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The Influence of Electoral System on Party Fragmentation in Serbian Parliament

Abstract

The subject of this paper is the impact of electoral system and other factors on high fragmentation of the Parliament in Serbia. Party system in Serbia is still not institutionalized, even after 25 years of the introduction of the multiparty system. Two-round majority system was applied in the first multiparty elections, and since 1992 the proportional system with the threshold of 5% and D'Hondt formula has been in force. Since 2011 Serbia has closed electoral lists and mandates are allocated by the predetermined order. However, after the last elections in 2014 the Parliament in Serbia will have around 20 political parties, unions and other organizations. These stakeholders appear on the electoral lists of the major political parties or in pre-electoral coalitions without graded electoral threshold and after entering the parliament form a separate parliamentary group, or distinguish themselves with their own identity, which leads to indirect parliamentarization and fragmentation of the parliament. This reflects on the complexity of the process of (coalition) government formation, but also on the functioning of the parliament. Frequent blackmails from the smaller political parties or changes in the behavior of actors reduce the predictability of actors' actions and slow down the consolidation of democracy in Serbia.

Keywords: electoral system, fragmentation of parliament, party groups.

Electoral system strongly influence other political institutions. In Serbia, the two-round majority electoral system was applied only in the first multiparty elections of 1990. Since 1992, the proportional electoral system has been used in all elections carried out so far for the Assembly of Serbia (1992-2014). All the time the threshold has been 5% of votes, whereas the transformation of votes to seats is calculated in accordance

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with the D’Hondt formula. The most recent change of the electoral system in Serbia was made in 2011. Proportional electoral systems (PR, proportional representation, or party-lists systems) are considered to be more favorable for smaller parties as they facilitate their entry into the parliament and provide for a better social representation, in the same time leading to the parliamentary fragmentation. These advantages however have their price. The question is raised to what extent a better representativeness of a parliament reflects to the efficiency of its functioning. This is often interpreted as trade-off, i.e. shall there be enough representative parliament and government or a strong and stable government; it is difficult to obtain both in the same time.

Election turnout is higher where the proportional electoral system is used in comparison to the states using the simple majority system (Gallagher 2008: 557). The proportional system stimulates more parties to get as many votes as possible, therefore influencing the mobilization of voters and increase of participation. In electoral systems of simple majority (non-proportional systems), an average turnout (not including the countries with compulsory voting) is 68.2%, while in proportional systems an average turnout is 70.8% (Farell 2001: 204). In Serbia, an average turnout for the period 1990 – 2014 is 62.58% (see Table 1).

Semi-direct or semi-indirect elections. In proportional electoral system, also known as party-list system, it is possible that the order on

Year/election	1990	1992	1993	1997	2000	2003	2007	2008	2012	2014
Turnout percentage	71.5%	69.7%	61.6%	57.4% with opposition boycott	57.72% *after the changes of Oct 5 th , when the turnout was 74.4%	75%	60.62%	61.35%	57.89%	53,09

Table 1:

the list is fixed and unchangeable. These are the systems with non-preferential, i.e. closed or blocked lists. Another group consists of preferential systems, with open or unblocked lists. From 1992 to 2011, electoral lists in Serbia were closed for voters and open for parties. Since 1992,

when Serbia replaced the two-round majority electoral system with the proportional system, one third of MPs was envisaged to be elected in line with the predefined order on the list, whereas the remaining ones were to be allocated by the submitter, i.e. party. The year 2000 saw the introduction of a news not characteristic for proportional systems. The submitter of the list was free to define who shall attain the seat irrespective of the ordinal number on the list and without clear criteria. In that way the directly expressed will of voters was violated as the political parties mediated between the voters and the parliament. This means that „voters vote, however in essence do not elect, as parties are those who nominate and allocate“ (Jovanović 2011: 26). Parties, i.e. submitters of the lists, compile the lists and define the order of candidates before the election, whereas after the election they decide who shall win the mandates and enter the Parliament, Article 84 of the Law on Elections of Members of Parliament („Official Gazette of the RS“, No. 35/ 2000). Upon insisting of the Venice Commission and the European Commission, amendments were made to the Law on Elections of MPs of 2011, stipulating that electoral lists become „closed“. Law on Altering and Amending the Law on Election of MPs („Official Gazette of the RS“, No. 36/11) was adopted on May 25th, 2011. Mandates are allocated according to predefined order on the list. Pursuant to the recent amendments, the Republic Electoral Commission shall, not later than ten days from the date of the publication of the complete election results, „allocate all attained parliamentary seats to the candidates on the electoral list in line with the order of the list, starting with the first candidate on the list“ (Article 13). The composition of electoral lists in accordance with the new rules bears both intraparty and interparty consequences. It is not easy to meet the criteria for the list to represent high officers, one third of women, territorial representation of municipalities, cities and regions; on the other hand, how to award local politicians who achieve good results and can attract the largest number of votes. According to these rules, it is difficult to maintain party discipline in the parliament. The problem becomes even more complex in case of pre-electoral coalitions. There is another issue the parties face with. If more respectable persons are candidates, they have more chances to attract votes; however, they are more autonomous and less disciplined. If candidates are the loyal ones, they are disciplined, but with less chances to attract votes.

