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Summary of a doctoral dissertation

**PRESIDENTS AND CABINET COALITIONS IN THE THIRD
REPUBLIC OF POLAND**

The main aim of the considerations undertaken in this dissertation is to analyse and to specify the conditions and mechanisms of the presidential influence on the formation, functioning and termination of cabinet coalitions in Poland in 1991-2015. Striving to realize this intention, the author focuses on the political practice of four incumbents of the office of the head of state in Poland – Lech Wałęsa, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Lech Kaczyński and Bronisław Komorowski. The dissertation discusses not only the activity of the above mentioned people, but also the determinants of their actions.

This thesis consists of an introduction, five chapters and conclusions. In the first chapter, the author presents the main theoretical and methodological aspects of the analysis. He explains the concept of a cabinet coalition, characterizes the main approaches to the study of government alliances and presents the most important types of such coalitions. Furthermore, he clarifies the model of “life cycle” of government alliance, identifying and discussing three stages of this process. Moreover, the author explains the analytical model, which he uses to realize the main aim of the dissertation.

The second chapter discusses personal determinants of the presidential influence on formation, functioning and termination of cabinet coalitions in Poland in 1991-2015. The author elaborates on the paths of career and experiences of the chosen incumbents of the office of the head of state in Poland. Additionally, he attempts to specify features of their personality, comparing them with models of democratic and authoritarian personhood.

The third chapter presents the institutional conditions of the presidential influence on the “life cycle” of government alliances. The author analyses political regime and model of presidency as a normative framework for the involvement of the head of state in the formation, functioning and termination of cabinet coalitions in Poland. He also indicates which of presidential powers could be used by the incumbents to influence on particular stages of “life cycle” of government alliances.

The fourth chapter discusses the contextual circumstances of the presidential influence on cabinet coalitions in Poland. The author includes to them: the properties of the party

system at the parliamentary level, the attributes of government alliances in Poland and the existence or absence of cohabitation.

The fifth chapter examines the involvement of chosen presidents in formation, functioning and termination of cabinet coalitions in Poland. The author discusses inter alia the goals of particular incumbents of the office of the head of state, forms of their activity and tools they used. At the same time, he points out how the other participants in the coalition negotiations reacted to the behaviour of the presidents.

The undertaken considerations allow the author to test the following six hypotheses: H₁ – presidents with the party model of the political career more actively influence the formation, functioning and termination of cabinet coalitions than those whose experience matches the non-party model; H₂ – incumbents of the office of the head of state with features more suited to the authoritarian personality more actively affect the particular stages of the “life cycle” of government alliances, than people closer to the model of democratic personality; H₃ – despite constitutional changes, which narrowed the powers of the president, the influence of the head of state office on particular stages of the “life cycle” of government alliances has not been really limited; H₄ – presidents more actively influence the formation, functioning and termination of cabinet alliances in a situation of large fragmentation and polarization of the party system, than when it was characterized by a relatively high level of its concentration, as well as genetic and ideological proximity of political parties; H₅ – incumbents of the office of the head of state more actively affect the particular stages of the “life cycle” of proportional and big alliances, than of disproportionate and small coalitions; H₆ – during cohabitation presidents more actively influence the functioning and termination of cabinet alliances, than when presidential party participates in the coalition or supports it.

Concluding considerations, the author stated that one hypothesis (H₃) proved to be fully true, three (H₄, H₆ and H₂) – were partially confirmed, one (H₅) cannot be recognized as conclusive, and one (H₁) has not been substantiate in the analysis.

Keywords:

president, influence, cabinet coalition, government, Poland, the Council of Ministers, political competition