HISTORY WRITTEN BY THE LOSERS? SMALL PARTIES IN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS 1990–2019

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This paper seeks to identify the determinants of the successes (government entry) of small political parties in 21 European states. Although the term small party is used quite regularly the borders between small, medium or large parties are not precisely delineated. To overcome this problem, I propose an original mathematical formula to select the group of 26 small parties based on the same criteria in 21 European states. Having this sample, I analyse all coalition cabinets to which these parties were invited as the junior partners. The main goal in this paper is to explain the causes of these parties' presence in the governments and explore the determinants of the portfolio allocations by combining quantitative (i.e. Banzhaf Power Index) and qualitative (ideological distance) measures. Some of the conclusions confirm previous findings (disproportional portfolio allocation which favours small parties) and some only partially overlap with the conclusions drawn in the previous studies (the relation between the number of potential/ alternative collaborators and the likelihood that the small party becomes the coalition member). This study deals with the cases from Central and East European States, and Western Europe.

Key words: small parties; government representation; European states.

1 INTRODUCTION

As it was shown in previous studies most of governments in the world under parliamentarianism (53.8%) had the status of coalition (Cheibub, Przeworski and Saiegh 2004, 573–574); it refers also to European governments, in both Eastern and Western part (Bergman, Ilonszki and Müller 2019, 538; Bergman, Hanna and Johan 2021, 694). It means that parties differing in ideology, but also in size, are involved in forming government coalitions. Obviously, small parties are analysed less frequently than their larger counterparts; it stems from the relative importance of the former and latter ones for political systems. However, it can be said, as I suggested in the title of this paper, probably paraphrasing Winston Churchill, that also small also parties seem to be relevant to political

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systems, particularly if coalition governments are being formed, which is the case of majority of governments, as mentioned above. The benefits they obtain from coalition negotiations are sometimes disproportionately high, which is why they are then called kingmakers (Evans 2020, 490; Klingemann and Volkens 1992, 191; Strom and Leipart 1992, 79; Sula 2021, 774).

The percentage of parliamentary seats controlled by an individual party is one of the most significant determinants of political parties' governmental relevancy. However, this was not the trigger point for political parties' unification. Conversely, the proliferation of small parties can be observed in European democracies. Furthermore, they demonstrated their significance not only at the parliamentary level but at the governmental one – in 27 European states since 1990 approximately 30 % of governments have been created with the support of small parties. Interestingly, the governmental representation of these parties was proportionally higher than their seat shares in the parliament and their potential measured with the Banzhaf power index. Therefore, it leads to the simple conclusion that coalition potential of political parties derives not only from arithmetical strength but from political context.

In this paper, I will present 26 small parties' performance at the governmental level in 21 European states trying to find out firstly what determines the entrance of small parties to the coalition government and secondly which of these independent variables (seat share controlled by small parties, Banzhaf power index, the position of the party on the left-right scale, the distance between senior and junior coalition party and the number of alternative coalition partners) affect the government position percentage. The spillover of studying small parties' performance would also be the presentation of the original mathematical formula which was used for creating a sample. It can be argued that utilising this formula was the only way to define "smallness".

Being concentrated on the small parties on the parliamentary and governmental levels I will not refer to the numerous studies dedicated to the small parties in the electoral process. However, I will collect the variant forms of the small parties' operationalisation; this is shown below in Table 1.

I will use consequently the term small party following the approach of many authors (Bolleyer 2007, 121; Browne and Franklin 1973, 460; Druckman and Roberts 2005, 537; Mattila and Raunio 2006, 434; Harmel and Robertson 1985, 505). However, some scholars use the category of minor party (Rokkan 1966, 73–75; Bélanger 2004, 1054; Small 2008, 51; Denemark and Bowler 2002, 47; Bochel and Denver 2008, 577) or niche party (Spoon 2009, 628; Van der Brug and Fennema 2009, 589; Miller 2007, 81; Meyer and Wagner 2013, 1247; Meguid 2008, 347) as an equivalent term.

Table 1 presents four approaches to operationalisation of the term of small party. However, I recognise the proposal of Bolleyer (2007, 138) as the most valuable for the purposes of this paper since it supports the analysis of the cases operating in the different environments. She defined as small those parties that hold 100/N percent of parliamentary seats or less, where N stands for the number of parliamentary parties. In her research, she managed to follow the methodological guidelines of Smith (Smith 1991, 25) who suggested that the numerical approach gives the opportunity to do comparative research but also emphasised the fact that smallness is a relative concept, specific to a given party system. I will employ the strategy of Bolleyer, slightly modifying the method utilised in the case-selection process; the formula that I propose reflects more precisely the fragmentation of a particular party system, which is important because

'smallness' can only be defined in a specific context. The detailed proposal will be presented in the next part of the paper.

