support of less than fifty percent of the deputies of complete composition of the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament (formal or informal silent confidence in the government cabinet is additionally guaranteed by another/other party/parties of the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament or non-party deputies

<sup>12</sup> V. Herman, J. Pope, *Minority Governments in Western Democracies*, "British Journal of Political Science" 1973, nr 3, s. 191–212.; K. Strom, *Minority Governments in Parliamentary Democracies: The Rationality on Non-winning Government Solutions*, "Comparative political Studies" 1984, vol 17, nr 2, s. 199–227.; K. Strom, *Deferred Gratification and Minority Governments in Scandinavia*, "Legislative Studies Quarterly" 1986, nr 11, s. 583–605.; C. Crombez, *Minority Governments, Minimal Winning Coalitions and Surplus Majorities in Parliamentary Systems*, "European Journal of Political Research" 1996, nr 29, s. 1–29.; T. Bergman, *When minority governments are the rule and majority coalitions the exception*, [w:] W. Müller, K. Strom, *Coalition governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000, s. 193–225.; C. Green-Pedersen, *Minority Governments and Party Politics: The Political and Institutional Background to the Danish Miracle*, "Journal of Public Policy" 2002, nr 21, s. 63–80.; B.E. Rasch, *Why Minority Governments? Executive-Legislative Relations in the Nordic Countries* [w:] T. Persson, M. Wiberg, *Parliamentary Government in the Nordic Countries at a Crossroads: Coping with Challenges from Europeanization and Presidentialisation*, Wyd. Santérus Academic Press 2011, s. 41–62.; M. Mattila, T. Raunio, *Government Formation in the Nordic Countries: The Electoral Connection*, "Scandinavian Political Studies" 2002, nr 25, s. 259–280.; A. Skjæveland, *Modeling Government Formation in Denmark and Beyond*, "Party Politics" 2009, nr 15, s. 715–735.

in general). T. Shmachkova believes that it is reasonable to dichotomize all minority government cabinets (single-party or coalition – *author*) into *two models: minority government cabinets with unstable support by virtue of one-time agreement* (when certain examples of minority governments are encountered rarely and are not common in an inter-institutional environment) and *minority government cabinets with a stable support by virtue of multiple-time agreement* between government and non-government/opposition parties in exchange to some concessions of government parties to non-government/opposition parties (when certain examples of minority cabinets are encountered permanently, and that is why they are common in the inter-institutional environment)<sup>13</sup>. But such dichotomy usually concerns minority coalition governments, in which the structures of inter-party relations and competition are more noticeable and much wider, including in respect to the provision of support to coalition cabinets in the course of their formation and functioning.

It is theoretically and empirically known that minority governments can be a mandatory way out or a common phenomenon of inter-institutional political process, and also of the relations of political parties, which have been elected to the parliament (provided that none of them possesses a vast majority in the parliament), but with regard to various reasons they can not or do not want to form the *majority coalition governments* (minimally victorious or excessively victorious, but mostly under the formula of “minimum range coalitions”). As a result, in most cases (particularly in the systems of positive and negative parliamentarism) a rule comes into action, subject to which an incapacity or reluctance of the parties, which individually do not have any vast majority in the parliament, to form the majority coalition government (minimally victorious or excessively victorious, but mostly under the formula of “minimum range coalitions”) is a reason for delivering *several alternatives* to these parties, political system and the country: to form a majority government cabinet in the format of “*grand coalition*” or “*national unity coalition*” (which, as experience shows, except for Austria, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, is mostly not characteristic of the systems of negative parliamentarism); to form a *single-party or minority coalition government* (which in the system of negative parliamentarism is often characteristic of Denmark, Norway, Portugal and Sweden, and sometimes of France); to form a *non-party government cabinet* (sometimes among the European systems of negative parliamentarism it is characteristic of Finland, but minority governments are also sometimes formed in this country); *early parliamentary election* (in the European systems of negative parliamentarism the term “early election” is arguable, since the government of the day can cause dissolution of the parliament and appointment of a new parliamentary election, but the latter is not the consequence of the government cabinet non-formation). It is obvious that the formation of minority governments in the European systems of negative parliamentarism is preferable, but by no means the only approach to

<sup>13</sup> T. Shmachkova, *Teoriya koalitsiy i stanovleniye rossyjskoi mnogopartyinosti (Metodyky ratsyonalizatsyy vibora)*, «Polys» 1996, vol 5, s. 28–52.

resolving the situations, when the parliament parties, which individually do not have the vast majority in the parliament, are not able to form majority coalition governments.