The effect of electoral system on party system. The electoral system significantly influences the character of the party system (Orlović 2011: 40-58). In accordance with the „Duverger’s law“ and „Duverger’s hypothesis“, generally speaking, majority electoral system with one-round voting tends to favor a two-party system, proportional electoral system tends to a multiparty system, while the two-round majority principle tends to a multiparty system being alleviated by alliance of parties (Duverger 1964: 217). A change of electoral system does not automatically lead to a change of party system. Forty years after formulating his hypothesis, Maurice Duverger reformulated his „law“ for the first time: „Proportional system tends to formation of several independent parties. Two-round majority system tends to formation of several parties in coalition. Majority system of simple majority leads to a two-party system“ (Duverger 1986: 70). Majority electoral systems reduce the number of parties, whereas the proportional ones increase it, i.e. the more proportional electoral system, the more fragmented party system. During the 1990s (1990–2000) in Serbia, on one hand, there was the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS – the successor of the League of Communists of Serbia, SKS) as a dominant party, and a fragmented opposition on the other. That was a party system with a (pre)dominant party. According to the Sartori’s criteria (Sartori 2002: 120–127), after the political changes of the year 2000, the party system of Serbia had the features of a polarized pluralism (2000–2006). After the year 2006, the party system of Serbia has not any longer been the system of polarized pluralism, but somewhere between polarized and moderate pluralism (2006–2012). The limited or moderate pluralism stands between two-party system on one hand and extreme or polarized pluralism on the other. This refers to a party system of some 3-5 relevant parties. The main characteristic of moderate pluralism is a coalition government. The bipolarity of the party system in Serbia is one of the consequences of the system of direct election of president of the Republic, where two candidates of the strongest parties enter the second round, bringing further strengthening of their parties as a feedback. In Serbia, presidential elections use two-round majority electoral system (of absolute majority). Most often, candidates of the strongest parties enter the second round, which reflects to strengthening of their parties. Smaller parties are motivated to have own candidates, although the chances for their election are small - they can, however, negotiate the redirection of support in the second round with the parties having the second round candidates, or with the candidates themselves. After the year 2012, the party system of Serbia became a party system with a (pre)dominant party (Serbian Progressive Party).

Effect of electoral system on intraparty relations. In proportional system, parties play the key role because of voting for lists, i.e. party, in difference from the majority system where there are no lists but the candidate is the one being voted for. Closed lists are the only ones where electoral rules play no role in allocation of seats to candidates (Shugart 2008: 39). This influences the intraparty relations as well. In closed lists it is voted for parties, while in case of open lists it is voted for candidate. When the system is candidate-based, the party relies more on its relation with the constituency and intraparty democracy is higher, i.e. intraparty structure is more decentralized, and vice versa.

- DIVISION AND MULTIPLICATION OF PARTIES IN SERBIA
- DS – SLS (1990) – Serbian Liberal Party (Nikola Milošević)
- DSS (1992) – DHSS (1997) – Christian Democratic Party of Serbia (Vladan Batić)
- DC (1994, NGO, 1996, party) – Democratic Centre (Dragoljub Mićunović)
- NDS (2001) – People’s Democratic Party (Slobodan Vuksanović)
- LDP (2005) – Liberal Democratic Party (Čedomir Jovanović)
- New party - (2013)
- SDP (2014) - Social democratic party
- Together for Serbia (2014)

- SPO – SNS (1994) – Conciliar People’s Party (Slobodan Rakitić)
- SPO – Together (1997)
- NS (1998) – New Serbia (Velimir Ilić)
- NS – Pravda (2000) – People’s Party – Justice (Borivoje Borović)
- DSPO (2005) – Serbian Democratic Renewal Movement (Veroljub Stevanović)