TABLE 1: OPERATIONALISATION OF SMALL POLITICAL PARTIES IN PREVIOUS RESEARCH IN WESTERN EUROPE

Author	Duverger	Mair	Spoon	Bolleyer
Category used by the author	Minor	Small	Small	Small
Sample selection method	Difficult to define	Quantitative	Quantitative and qualitative	Quantitative
	- Indicated personality parties and permanent minority parties	– Maintained a stable position at the heart of a party system; this assumption excludes parties which did not participate in at least three terms of parliament (not necessarily consecutive); – could not be described as micro, which P. Mair attributed to parties that gained less than 1% electorate support in at least three elections; – did not reach over 15% threshold of support in parliamentary election; parties that crossed the 15% threshold were defined as large, even if they did not reach the 15% threshold three times before; – gained steady support between 1–15%, hence were neither micro nor large parties	- Appeal to a subset of the population and do not seek to be catchall parties by broadening their ideological appeal to attract the greatest number of voters. To be included in the small party category, a party must be small in terms of ideology (thus, must focus on a limited set of issues) or be small in terms of vote and seat share (that is, not among the major players in a party system).	- based on the mathematical formula: small parties are those that hold 100/N per cent of the parliamentary seats or less; N - the number of parties gaining parliamentary representation. Only those parties are considered that held on average two percent of the seats over the Elections except for parties that entered government.
Types, subsets, and examples	- personality parties (parliamentary group within a political party (Lloyd George faction in Liberal party in Great Britain), the satellite parties (the Union of Progressive Republicans circling around the Communist party in France, - permanent minority parties - based on ethnic or geographical minorities (Polish Czech, Slovak parties in Austro-Hungarian Empire), parties based on religious minorities (in Africa and Asia religious minority parties), parties based on political minorities (the Communist parties in Great Britain and Belgium).	86 small parties in Western Europe 1947 – 1987 belonging to all families: - communist, - socialist, - Christian, - liberal, - extreme right, - conservative and other right, - agrarian, - nationalist/regionalist, - ecologists, - others	- European green parties, winning between 3 and 8 percent of the vote in national elections, - far-right parties, such as the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Austrian Freedom Party, FPÖ) and the Schweizerische Volkspartei (Swiss People's Party, SVP), - traditional party families with very low vote or seat shares (the Swedish centre-right Kristdemokraterna - Christian Democrats, the British Liberal Democrats)	- Parties were divided into 4 groups: pivotal/central actors, pivotal/non-central and non-pivotal/central parties, non-pivotal/non-central.

Source: Own study based on Duverger (1954, 290–292), Mair (1991, 43–44), Spoon (2011, 5) and Bolleyer (2007, 134–138).

Having employed mostly the quantitative methods in this paper, I will not be focused on answering the question of if small political parties are able to accomplish their programmatic goals while being in the coalition, but if they are recognised as relevant or even essential for larger parties (*formateurs*) during the process of government formation. They might be invited to the coalition because of the seat shares they control, the values they promote or both aspects. Thus, I will examine the phase of coalition formation and the weight of small

parties in this process. As a result, the visibility of small party weight understood by Bolleyer (2007, 122) as programmatic commitment included in coalition agreement and a degree to which small party can transfer it into legislation will not be covered by this study.

Being concentrated on quantitative measures, I will not resign from also exploring qualitative data thoroughly. I will present the ideological profile of small parties, the character of coalitions (minimal winning, surplus, etc.) or the ideological distance between junior and senior coalition partners. However, some of these variables appeared almost completely irrelevant. I will refer to this issue while presenting the findings.

My goal in this paper is to cover all EU states in which coalition governments are formed, not differentiating between Western, Central and Eastern Europe. Such comparison might be interesting, but the number of cases included in the sample imposed significant limitations related to splitting the group of small parties. Hence, I will not divide them in this paper, but further studies aiming at such comparison and employing a slightly different methodology might be worth continuing. The next part of this paper is devoted to the presentation of the consecutive stages in this research and the employed methods.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

The presented research has two goals. Firstly, it aims to propose an original operationalisation of the term 'small party' based on the assumption that the meaning of this category is contextual and connected with the number of political parties competing in party systems. To accomplish this, the mathematical formula will be utilised in the process of selecting cases. Secondly, this paper explores the determinants of small parties' entrance into the government and preconditions of their representation size in the coalition government.