But in their activity, particularly in conditions of negative parliamentarism, single-party and minority coalition governments carry out the *same functions* that the majority cabinets. A key distinction consists in the fact that the head of parliament has to pay attention more closely to *the threat of possible early resignation* of the cabinet, caused by a refusal of silent confidence or denial of negative confidence in the minority government cabinet (equated with the vote of no confidence in the systems of positive parliamentarism). It means that the heads of minority governments have to pay substantial part of their attention to *interrelations with parliamentary parties* (at the same time with government parliamentary parties and non-government parties, which provide a silent confidence in the minority government, as well as with opposition parties) and non-party deputies (when such are available in composition of the parliament/leading chamber of the parliament), which is less characteristic of the majority governments. The fact is that an inadequate attention on the part of the cabinet head, for example, to non-government parties and non-government deputies of the parliament, which provide formal and informal silent confidence in the minority government (in terms of resolving their election promises), can result in refusal to the silent vote of confidence or in denial of negative confidence in such government (which is the most common reason for the early termination of the minority governments powers in the systems of negative parliamentarism). With regard to this fact in particular it is clear enough that minority governments (single-party or coalition governments) are *institutionally more flexible* in carrying out their political course, as well as *more open* in the context of considering the interests of basic political (particularly parliamentary) groups, than the majority governments. This, for example, is caused by the fact that the systems of negative parliamentarism possess constitutional standards in relation to governments formation, which provide *wide powers to an opposition*<sup>14</sup>. In addition, the consent or non-refusal of parliament parties to the formation of minority governments in some European systems of negative parliamentarism is also based on the existence of *wide possibilities of parliamentary committees and commissions* to affect an interior or exterior life of the country. Under these conditions it is quite acceptable for the parties, which have party factions in the parliament, to concentrate their influence on the activity of parliamentary commissions. The situation in the context of hypothetical nature of the minority governments

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, it is held that in those European systems of negative parliamentarism, where minority governments are often formed, the parliamentary opposition has a rather specific status. It takes very active part in the activity of legislative/parliamentary committees and is engaged in the procedure of adopting the parliament agenda. At the same time in view of the party systems nature (for example, in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and etc.) in the presence of large amount of small parties and their clearly delineated electoral bases, the party or parties, which are represented in the government, are often minority governments, and the opposition as a whole constitutes a majority in the government. This regulates that under condition of the minority governments functioning in the system of negative parliamentarism a formal role of opposition is not likely to be institutionalized, but informal rules and usages can facilitate the parliamentary (non-parliamentary) minority/opposition (which is actually the "majority") in affecting the legislative activity of the parliament and executive activity of the government. Refer to: M. Mattila, T. Raunio, *Does winning pay? Electoral success and government formation in 15 West European countries*, "European Journal of Political Research" 2004, vol 43, nr 2, s. 270–271.; F. J. Christiansen, E. Damgaard, *Parliamentary Opposition under Minority Parliamentarism: Scandinavia*, "Journal of Legislative Studies" 2008, vol 14, nr 1, s. 46–76.

formation in negative parliamentarism systems is slightly simplified by competitive interrelations between the parliamentary parties, which can possibly constitute a permanent or situational parliamentary majority. The fact is that provision of the right to form a minority government to one parliamentary party will be the “evil of the lesser kind” for the remaining parties, and that is why they will be interested in saving the existing ratio/balance (status quo) of the level of active parliamentary parties’ political weight. It means that the minority governments can by virtue of the influence of non-governmental parties have a rather strong (resistant) support of parliamentary majority, be fully viable and even stable<sup>15</sup>. An example is presented by separate Danish minority coalition governments, formed by the Liberal Party of Denmark (Venstre) and the Conservative People’s Party (DKF) with an extra-governmental parliamentary support of the Danish People’s Party (DPP). It is also necessary to mention single-party minority governments of the Labour Party (DNA) in Norway and the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) in Sweden.

Taking this into consideration, T. Bergman<sup>16</sup> points out that in the systems of negative parliamentarism the minority government cabinets became a stereotyped and very common phenomenon. The scientist argues that the negative parliamentarism, in view of the peculiarities of silent/negative vote of confidence in the government cabinets, facilitates the process of minority governments formation<sup>17</sup>. Instead, J.A. Cheibub, S. Martin and B. E. Rasch<sup>18</sup> assert that it is impossible to reach a single clear conclusion that the minority governments in particular prevail in the systems of negative parliamentarism. Scientists note that as of 2009 the minority governments amounted to 74 percent of the cases of the total terms of party governments functioning within a time sample in the systems of positive parliamentarism, and, instead, in the system of parliamentarism this value amounted to 64 percent of the cases of total terms of party governments functioning. It is obvious that it is a minor time difference, especially in view of the fact that except for Iceland, Denmark and Norway (that is, classic examples of the systems of negative parliamentarism) a share of the term of majority governments functioning in negative parliamentarism systems increased up to 92 percent (as of 2009 as well). And this leads to the conclusion

<sup>15</sup> Sometimes researchers argue that such position is quite logical, when the right to form the minority government is granted to centre parties, and the parliamentary majority is possessed by the parties, which belong to different parts of the left or right ideological party spectrum. This is partially characteristic of minority governments in Denmark, Norway and Sweden (they are not centrist, but left-of-center or center-right governments). It means that formation of the minority government is a regular way out of the situation of ideological opposition between parties in the parliament. Undoubtedly, in a similar situation the government can be criticized for its activity on both sides of spectrum, but the ideological opposition will be a retaliatory deterrent hindering the unification of opposition parties representatives for the purpose of overthrowing the government. Alternatively, in similar situations there are quite a lot of examples of blocking the government in order to oppose to ones ideological opponent.