- SRS – RSS (1993) – Serbian Radical Party
- SRS – Nikola Pašić (1994)
- URSS (1996) – United Radical Party of Serbia
- SNS (2009) – Serbian Progressive Party

- SPS – SDP (1992) – Social Democratic Party
- DA (1997) – Democratic Alternative (Nebojša Čović)
- DSP (2000) – Democratic Socialist Party (Milorad Vučelić)
- SSP (2000) – Serbian Social Democratic Party (Zoran Lilić)
- SNP (2002) – Socialist People’s Party (Branislav Ivković)

- GSS – SDU (1996) – Social Democratic Union (Žarko Korać)

Table 2: Splitting and division of parties in Serbia

The parties which have united were GSS and LDP, NDS and DSS, and SSJ and SRS.

The larger is the constituency and the lower is the threshold, the higher is the proportionality. This tendency also yielded the subsequent ones, such as high fragmentation of party system, strengthening of parties and party discipline, fractioning, splitting and division of parties. Radicalized intraparty conflicts result in division of parties and/or formation of new ones (Orlović 2008:450-459). Almost no party in Serbia since the introduction of multiparty system was immune to that „disease“ (see Table 2).

Effects of the party system on the parliamentary structure. One of the most important issues of electoral systems is the level of proportionality of number of votes obtained at the election and the number of the attained seats. In average, the outcome of proportional electoral systems is more proportional when compared to majority (non-proportional) electoral systems. This means that the distortion between the number of votes won by a party and the number of seats attained in the parliament on the basis thereof is smaller. Proportionality of electoral system bears a consequence of a more proportional transposition and higher representation of minority parties, smaller parties, as well as the fragmentation of party system and an unavoidability of a coalition government. This means that the electoral will of voters is not transferred to the government immediately upon elections, but coalition majorities are to be formed not so easily and not so fast. Apart from having a coalition potential, small parties often have a blackmailing potential as well. The higher is the proportionality of the system, the more fragmented is the party system and higher are the tendencies towards more numerous, i.e. broader coalitions.

There is a general agreement that the highest effect on the level of proportionality is exercised by the DM –District magnitude, i.e. how many representatives are elected per constituency. Rain Taagepera and Matthew Shugart consider this variable a „decisive factor“ (Taagepera and Shugart 1989: 112). The majority and the proportional electoral systems are both influenced by the DM, however with opposite effects. In majority systems, the more representatives are elected in constituency, the higher is the disproportionality and higher are the benefits for larger parties. In proportional systems, the higher is the number of representatives being voted to, the lower is the disproportionality (and higher the proportionality) which is particularly favorable for smaller parties. The lower is the number of representatives being elected in a constituency, the higher is the percentage of votes necessary for a party to win the seat(s) (Nohlen and Kasapović 1997: 12). The higher is the number of representatives being elected in a single constituency, the

Year/ Election/Ord / Extraord.	Electoral system	Number of constituencie s	DM – No. of representative s elected per constituency	No of municipalitie s without MPs ¹	Disproportionality Index ²	Effective No. of parties	Government – single party/coalition
1990. Ord.	Majority- two round ordinary	250	1	59	23,65	1,4	Single party – SPS 1. 11.2.1991. 23.12.1991. 2. 23.12.1991. 10. 2.1993
1992. Extraord.	Proportional extraordinary	9	27,7 (average)	90	10,22	3,4	Minority 10.2.1993. 18.3.1993.
1993. Extraord.	Proportional extraordinary	9	27,7 (average)	77	9,31	3,3	Coalition 18.3.1994. 24.3.1998.
1997. Ord.	Proportional ordinary	29	8,62 (average)	75	7,98	3	Coalition 1. 24.3.1998. 23.10.2000. 2. 23.10.2000. 25.1.2001.
2000. Extraord.	Proportional extraordinary	1	250	111	5,34	4,95	Coalition- single DOS 1) 25.01.2000. 12.3.2003. 2) 18.3.2003. 3.3.2004.
2003. Extraord.	Proportional extraordinary	1	250	94	6,42	5	Minority 3.3.2004. 15.5.2007.
2007. Extraord.	Proportional extraordinary	1	250	99	5,16	5,25	Coalition 15.3.2007. 7.7.2008.
2008. Extraord.	Proportional extraordinary	1	250	98	2,18	4,25 (6,63)*	Coalition 7.7.2008. 27.7.2012.
2012. Ord.	Proportional ordinary	1	250	111	7,27	7,01*	Coalition 27.7.2012. 27.4.2014
2014. Extraord.	Proportional extraordinary	1	250	94	3,07	12,29	Coalition 27.4.2014 -