The formula was inspired by the effective number of parties at parliamentary level proposed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979, 4). The formula of small party threshold (SPT) can be presented as:

$$\text{Spt} = \frac{1}{2 \times \text{ENP}} \times 100\% = \frac{0.5}{\text{ENP}} \times 100\%,[2]$$

where SPT stands for small party threshold, and ENP stands for effective number of parties.

Using this formula, firstly, I selected small political parties that in the result of at least two consecutive elections did not pass the small party threshold. This meant that based on data from Döring and Manow (2020) I had to calculate the small party threshold for the results of each parliamentary elections in 27 EU states (there were no small parties in parliaments of Malta) between 1990 and 2019 and compare it with the seat share for each political party. Then, the status of the party (its smallness) was defined for each parliamentary term. Such an approach can be regarded as reflecting Nicklas Luhmann's (1996, 44) suggestion that "[i]t would be wrong simply to understand structures as atemporal and processes as temporal" and can be also justified by numerous examples of small parties' metamorphosis, particularly visible in the case of CEE states.

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[2] This formula was firstly used in (Sula 2018); it was developed with the help of Rein Taagepera during my visit to Tartu University in 2012.

Adopting the rule of two consecutive elections as the criterion for incorporating the parties into the dataset stemmed, on the one hand, from the conviction that 'smallness' needed to be a permanent feature, but on the other hand, limiting the number to two elections was the strategic decision, precluding the complete elimination of the Central and Eastern European cases, as in this region political parties have been less stable than their Western European counterparts.

Secondly, I decided to exclude all parties not competing independently in the elections from the study. This assumed that the analysis of political parties should not be combined with the electoral performance of electoral alliances set up by a few political groups only for the purpose of the elections. Methodological stringency and clarity justified such an approach, as I took into consideration the parliamentary representation of parties and wanted to avoid the discrepancies between for instance the names of the actors that were competing in the elections and those that had the parliamentary representation. It resulted in selecting 123 cases from all EU members. The only state in which no small party managed to enter the parliament was Malta. In this way, I created a dataset that contained the information on the small political parties competing in 218 parliamentary elections between 1990-2019. The starting point in this analysis has been justified by the fact that first fully competitive elections after the collapse of communism in CEE states were organised in 1990.

Thirdly, I calculated Banzhaf power index values for all parties competing in these 218 elections so that I could obtain the respective data only for small parties. I suppose that further clarification should be made on Banzhaf power index, called by Felsenthal and Machover (1998, 2) relative a priori voting power since it is determined by power of other actors. It might be contrasted with absolute voting power, expressed by the number of seats in the parliament.

The Banzhaf power index is a formula that enables assessing the voting and bargaining power of each actor in each environment (in the case of this research, the political parties in their respective parliaments). The power index is computed for each party. The calculation process aims at answering in how many minimal winning coalitions a given party can be regarded as a critical partner, i.e. essential for forming a winning coalition (Leech 2002, 2). To explain the formula, I will use the example given by Warwick and Druckman (2006, 644–645). If party A and B control 45% seats in the 100-seat parliament and party C 10% there are 3 minimal winning coalitions possible: AB, AC, BC. It means that all parties are pivotal and receive the score 0.33, which means that their a priori relative power is equal.

I have calculated the Banzhaf Power Index with the help of a computer algorithm for voting power analysis, published at the website that is managed by Dennis Leech and Robert Leech (n.d.). The results of the BPI were later used in comparison with the virtual political parties' representation in the governments. The data on government portfolio allocations were taken from the Political Data Yearbook (n.d.) and all missing data was calculated based on Database on WHO GOVERNS in Europe and beyond (Bértoa 2023).

Fourthly, I created the final dataset that contained following variables (abbreviations used in the dataset are given in brackets):
▪ governments (43 coalition government with one small party)
▪ junior coalition partner (JP; dummy variable); as mentioned before I analysed 26 parties, but they entered 43 coalition governments, whereas at the

parliamentary level there were additional 47 small parties that did not enter the government.

- Banzhaf power index (BPI),
- government position percentage (GPP),
- position on the left – right axis (LR),
- the ideological distance between junior and senior coalition partners (LRD),
- seat shares (SS) controlled by the party,
- the number of potential junior partners (PJP), other than the one that joined the coalition.