<sup>16</sup> T. Bergman, *Formation rules and minority governments*, “European Journal of Political Research” 1993, vol 23, nr 1, s. 61.

<sup>17</sup> Other scientists support similar conclusions. Refer to: L. De Winter, *Parties and government formation, portfolio allocation, and policy definition*, [w:] K.R. Luther, F. Muller-Rommel, *Political Parties in the New Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2003, s. 171–206.; L. De Winter, *The Role of Parliament in Government Formation and Resignation*, [w:] H. Doring, *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe*, Wyd. St. Martin’s Press 1995, s. 115–151.; K. Strom, *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990.; T. Saalfeld, *Members of parliament and governments in Western Europe: Agency relations and problems of oversight*, European journal of political researches 2000, vol 37, s. 353–376.

<sup>18</sup> J.A. Cheibub, S. Martin, J.A. Rasch, *The Investiture Vote and the Formation of Minority Parliamentary Governments*, Presented at the workshop on The Importance of Constitutions: Parliamentarism, Representation, and Voting Rights, Istanbul 2013.

that the minority governments, except for Scandinavia, are even more time-tested in conditions of parliamentary democracy (particularly in the countries of Central Eastern Europe) in the systems of positive, but not negative parliamentarism<sup>19</sup>. This is evidenced by the data of table 1, which represents the statistics of formation and functioning of minority governments in the negative parliamentarism systems in European parliamentary democracies within 1942–2014.

As *practice* shows, the government minority cabinets in the European systems of negative parliamentarism *do not constitute a consolidated phenomenon*, because in some countries they have already become a common/institutionalized phenomenon (Denmark, Norway, Portugal and Sweden), whereas in other countries it is rather rare (Austria, Iceland, the Netherlands, Finland, France and the United Kingdom) or even unproven (Luxembourg) phenomenon. The largest amount of minority governments within the period of 1942–2014 (including provisional or acting governments) has been formed in Denmark (34), Norway (20) and Sweden (22). Minority governments constitute the largest percent among other government cabinets (including provisional or acting governments) in Denmark (91,9), Sweden (73,3), Norway (62,5) and Portugal (40,9). The smallest amount of minority governments within the period of 1942–2014 (including the provisional or acting governments) has been formed in Austria (2), United Kingdom (3), Iceland (6), the Netherlands (8), Portugal (9) and Finland (9). Minority governments constitute the smallest percent among other government cabinets (including provisional or acting governments) in Austria (5,8), the United Kingdom (12,5), Finland (16,7), Iceland (17,7), France (21,3), and the Netherlands (24,2). No minority governments have been formed in such country with the system of negative parliamentarism as Luxembourg (for details see table 1). Among all the government minority cabinets, which have been formed in the European systems of negative parliamentarism within 1942–2014 (and there are 127 such cabinets together with provisional or acting governments), most of them (113, or 89 percent) are presented by the permanent government minority cabinets. This regulates that in those countries, where minority governments are often formed, they have become a common phenomenon of inter-institutional (parliament-government) relations long ago (this, for example, is characteristic of the part of negative parliamentarism systems in Scandinavian countries<sup>20</sup>). Among the minority governments there

<sup>19</sup> Also refer additionally to: K. Strom, *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990; M. Taylor, M. Laver, *Government coalitions in Western Europe*, "European Journal of Political Research" 1973, vol 1, s. 205–248.

<sup>20</sup> D. Artter, *Parliamentary Democracy in Scandinavia*, "Parliamentary Affairs" 2004, vol 57, nr 3, s. 581–600; B.E. Rasch, *Why Minority Governments? Executive-Legislative Relations in the Nordic Countries* [w:] T. Persson, M. Wiberg, *Parliamentary Government in the Nordic Countries at a Crossroads: Coping with Challenges from Europeanization and Presidentialisation*, Wyd. Santérus Academic Press 2011, s. 41–62; K. Ström, *Deferred Gratification and Minority Governments in Scandinavia*, "Legislative Studies Quarterly" 1986, nr 11, s. 583–605; K. Strom, *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990; F. Janson, *Minority Governments in Sweden*, "American Political Science Review" 1928, vol 22, s. 407–413; V. Herman, J. Pope, *Minority Governments in Western Democracies*, "British Journal of Political Science" 1973, nr 3, s. 191–212; F. J. Christiansen, *Consensus or Conflict? Legislative Behavior of Opposition Parties during Minority Government in Denmark*, Paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the Italian Political Science Association, Palermo, 8–10 September 2011; F. J. Christiansen, H. H. Pedersen, *Minority Coalition in Denmark*, Paper prepared for ECPR General Conference, Reykjavik, August 25–27, 2011; C. Green-Pedersen, *Minority Governments and Party Politics: The Political and Institutional Background to the Danish Miracle*, "Journal of Public Policy" 2002, nr 21, s. 63–80; C. Green-Pedersen, L. H. Thomsen, *Bloc Politics vs. Broad Cooperation? The Functioning of Danish Minority Parliamentarism*, "The Journal of Legislative Studies" 2005, vol 11, nr 2, s. 153–169.