Table 3: Effects of electoral system in Serbia

* With coalitions

1 The data on the number of municipalities without MPs from: Milan Jovanović, (2008), Narodna skupština – Deformacije teritorijalnog predstavljanja, godišnjak Fakulteta političkih nauka Univerziteta u Beogradu, year II, No. 2, December 2008, pp. 117–132

2 The data on the disproportionality index from: Dušan Vučićević, Lajphart's Conceptual Map of Democracy: The Case of Serbia, Serbian Political Thought, p. 50

higher are the chances of smaller parties. Proportional elections do not contribute the creation of a parliamentary majority, majority electoral systems do not lead to a fair representation (Nohlen, 1992: 89). An insight into the changes of electoral system in Serbia since the shift to the proportional electoral system show the changes in the number of

constituencies. A trend can be observed, of a reduction of disproportionality, i.e. increase of proportionality (Table 3 – Disproportionality index). The number of constituencies in Serbia was fluctuating as follows: 1992 – 9; 1993 – 9, 1997 – 29, 2000 – 1, 2003 – 1, 2006 – 1, 2008 – 1, 2012 – 1, 2014 – 1. (Table 2, the column referring to the number of representatives elected per constituency). Since 2000, the DM in Serbia amounts to 250, as that is the number of MPs being elected in a single constituency (the entire country). Considering that since 2000 Serbia is a single constituency, the electoral system has been extremely proportional (See Table 2). This proportionality has partly been reduced by implementation of the D'Hondt system, which is one of the least proportional electoral formula in the proportional system (Lijphart 1994), and also by the 5% electoral threshold. An increase of the number of constituencies should reduce the proportionality, and therefore also the fragmentation of the party system. One of the explanations for this not being done are the elections at the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, where it would be more difficult to carry out the elections with more constituencies (Goati 2011: 13).

Electoral threshold. In an intention to prevent the fragmentation of party system, the post-communist states introduced a slightly higher threshold in relation to other European countries, or a two-stage threshold. Hungary has the threshold of 5% for independent lists and 15% for coalitions of four and more parties. Romania - 5% and 8–10% for coalitions, Poland 5% for independent lists and 8% for coalitions. Out of the post-communist states, Macedonia is the only one without an electoral threshold. The threshold in Turkey is 10%, Poland 7%. In the Czech Republic, the threshold is 5% for single parties, 10% for two parties, 15% for three parties, and 20% for four parties. Since the introduction of the proportional electoral system, Serbia has been using the 5% threshold. Due to the fear that small parties cannot reach the 5% of votes (in Serbia, depending on the turnout, this amounts to about 200,000 of voters), small parties shelter to pre-electoral coalitions or appear on the larger parties' lists.

The fragmented parliament. The party fragmentation in a parliament occurs, primarily, because smaller parties avoid the threshold effect in the elections, appearing on larger parties' lists and then separating their own parliamentary groups afterwards. In parliamentary elections of 2008, the 574 parties registered until that moment submitted 22 lists. Five lists passed the threshold, whereas the natural threshold