3 SMALL PARTIES IN GOVERNMENTS: BETWEEN ARITHMETIC AND IDEOLOGY

As was mentioned before, I analysed the performance of 26 parties in 21 European states joining 43 governments as junior coalition partners. I took into consideration only the first coalition government created after the parliamentary elections. These 43 governments were formed with the engagement of 26 small parties out of 73 that were present in the parliament and had the status of small party. The list of 26 small governmental parties is given below in Table 2.

TABLE 2: SMALL PARTIES IN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS (1/2)

No.	Political Party name/name in English (abbreviation in a brackets)	Country	Election Date	SPT	Seat share	BPI	GPP	Type of coalition	Number of potential junior partners (without the party of interest)
1.	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs/ Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)	Austria	2002/11/24	16.67	9.84	16.66	25	minimum winning	2
2.	Dvizhenie za Prava i Svobodi/ Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS)	Bulgaria	2001/06/18	17.24	8.75	10	11.76	surplus coalition	2
			2013/05/12	16.13	15.00	25	11.76	multi-party minority government	2
3.	Křesťanská a demokratická unie – Československá strana lidová/ Christian Democratic Union - People's Party (KDU-CSL)	Czech Republic	1996/06/01	12.2	9	10.71	25	multi-party minority government	4
			2013/10/25	8.62	7	5.65	17.65	minimum winning	6
4.	Det Radikale Venstre/ Danish Social Liberal Party (RV)	Denmark	1998/03/11	10.2	3.91	4.04	20	multi-party minority government	12
5.	Konservative/ Conservatives (KF)	Denmark	2001/11/20	10.69	8.94	9.95	33.33	multi-party minority government	10
6.	Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond/ Social Democratic Party (SDE)	Estonia	2007/03/04	11.36	9.90	5.56	21.43	minimum winning	4
7.	Ruotsalainen Kansanpuolue – Svenska Folkepartiet i Finland/ Swedish People's Party (RKP-SFP)	Finland	2003/03/16	10.20	4	3.45	11.1	surplus coalition	7
8.	Freie Demokratische Partei/ Free Democratic Party (FDP)	Germany	1990/12/02	15.62	11.93	23.08	25	minimum winning	4
			1994/10/16	14.7	6.99	14.29	16.67	minimum winning	4
9.	Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen/ Alliance 90 / Greens (B90/Grüne)	Germany	1998/09/27	15.15	7.03	9.09	18.75	minimum winning	4
			2002/09/22	14.70	9.12	16.67	21.43	minimum winning	4
10.	Anexartitoi Ellines/ Independent Greeks (ANEL)	Greece	2015/01/25	16.13	4.33	2.7	6.67	minimum winning	5
			2015/09/20	15.62	3.33	1.43	5.58	minimum winning	6

TABLE 2: SMALL PARTIES IN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS (2/2)

No.	Political Party name/name in English (abbreviation in a brackets)	Country	Election Date	SPT	Seat share	BPI	GPP	Type of coalition	Number of potential junior partners (without the party of interest)
11.	Független Kisgazda Párt/ Independent Small Holders Party (FKgP)	Hungary	1998/05/24	14.71	12.44	26.92	23.5	surplus coalition	4
12.	Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége/ Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz)	Hungary	2002/04/21	20.00	5.18	16.67	26.7	minimum winning	2
			2006/04/09	19.23	5.18	9.09	23.1	minimum winning	4
13.	Progressive Democrats/ Progressive Democrats (PD)	Ireland	1997/06/06	16.67	2.41	4.51	6.7	multi-party minority government	7
			2002/05/17	15.15	4.82	2.39	13.3	minimum winning	7
14.	Nacionālā apvienība / Tēvzemei un Brīvībai / LNNK/ National Alliance / For Fatherland and Freedom / LNNK (NA/TB/LNNK)	Latvia	2002/10/05	10	7	7.14	11.11	minimum winning	4
			2006/10/07	8.33	8	5.51	15.8	surplus coalition	5
15.	Lietuvos Krikščionys Demokratai/ Lithuanian Christian Democrats (LKDP)	Lithuania	1996/10/20	15.15	11.68	0	16.67	surplus coalition	12
16.	Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija/ Election Action of Lithuania's Poles (LLRA)	Lithuania	2012/10/14	9.09	5.67	3.6	6.67	surplus coalition	7
17.	Déi Gréng – Les Verts – Die Grünen/ The Greens (Greng)	Luxembourg	2013/10/20	12.82	10.00	11.54	22.22	minimum winning	4
18.	Democraten 66/ Democrats 66 (D66)	Netherlands	1998/05/06	10.42	9.33	5.26	20	surplus coalition	7
			2003/01/22	10.64	4.00	2.82	12.5	minimum winning	7
19.	Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe/ Polish People's Party (PSL)	Poland	2001/09/23	12.5	9.13	5	12.5	surplus coalition	6
			2007/10/19	17.24	6.74	16.67	15.79	minimum winning	6
			2011/10/09	16.67	6.09	9.09	15	minimum winning	4
20.	Centro Democrático e Social – Partido Popular/ Democratic and Social Centre - People's Party (CDS-PP)	Portugal	2002/03/17	19.23	6.09	18	16.67	minimum winning	4
			2011/06/05	17.24	10.43	9.09	25	minimum winning	3
21.	Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România/ Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR)	Romania	1996/11/03	8.20	7.29	7.1	8	surplus coalition	8
			2004/11/28	12.20	6.63	4.17	16	multi-party minority government	5
22.	Most-Híd/ Most-Hid (MH)	Slovakia	2016/03/06	8.77	7.33	6.14	14.28	minimum winning	6
23.	Demokratična stranka upokojencev Slovenije/ Slovenian People's Party (DeSUS)	Slovenia	1996/11/10	9.09	5.56	3.11	5	minimum winning	6
			2008/09/21	11.36	7.78	11.34	15.79	minimum winning	7
			2014/07/13	12.12	11.11	10.38	23.53	surplus coalition	7
			2018/06/03	7.35	5.56	5.2	11.76	multi-party minority government	7
24.	Slovenska ljudska stranka/ Slovenian People's Party (SLS)	Slovenia	2000/10/15	10.2	10.00	7.51	18.75	minimum winning	8
25.	Miljöpartiet de Gröna/ Greens (MP)	Sweden	2014/09/14	10.00	7.16	7.89	25	multi-party minority government	6
			2018/09/09	9.93	4.58	4.24	26,09	multi-party minority government	6
26.	Liberals (Lib)	United Kingdom	2010/05/06	19.23	8.77	20.78	21.74	minimum winning	9