are no or almost no provisional or acting governments in Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Finland, the United Kingdom, and Sweden. Instead, half or even more minority governments are formed by the provisional or acting governments in Iceland and the Netherlands: this fact repeatedly reasons that the minority governments are not characteristic of these countries, but if they are still formed, then exclusively as temporary anti-crisis/crisis phenomena. It should also be noted that among all minority governments in the European systems of negative parliamentarism (and 127, or 32,7 percent of all such governments, including provisional governments, have been formed within the period of 1942-2014): the majority of permanent governments consist of single-party governments (67 to 46); the majority of provisional governments consist of coalition governments (10 to 4). There are more single-party minority governments than coalition minority governments in Iceland, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom and Sweden; there are more coalition minority governments in Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, and France; the total amount of single-party and coalition minority governments in Austria (see details in table 1). It is worthy of note that in cases where minority governments became institutionalized, very often they represent the cases of cabinets with *a stable support by virtue of a multiple-time agreement*. In addition, the non-governmental parties, which provide parliamentary support/majority to minority governments, openly and publicly state of the same. In those countries, where minority governments are formed rarely or even occasionally, they are usually the cabinets *with unstable support by virtue of one-time (ad hoc) agreement*.

**Table 1.** Statistics of minority governments in the systems of negative parliamentarism (1942–2014)<sup>21</sup>

Country	Number of all (provisional) governments, №	Number of all single-party (provisional) minority governments	Number of all coalition (provisional) minority governments	Percent of all single-party (provisional) minority governments	Percent of all coalition (provisional) minority governments
Austria (since 1945)	34 (6)	1 (0)	1 (0)	2,9 (0,0)	2,9 (0,0)
Denmark (since 1945)	37 (1)	14 (0)	20 (0)	37,8 (0,0)	54,1 (0,0)
Iceland (since 1942)	34 (3)	4 (2)	2 (1)	11,8 (66,7)	5,9 (33,3)
Luxembourg (since 1944)	22 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0,0 (0,0)	0,0 (0,0)
The Netherlands (since 1945)	33 (10)	0 (0)	8 (7)	0,0 (0,0)	24,2 (70,0)
Norway (since 1945)	32 (2)	13 (0)	7 (1)	40,6 (0,0)	21,9 (50,0)
Portugal (since 1975)	22 (3)	8 (2)	1 (0)	36,4 (66,7)	4,5 (0,0)
Finland (1944-2000)	54 (7)	3 (0)	6 (0)	5,6 (0,0)	11,1 (0,0)
France (since 1944)	66 (5)	6 (0)	8 (1)	9,1 (0,0)	12,2 (20,0)
The United Kingdom (since 1945)	24 (0)	3 (0)	0 (0)	12,5 (0,0)	0,0 (0,0)
Sweden (since 1945)	30 (0)	19 (0)	3 (0)	63,3 (0,0)	10,0 (0,0)
Total	388 (40)	71 (4)	56 (10)	18,3 (10,0)	14,4 (25,0)

Źródło: H. Döring, P. Manow, *Parliament and government composition database (ParlGov): An infrastructure for empirical information on parties, elections and governments in modern democracies*, źródło: <http://www.parlgov.org/> [odczyt: 01.08.2014]

<sup>21</sup> The analysis includes provisional (acting) minority governments.

Interestingly, the minority governments *should not be regarded as a solely true and comprehensive version of inter-institutional balance* of legislative and executive power provided that it is impossible to form single-party majority governments and coalition majority governments of “minimum action range” format in the European systems of negative parliamentarism. The fact is that subject to the approaches to resolving the situations, where the parliament parties, which individually do not have the vast majority in the parliament, can not form the majority coalition cabinets (minimally victorious or excessively victorious coalitions of “minimum action range”), the systems of negative parliamentarism should be divided into *two groups*: “grand coalitions” or “national unity coalitions” are traditionally formed *in the first group* (Austria, the Netherlands and Luxembourg); minority governments are traditionally formed *in the second group* (Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and France). The non-formation of single-party majority governments and majority coalition governments in the format of minimally-victorious or excessively-victorious coalitions of “minimum action range” is uncharacteristic/rarely characteristic of the remaining systems of negative parliamentarism (Iceland, Finland up to 2000, and the United Kingdom).