3.1 Small parties' entry into the governments

Attempting to evaluate the role of determinants of small parties' entries to the coalition governments, I estimated a logistic regression model since the output variable had a binary character (enter the coalition or not). The respective results produced by the model are presented below in Table 3.

TABLE 3: LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODEL OUTPUT: SMALL PARTIES' COALITION ENTRY AND ITS DETERMINANTS

Predictors	JP		
	Odds Ratios	CI	p
(Intercept)	0.02	0.00 – 0.26	**0.004**
SS	1.19	1.00 – 1.42	**0.047**
BPI	1.14	1.02 – 1.29	**0.029**
LR	1.43	1.01 – 2.07	**0.050**
LRD	1.09	0.84 – 1.42	0.536
PJP	0.92	0.74 – 1.13	0.433
Observations	126		
R² Tjur	0.270		

As can be seen in Table 3, the party's position on the left-right axis (LR), Banzhaf Power Index values (BPI), and number of seats controlled by the small party (SS) were estimated as significant predictors of the small parties' entry to a coalition. To determine the influence of these predictors, I have also calculated odd ratios (OR): OR for LR predictor is 1.43, for BPI OR is 1.14, and OR for SS is 1.19. Since ORs for each predictor are higher than 1, these predictors can be treated as providing increased chances of entering a coalition. However, it should be stressed here that the party's position on the left-right axis (LR) provides a greater increase in the chance of entering a coalition government. It is also worth noting that, surprisingly, the predictive power of seat share was bigger than the one of Banzhaf Power Index. Furthermore, it turned out that the other two variables (the ideological distance between small parties and potential junior partners) did not affect small parties' presence in coalitions. These observations were confirmed by the results of computing Average Marginal Effect. The respective data is shown in Table 4 and maybe even more visible in Figure 1.

TABLE 4: AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS FOR PREDICTORS OF SMALL PARTY BECOMING JUNIOR COALITION PARTNER

Factors	AME	Lower.CI	Upper.CI
BPI	0.02	0.00	0.04
LR	0.06	0.00	0.11
LRD	0.01	-0.03	0.06
PJP	-0.01	-0.05	0.02
SS	0.03	0.00	0.05

As it is shown in Figure 1 the number of parties that might be regarded as potential coalition parties does not play any role in determining the probability of entering the coalition cabinet by the small party.

FIGURE 1: THE VISUALIZATION OF AME VALUES
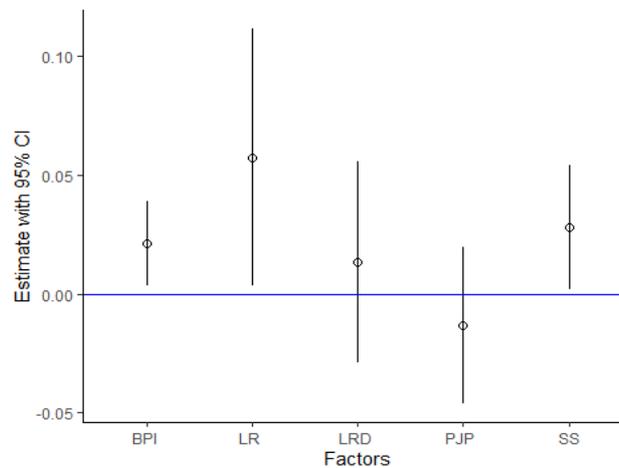
With respect to interpreting the importance of the position on the left-right axis, as the left-right mean was 4.690 and left-right median was 4.507 (measurement taken on a 0 to 10) scale it must be acknowledged that most parties were left-oriented. Accordingly, the increased probability of joining the coalition is to be seen as resulting from being closer to the centre of the axis, i.e. the closer to the centre the parties were, the greater their chances were of entering a coalition.

3.2 Small parties' representation in the governments

In order to answer the question of which variables might be regarded as the more powerful determinants of the government representation increase, I estimated a linear regression model with government positions percentage as the dependent variable and the Banzhaf power index, seat shares, position on the left – right scale, the distance between small governmental junior and senior party, and the number of potential junior parties in the parliament as predictors. However, these variables behaved differently in the various models I created. The first one, containing all variables, was not significant at all. Once I separated seat shares and Banzhaf power index and built two independent models, Banzhaf power index and seat shares appeared to be valid and significant. It means that seat shares and Banzhaf power index reduced their importance since BPI is calculated with the use of percentage of seats controlled by the party. Thus, probably the mathematical "proximity" is responsible for the marginalisation of their significance in one model. With respect to the model that included BPI and did not include the seat shares (model 1, see Figure 4), it turned out that other predictors included in the model were of no influence. Therefore, my hypothesis that BPI would have an impact on the number of portfolios controlled by the small parties was confirmed - when BPI value increases by one the portfolios percentage increases by 0.39. Detailed model information is provided in Figure 4 and the effect is presented graphically in Figure 6. However, it turned out that the seat share was even more influential and significant, which is displayed in Figure 5. With a one percent increase of seat shares, the government position percentage increases by 0.76 percent.

As I wrote above, the two independent variables that had a statistically significant impact on the small parties' shares in the government were BPI values and seat shares. However, the above data and especially what can be seen in Figure 6 suggests that the distance between junior and senior coalition parties had an impact on GPP as well. Even though these predictors were returned as statistically insignificant, it can be said the tendency is illustrated well and the problem with statistical significance might arise from small sample size. Nevertheless, the interpretation of this tendency is a little bit more 'sophisticated', which means that the distance between senior and junior parties increase when the small party is more to the left. Therefore, it can be argued that the more left-oriented parties enter the coalition government the more consensually-oriented the senior party and the coalition are.

TABLE 5: LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL OUTPUT: GOVERNMENT POSITION PERCENTAGE AND ITS DETERMINANTS (MODEL 1)

Predictors	GPP		
	Estimates	CI	p
(Intercept)	13.07	3.17 – 22.96	**0.011**
BPI	0.39	0.06 – 0.71	**0.021**
LR	0.17	-1.06 – 1.39	0.786
LRD	0.95	-0.23 – 2.13	0.112
PJP	0.04	-0.91 – 0.99	0.935
Observations	43		
R² / R² adjusted	0.249 / 0.170		

TABLE 6: LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL OUTPUT: GOVERNMENT POSITION PERCENTAGE AND ITS DETERMINANTS (MODEL 2)

Predictors	GPP		
	Estimates	CI	p
(Intercept)	12.82	2.59 – 23.05	**0.015**
SS	0.76	0.08 – 1.44	**0.029**
LR	0.18	-1.05 – 1.41	0.768
LRD	0.97	-0.22 – 2.16	0.107
PJP	-0.31	-1.18 – 0.56	0.473
Observations	43		
R² / R² adjusted	0.238 / 0.158		