The analysis of the European systems of negative parliamentarism, of which minority governments are permanently or sometimes characteristic, or not characteristic at all, gives reasons that there exist several *key reasons and motives* for parliamentary parties and parliaments in general to form the minority governments. *Firstly* (as it was indicated above), minority governments are formed more often in the case of political systems, in which a strong parliamentary opposition was formalized or stereotyped/made common. Political and legal delineation of the status and rights of parliamentary minority and/or formation and functioning of the systems of strong parliamentary committees are usually the key attributes and resources of a strong parliamentary opposition<sup>22</sup>. *Secondly*, minority governments are formed more often in the case of political systems, in which interest groups are mostly determined

<sup>22</sup> K. Strom, *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1990; W. Müller, K. Strom, *Coalition governments in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2000; K. Strøm, W. C. Müller, T. Bergman, *Governments and Coalition Bargaining. The Democratic Life Cycle in Western Europe*, Oxford 2008; T. Bergman, K. Strom, *The Madisonian Turn: Political Parties and Parliamentary Democracy in Scandinavia*, Wyd. University of Michigan Press 2010; K. Strom, *Minority Governments in Parliamentary Democracies: The Rationality on Non-winning Government Solutions*, “Comparative political Studies” 1984, vol 17, nr 2, s. 199–227.; K. Strom, *Deferred Gratification and Minority Governments in Scandinavia*, “Legislative Studies Quarterly” 1986, nr 11, s. 583–605.; K. Strom, *Norway, Sweden, and the New Europe*, “Scandinavian Studies” 1992, vol 64, nr 4, s. 498–528.; K. Strom, J. Leipart, *Policy, Institutions, and Coalition Avoidance: Norwegian Governments 1945–1990*, “American Political Science Review” 1993, vol 87, nr 4, s. 870–887.; K. Strom, I. Budge, M. J. Laver, *Constraints on Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies*, “American Journal of Political Science” 1994, vol 38, nr 2, s. 303–335.; K. Strom, *Parliamentary Committees in European Democracies*, “Journal of Legislative Studies” 1998, vol 4, nr 1, s. 21–59.; K. Strom, W. C. Müller, *The Keys to Togetherness: Coalition Agreements in Parliamentary Democracies*, “Journal of Legislative Studies” 1999, vol 5, nr 3–4, s. 255–282.; I. Mattson, K. Strom, *Parliamentary Committees*, [w:] H. Döring, *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe*, Wyd. St. Martin’s Press 1995, s. 249–307.; I. Mattson, K. Strom, *Committee Effects on Legislation*, [w:] H. Döring, M. Hallerberg, *Patterns of Parliamentary Behavior: Passage of Legislation Across Western Europe*, Wyd. Ashgate 2004, s. 91–111.; W. C. Müller, K. Strom, *The Keys to Commitment: Coalition Agreements and Governance*, [w:] K. Strøm, W. C. Müller, T. Bergman, *Governments and Coalition Bargaining: The Democratic Life Cycle in Western Europe*, Wyd. Oxford University Press 2008, s. 159–199.; B. G. Powell, *Elections as Instruments of Democracy. Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*, Wyd. Yale University Press 2000, s. 34.; H. Döring, *Time as a Scarce Resource: Government Control of the Agenda*, [w:] H. Döring, *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe*, Wyd. St. Martin’s Press 1995, s. 223–246.

not by pluralistic, but by corporate relations<sup>23</sup>. The pluralistic relations of interest groups are usually executed when the interest groups contend/compete in a political market beyond the scope of a formal process of policy creation. Instead, corporate relations of interest groups take place mostly when the key social and economic entities, such as employment, business and agriculture, are integrated in the formal process of policy formation. As a consequence, the institute of corporatism facilitates and simplifies the process of minority governments formation, since it makes the minority governments cooperate with labour, entrepreneurial and agricultural interest groups. It should be noted that such groups should not be represented in the government cabinet, particularly in the format of parliamentary parties, because in the systems, where corporate relations of interest groups gained a wide-spread occurrence, the non-parliamentary/non-governmental mechanisms of interest groups impact on a political process have been approved. This actually means that a non-parliamentary political opposition has a substantial impact on the minority governments functioning. This fact is stipulated by a bilateral dependence: interest groups and the non-parliamentary opposition are interested in implementation of their aims and purposes and, instead, minority governments are interested in extra-parliamentary support of their political activity and their political programs. *Thirdly*, what has been incorporated from the peculiarities and consequences of the European negative parliamentarism systems is that the minority governments are hypothetically (but not always practically, for which fact there are particular reasons – historical, social and political) more frequently used in the case of political systems, where an institute of positive vote of confidence is formally not regulated, and the institute of silent vote of confidence in the government (for example, Denmark and Norway) or the institute of negative vote of confidence in the governments on the part of parliament (Portugal and Sweden) are regulated instead. The fact is that the silent or negative vote of confidence in the government does not make the opposition parliamentary parties directly or openly support the minority government. As a result, some opposition parliamentary parties, which not necessarily support the minority government publicly, can turn out to be loyal to the minority government in case if it enjoys support of other opposition parties. This is manifested in the silent confidence or the opposition parties non-rejection of minority government. It dichotomically distinguishes minority governments in the European systems of positive and negative parliamentarism: for positive parliamentarism systems in terms of a necessity of the government minority cabinet to receive a positive (necessarily formal) vote of confidence a political responsibility is imposed on the minority government in particular, which has to prove that it enjoys approval and support of a majority in the parliament; for negative parliamentarism systems in terms of the absence of the government minority cabinet necessity to receive a positive vote of confidence, and, instead, in terms of a necessity to receive the silent or negative vote of confidence the political