FIGURE 2: GOVERNMENT POSITION PERCENTAGE AND ITS DETERMINANTS
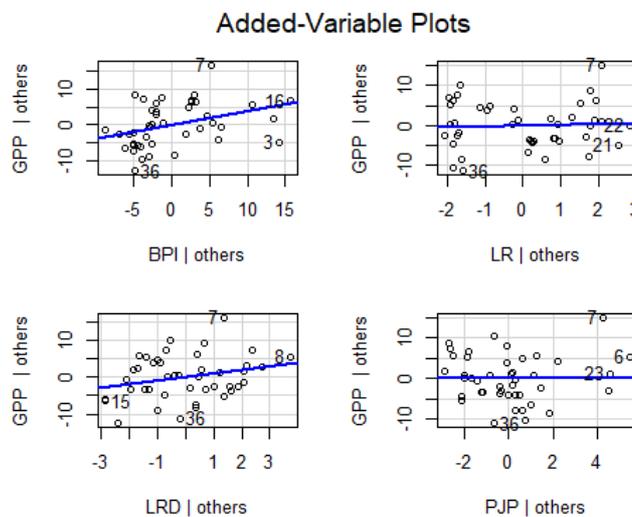
The above conclusion corresponds with the results of linear regression analysis with the distance between junior and senior parties as the dependent variable and the small party position on the left – right axis as the predictor; shown in Figure 2 and Table 7.

TABLE 7: LINEAR REGRESSION OUTPUT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEFT-RIGHT DISTANCE AND THE POSITION OF THE SMALL PARTY ON THE LEFT-RIGHT AXIS

Predictors	LRD		
	Estimates	CI	p
(Intercept)	3.07	1.55 – 4.59	**<0.001**
LR	-0.66	-0.92 – -0.40	**<0.001**
Observations	43		
R² / R² adjusted	0.388 / 0.373		

The association between political party position and the distance between small party and its coalition partner is better displayed in the scatterplot (Figure 3): the closer to the right a party is, the smaller is the ideological distance between coalition partners. However, as I mentioned before, being more on the right means to be closer to the centre of the political spectrum. Such opinion is justified also by the distribution of observations:

- minimum value (-5.9050),
- 1st quartile (-1.7060),
- median (-0.5040),
- 3rd quartile (0.4165).

FIGURE 3: THE VISUALISATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEFT-RIGHT DISTANCE AND THE POSITION OF THE SMALL PARTY ON THE LEFT-RIGHT AXIS
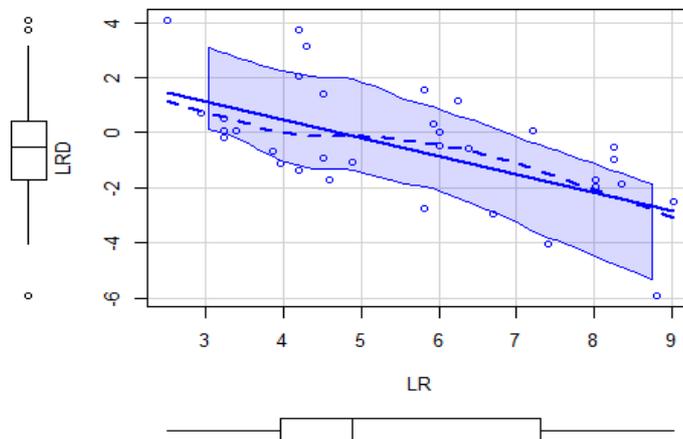
I will not present the data on the role of government type in affecting the character of other variables since having checked it while doing this research, I found out it was completely irrelevant. It means that the character of none of other variables was shaped by the type of coalition government. It can be added that I recoded the types of governments into two categories with surplus coalitions and multi-party minority governments in one group and minimal winning coalition in the second. It stemmed from the fact that only minimal winning coalitions were the ones for which small parties were necessary elements.

4 CONCLUSIONS

One of the main identifiable challenges in existing literature on small political parties is related to defining "smallness". Therefore, it can be argued that whenever the term appears in the text it should be preceded by its operationalisation. However, one can say that the clear distinction between small and large parties can be easily found in the discussion on the system if "small'' is used as a label to describe bigger and smaller parties. Another problem that must be clearly stressed in future studies on small parties is the recognition of the temporality of small parties' statuses. As I mentioned while describing steps of this research, I identified 123 small parliamentary parties. It means that these parties were considered as small in two consecutive elections between 1990 and 2019 but some of them disappeared and some others became more successful electorally.

This paper also showed that the percentage of votes controlled by the small party is a slightly better predictor than the values of Banzhaf power index. It applies to explaining entering the government as well as to the percentage of controlled portfolios. However, both variables were relevant and significant. In contrast, the number of potential coalition partners did not affect the chances of the small party entering the government. In this context, I can admit I expected that the Banzhaf power index would be more important. However, it can be argued that once senior political parties give priority to those parties who are closer to them programmatically, it is logical that they would not consider theoretical/arithmetic strength but a less sophisticated combination of seats, programme proximity and former experiences.

It can be emphasised also that this paper did not aim at dealing with portfolio salience since the outcome (dependant variable) was designed here as the numerical one. Incorporating the quantitative components, as it was tested in the research of Druckman and Roberts (2008, 102–103) or Warwick and Druckman (2006, 640) might be worth developing in future studies. However, it is not very common that hierarchical order of portfolios can be derived from official documents like in the case of the Fifth Republic (Bucur 2018, 155). Further limitations with using portfolio salience might be related to the fact that political party programmes vary over time and the jurisdiction of portfolio might evolve and vary between countries (Bäck, Debus and Dumont 2011, 453, 473). Thus, there might be a problem with defining a portfolio's importance, especially while having newly and established democracies in the same group. The former ones formulated portfolio salience differently since in the 90s privatisation was recognised as one of the most important challenges, absent in the mature European democracies. Another problem might be associated with the strategy of political parties, that might be explained by PSO theory of Meguid (2008, 16–26), who emphasised the variance of issue salience in each election.

With respect to the pivotality of small parties (see Bolleyer 2007, 125), this study showed that this was the attribute of a few of them (DeSUS, D66, KDU-CSL, PSL) and a few more became loyal to the same coalition partner. The result of the study also revealed that the number of potential coalition partners did not have any influence on the success of small parties in terms of their entry to government or the number of obtained portfolios. However, in this respect as well as in the case of other variables, small sample size must be taken into account. Hence, the method I employed in this study might lead to such conclusions but under some

other circumstances the number of potential junior coalition parties might become more relevant.

My intention in this article was to avoid the shortcomings in earlier studies on cabinet formation that were identified by Garrett Glasgow and Sona N. Golder (2014, 739). Following the postulates of both authors, and bearing in mind that I am interested in specific parties and not coalitions as a whole, I designed the research to take into account not only the characteristics of the parties I studied, but also their coalition partners. I achieved this effect by applying a case selection formula, relativising their arithmetic strength (quantitative dimension) and, in a qualitative sense, taking into account the ideological distance between the parties that I am interested in and their coalition partners. By considering the number of variables when examining the determinants of the participation of small parties in government coalitions, I referred to the research conducted by Lanny W. Martin and Randolph T. Stevenson (2001), although the scope of my undertaking was much narrower. Hence, this study provides a springboard for examining the capability of the parties that have similar levels of power in different party systems. Such future studies might employ more qualitative approaches focused on examining the congruence between programmes of governments and parties.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning a problem which, in the context of this article, is marginal but, from the perspective of the weakening of democracy in some European countries, is of fundamental importance. The presence of small parties in political systems can be interpreted as an indicator of the vitality of democracy, and their absence may result from strategies of largest parties oriented towards marginalising smaller actors, which is clearly illustrated by the example of Hungary from 2010 onwards (Szabó 2020, 31).

The datasets utilised in this research have been already published in the Harvard Dataverse Repository https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/VRMUHQ

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ZGODOVINA, KI JO PIŠEJO PORAŽENCI? MAJHNE STRANKE V EVROPSKIH VLADAH 1990 – 2019

Prispevek skuša identificirati dejavnike uspeha (vstop v vlado) majhnih političnih strank v 21 evropskih državah. Čeprav se izraz majhna stranka precej pogosto uporablja, meje med majhnimi, srednjimi ali velikimi strankami niso natančno začrtane. Da bi rešili to težavo, predlagamo izvirno matematično formulo za izbiro

skupine 26 majhnih strank na podlagi istih meril v 21 evropskih državah. Na tem vzorcu analiziramo vse koalicijske vlade, v katere so bile te stranke povabljene kot manjši partnerji. Glavni cilj prispevka je razložiti vzroke za prisotnost majhnih strank v vladah in raziskati determinante dodeljevanja ministrstev s kombinacijo kvantitativnih (tj. Banzhafov indeks moči) in kvalitativnih (ideološka distanca) meritev. Nekateri zaključki potrjujejo dosedanje ugotovitve (nesorazmerna razdelitev ministrskih mest v korist majhnih strank), nekateri pa se le delno prekrivajo z zaključki prejšnjih študij (razmerje med številom potencialnih/alternativnih sodelavcev in verjetnostjo, da majhna stranka postane koalicijska stranka). Študija obravnava primere iz držav srednje, vzhodne in zahodne Evrope.

Ključne besede: majhne stranke; vladno predstavništvo; evropske države.