---

<sup>23</sup> G. M. Luebbert, *A theory of government formation in multiparty democracies*, Wyd. Stanford University 1983; G. M. Luebbert, *Comparative Democracy: Policy Making and Government Coalitions in Europe and Israel*, Wyd. Columbia University Press 1986.

responsibility has been imposed on the parliamentary opposition, which has to demonstrate that the minority government does not have a strong majority. *Fourthly*, minority governments are formed more often in the case of political systems, in which a strong but not dominant parliamentary party exists. The fact is that a feasibility of formation and duration of the minority governments operation directly depends on the fact that opposition (weak) parliamentary parties can not agree on alternatives to minority governments. The situation is clarified by an ideological positioning<sup>24</sup> of strong/mainstream and weak (but relevant) parliamentary parties. Relatively large (strong/mainstream) parliamentary parties, which ideologically gravitate toward centrism (conditionally left-of-centre, centrist and centre-right parties), but individually do not have any majority in the parliament, form single-party or coalition minority governments more often than the parties, which are centrist (left-wing or right-wing) in ideological context and oppose each other.

Social-democratic left-of-centre minority governments prevail in the European systems of negative parliamentarism in a party and ideological context. Minority governments are sometimes formed with participation of Christian and democratic, conservative (or liberal-conservative and social-conservative), liberal (social-liberal) parties and etc. In Austria minority governments are mostly represented by social-democratic left-of-centre or Christian-democratic/conservative right-of-centre cabinets; in Denmark these are mostly left-of-centre social-democratic or social-liberal or right-of-centre conservative-liberal cabinets; in Iceland these are usually social-democratic left-of-centre cabinets; in the Netherlands these are usually right-of-centre Christian-democratic/conservative cabinets; in Norway these are right-of-centre liberal-conservative or left-of-centre social-democratic cabinets; in Portugal these are mostly social-democratic left-of-centre and liberal/liberal and conservative right-of-centre cabinets; in Finland these are mostly agrarian-liberal/social-liberal centrist cabinets; in France these are mostly social-democratic left-of-centre social-democratic/social-liberal and conservative centrist cabinets; in Sweden these are mostly social-democratic left-of-centre cabinets.

*Key reasons for termination of powers and resignations* of minority governments in the European negative parliamentarism system traditionally are: scheduled/early parliamentary elections, loss of the silent vote of confidence or termination of the negative vote of confidence in the government cabinet on the part of parliament, voluntary resignation of the prime minister and a change in the government cabinet composition. Such terminal factors of the termination of government minority cabinets powers regulate the stability of minority governments. What constitutes a trend in operation of the minority governments in the systems of

<sup>24</sup> C. Crombez, *Minority Governments, Minimal Winning Coalitions and Surplus Majorities in Parliamentary Systems*, "European Journal of Political Research" 1996, nr 29, s. 1–29.; L. Martin, R. Stevenson, *Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies*, "American Journal of Political Science" 2001, vol 45, nr 1, s. 33–50.; N. Schofield, *Political Competition and Multiparty Coalition Governments*, "European Journal of Political Research" 1993, vol 23, s. 1–33.

negative parliamentarism (even with no regard to the fact that some of the minority governments among them are already institutionalized) is their *shorter period of existence*, than in case of majority governments. Thus, A. Romaniuk points out that as of 2004 the mean value of single-party majority governments duration in the countries of Western Europe amounted to 45 months, whereas the duration of coalition minority governments amounted to only 19 months<sup>25</sup>. Only Scandinavian countries were exceptions, Denmark and Sweden in particular. In their case an opposite phenomenon could be observed. Particularly in Sweden the average duration of coalition minority governments was half a year larger than an average term of powers of majority governments (30 to 24 months). This is a result of not only specially developed routine procedures, but also of a stability of economic situation and arranged cooperation, ability to reach a compromise between various parliamentary parties, which present different ideological courses and doctrines<sup>26</sup>. Nevertheless, as of 2014 in the European systems of negative parliamentarism the level of minority governments stability was not fully equal to the mean all-European value of governments stability (for details refer to table 2).

**Table 2.** Stability of minority governments in the system of negative parliamentarism (1942–2014)

Country	Stability of all minority governments, year	Stability of provisional minority governments, year	Stability of permanent minority governments, year	Stability of provisional single-party minority governments, year	Stability of provisional coalition minority governments, year	Stability of permanent single-party minority governments, year	Stability of permanent coalition minority governments, year
Austria	1,46	–	1,46	–	–	1,45	1,47
Denmark	1,79	–	1,79	–	–	1,49	2,02
Iceland	0,56	0,58	0,55	0,75	0,23	0,36	0,94
Luxembourg	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
The Netherlands	0,65	0,53	1,50	–	0,53	–	1,50
Norway	1,90	0,90	1,96	–	0,90	2,10	1,58
Portugal	1,41	0,39	1,70	0,39	–	1,86	0,75
UK	1,37	–	1,37	–	–	1,37	–
Finland	0,79	–	0,79	–	–	0,89	0,73
France	0,57	0,59	0,56	–	0,59	0,39	0,71
Sweden	2,29	–	2,29	–	–	2,30	2,12
Total	1,28	0,60	1,40	0,57	0,56	1,36	1,31

Źródło: H. Döring, P. Manow, *Parliament and government composition database (ParlGov): An infrastructure for empirical information on parties, elections and governments in modern democracies*, źródło: <http://www.parlgov.org/> [odczyt: 01.08.2014]

In particular, all minority governments (including provisional or acting governments) within the period of 1942–2014 lasted only for 1,28 years on the average: for the longest

<sup>25</sup> A. Romaniuk, *Porivniabryi analiz politychnykh system krain Zakhidnoi Yevropy: instytutsiynyi vymir*, Lviv 2004, s. 206.

<sup>26</sup> M. Mohunova, *Skandynavskiy parlamentaryzm. Teoriya y praktyka*, Moskva 2001, s. 257.

period in Denmark (1,79), Norway (1,90) and Sweden (2,29); and for the shortest period in Iceland (0,65), France (0,57) and Finland (0,79). This fact provides a clear argument that minority governments become more long-standing due to their institutionalization. The duration of permanent/non-provisional minority governments shows a similar trend: these governments are most stable in Denmark (1,79), Sweden (2,29) and Norway (1,96); they are slightly less stable in Portugal (1,70), the Netherlands (1,50), Austria (1,46); they are least stable in Finland (0,79), Iceland (0,55) and France (0,56). In some European systems of negative parliamentarism provisional minority governments are less stable than permanent minority governments. This concerns Iceland (from 0,58 to 0,55) and France (from 0,59 to 0,56). On the average, single-party cabinets are usually more stable among minority governments in the systems of negative parliamentarism. It is characteristic of Norway, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (where only single-party minority governments existed). Single-party minority governments in Sweden (2,30), Portugal (1,86) and Norway (2,10) turned out to be most long-lasting. Instead, among the minority governments in the systems of negative parliamentarism coalition cabinets usually were more stable in Denmark, Iceland, France and the Netherlands (where only coalition minority governments existed). On the average, the coalition minority governments in Denmark (2,02) and Sweden (2,12) have been most long-lasting within the period of 1942–2014. Single-party and coalition minority governments lasted for approximately the same period only in Austria (from 1,45 to 1,47).

The major *problem of prolongation of the minority governments duration* in the European systems of negative parliamentarism consists in the amount of possible scenarios of the minority governments losing their silent or negative votes of confidence. This takes place as a result of the desire of opposition parties, which actually constitute majority in the parliaments, to impose their rules and political preferences to minority governments without being a part of government cabinets or without taking a direct political responsibility for the decisions, taken by governments. Another important reason for a short duration of minority governments in the systems of negative parliamentarism also consists in the fact that not in all countries with the systems of negative parliamentarism (as it was believed before) minority governments should be treated as institutionalized, because in some political systems (for example, in Austria, Iceland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom or France) the minority governments are treated as unique or even critically risk-relevant situations. Small duration of minority governments in the systems, where they have been already institutionalized long ago, is caused primarily by a ratio of government and opposition parties with regard to searching for possible options of the majority governments formation, that is, serving the interests of a larger amount of political players. And this results in initiation of the rule, stereotyped for majority governments, under which the absence of guaranteed support, and instead the presence of only silent support of the majority in parliament (which is characteristic of minority governments in particular) causes instability of government cabinets,

political instability and inefficiency of governance. And that is why in the systems of negative parliamentarism, where minority governments are not institutionalized, they usually do not have strong power, replace each other fast (if they are formed frequently), as a result of which a crisis of governance legitimacy commences. Instead, in the systems of negative parliamentarism, where minority governments became common, they function in more successful and stable way. Z. Maoz and B. Russett believe that in such systems “minority governments are not more limited, than majority governments”<sup>27</sup>, that is why, as a result, they can be less conflicting than the latter. In their turn B. Prins and C. Sprecher<sup>28</sup> prove that the tasks and objectives, which are governed by government coalitions, are likely to be opposed, if pressure on the government cabinet increases. When studying the initiations of system conflicts in the systems of negative parliamentarism they offered (analyzing such competitive aspects of governmental activity) to designate the coalition majority governments as more dangerous in the issues of institutional conflicts escalation than the minority governments – but provided that the minority governments in the indicated political systems are institutionalized<sup>29</sup>. That is why the stability and frequency of minority governments formation in the systems of negative parliamentarism increases, when political systems of the countries with negative parliamentarism are constructed on the principles of consensus, and when a parliamentary support is provided to the minority governments by parties with different (even opposite) ideologies, and party systems are not characteristic of dominant parties. For example, this is characteristic of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and instead not characteristic of Iceland, Austria and other systems of negative parliamentarism in Europe. A specific character of the former consists in the fact that on the basis of the systems of strong parliamentary committees the involvement in taking the most significant political decisions of the government and opposition is regulated with respect to parliamentary and governmental/management activity, which is usually carried out by minority governments. And that is why a part of functions of the governments is concentrated in various internal structures of the parliaments<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Z. Maoz, B. Russett, *Normative and structural causes of the democratic peace, 1946-1986*, “American Political Science Review” 1993, nr 87, s. 626.

<sup>28</sup> B. Prins, C. Sprecher, *Institutional constraints, political opposition, and interstate dispute escalation: Evidence from parliamentary systems, 1946-1989*, “Journal of Peace Research” 1999, nr 36, s. 271-287.

<sup>29</sup> M. Ireland, S.S. Gartner, *Time to Fight. Government Type and Conflict Initiation in Parliamentary Systems*, “Journal of Conflict Resolution” 2001, nr 45, s. 547-568.

<sup>30</sup> For example, an “*institute of minority rights*” serves this purpose, which operates in the parliaments of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and which gives the right to the parliamentary opposition (which in conditions of minority governments functioning actually constitutes the parliament majority) to withhold the adoption of government laws for a certain period of time or to try to transfer them to the following session, pass over for approval or rejection at the discretion of voters by holding a referendum. For example, in the case of Denmark this is formally regulated by the fact, that in 1953 the parliament was with key powers in a state mechanism, its rights in the sphere of legislative activities, finance, defense and foreign affairs were extended, as well as forms of control over the government. This, together with the so-called “*institute of minority rights*”, is a very significant factor of political process. The fact is that, for example, if the parliament takes a decision, which is not supported by all deputies, one third of the deputies is entitled to address the speaker of the Folketing with a demand to hold a nationwide referendum on an arguable draft law. It is obvious that this creates a consensus in a political and party system, and accordingly extends powers of the government minority cabinets, which are common in Denmark, as it was indicated above. A similar practice was also approved in Sweden and Norway, where the rule on “the balance of powers – the Storting and the government with preponderance in favour of legislative power” was adopted. The structure of interrelations of the parliament and the government

Drawing a conclusion it should be noted that minority governments in the European systems of negative parliamentarism are normal and democratic result of competition between parties. They are particularly widespread in case of absence of several dominant parties in party systems (this is characteristic of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, although minority governments are sometimes formed in the party systems with dominant parties, for example, in Portugal), but instead they are not common in such party systems, where single-party or coalition majority governments (including “grand coalitions”) are formed around several dominant parties (Austria, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Finland, France and the United Kingdom). Minority governments are mostly formed and institutionalized in: political systems with strong parliamentary committees and, accordingly, strong parliamentary opposition; in the political systems, where interest groups are determined not by pluralistic, but corporate relations; in the political systems, where the institute of positive vote of confidence is formally not regulated, and instead the institute of silent or negative vote of confidence in the government on the part of parliament is regulated; in the political systems, where one strong/major, but not dominant parliament party exists, especially if it tends to an ideological centre (that is, it is left-of-centre, centrist, right-of-centre). The minority governments, as compared to the majority governments, in the systems of negative parliamentarism are on average less institutionalized and stable. This is particularly evident in Austria, Iceland, Luxembourg (where minority governments are not characteristic), the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Finland (before 2000) and France. In addition, the institutionalization of minority governments is a key reason for an increase in their stability. This is characteristic of Denmark, Norway, Portugal and Sweden.

---

in these Scandinavian countries in conditions of negative parliamentarism gained the features of consensus democracy or “consensus parliamentarism,” the essence of which consists in the division of power between parties, and also its fair allocation, delegation and formal reduction. For details refer to: M. Mohunova, *Skandynawski parlamentarizm. Teoryja y praktyka*, Moskwa 2001, s. 37–38, 104–105.; D. Arter, *Scandinavian Politics Today*, Manchester 1999, s. 211–217.