for the minority parties was passed by three parties only. Nevertheless, in 2010 the Assembly of Serbia registered ten parliamentary groups and two independent MPs, or 23 parliamentary parties in total. This speaks about an indirect parliamentarization – smaller parties attain seats on the lists of the larger ones, to later separate a parliamentary group and fragmentize the party system. The parliament fragmentation can be resolved by preventing the parties from separating their own parliamentary groups or the parties from the lists which the voters put their trust into, or to make the number of MPs required for the establishment of a parliamentary group higher than the present five. Four majority and two minority lists obtained less votes than the signatures necessary for candidature. One of the possibilities is the introduction of a deposit (introduced since 2011), to be returned if the number of obtained votes is less than the number of the collected signatures. With the adoption of the new Law on Political Parties of 2009, 87 parties have been registered until the year of 2012. The Law on Political Parties („Official Gazette of the RS“, No. 36/09) entered into force on May 23rd, 2009 and started to be implemented on July 23rd, 2009. This trend continued after the parliamentary election of 2012, as about 44 parties, trade unions and other organizations reached the parliament. After parliamentary elections 2014. Assembly of Serbia registered ten parliamentary groups and tree independent MPs, or 19 parliamentary parties in total. The fact of the smaller parties being in tow on the lists of the larger ones confirms that pre-electoral coalitions can be very expensive for the larger parties which give a significant number of seats to smaller parties with an uncertain amount of the votes to be brought in (or took out). This shows that pre-electoral coalitions are not only expensive for citizens, but also not cheap for parties. If an event of a threshold lower than 5%, the fragmentation of the party system would be even higher, and if it is higher or staged, it would reduce the number of parties. The amendments of the electoral system in 2003 abolished the electoral threshold for minority parties. The so-called natural threshold (or so-called positive discrimination) have been introduced. This means that the total number of voters who participated in the election is divided with the number of seats in the parliament (250) in order to obtain the number of votes borne by one parliamentary seat. In relation to that number, minority parties obtain as many seats as is the result of the division of the number of the votes they won by the number of votes borne by a single seat. For example, if the number of voters at the election is 3,750,000 and that number is divided with the

number of seats in the parliament (250), the result is 15,000, meaning that one parliamentary seat bears this number of votes. If a minority party wins 30,000 votes, this is divided by 15,000 and this party attains two seats in the Assembly.

Parliamentary fragmentation becomes obvious in formation of parliamentary groups in the parliament. Parliamentary groups are formed from the ranks of MPs of one political party, other political organization or group of citizens having at least five MPs (Article 22 of the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia). The elected representatives – MPs have a dual role. They have been elected by citizens and by their own parties, and take care both of the citizens' and of parties' interests. These two roles overlap, however not being always identical. The main task of the heads of the parliamentary groups is to maintain the party discipline in voting. An extreme example of party discipline was recorded in 1993 in Ireland when the parliamentary group of the largest Fianna Fail party decided that any MP who would vote contrary to his/her party's attitudes on any issue whatsoever will be expelled from the parliamentary group. Another important source of control available to the party oligarchy is candidacy of its human resources in the next occasion, either for the parliament or for the government. The loyal ones are to be rewarded whereas the disloyal ones are to be punished, either by repeated candidacy for parliamentary election or by positions in the government. It derives from the above that MPs have a strong initiative to vote in line with their party attitudes.

Weak geographic (territorial) representation. One of the problems with a single national-level constituency is that there is a danger of a higher concentration of representatives from urban environments, whereas the representation of other environments is lacking. A solution applied in the Netherlands stipulates the lists to be composed at the regional level. The Assembly of Serbia is characterized by an excessive territorial non-representation. After the parliamentary election of 2008, the MPs from Belgrade and Novi Sad prevailed in the Assembly of Serbia, whereas a large number of self-governance units – 98 (out of total 150 municipalities, 23 cities and the capital Belgrade) had no parliamentary representatives at all (Orlović 2010:89). In four convocations of the National Assembly, from 2000 to 2014, about 100 municipalities in average were without representatives. In the same time, 39.2% MPs came from the territory of Belgrade and

Novi Sad, although 26.9 % of voters are from these two cities. This is the „metropolization“ of political representation. As many as 17 municipalities had no representatives in either of the eight convocations of the parliament. This primarily pertains to underdeveloped regions (Jovanović 2008: 128). This is one of the tendencies of the electoral system in which the entire state is a single constituency; however, this was also contributed by the parties themselves, by their decisions on people from the electoral lists who should enter the parliament, not taking care about an even territorial representation. The parliamentary election of 2012 was followed by an excessive lack of territorial representation in the parliament. 111 self-governance units do not have their representatives in the parliament. After parliamentary election of 2014, 94 self-governance units do not have their representatives in the parliament.

Transfers of MPs from one party to another enabled some parties to become parliamentary parties without elections. Non-electoral representation means that a party became parliamentary although it did not attain seats at an election, or even didn't exist at the time of election. As emphasized by Mirjana Kasapović: „Non-electoral parliamentarization and de-parlamentarization are rare in stabile democracies with consolidated party systems, whereas much frequent in new, unconsolidated democracies“ (Kasapović 2003: 242). According to this author, non-electoral parliamentarization is under the influence of legal-political and structural-political reasons; electoral systems, parliamentary rules of procedure which, among else, regulate the manner of establishment of parliamentary fractions, structure and organization of political parties and party system. Serbia recorded several examples of non-electoral parliamentarization. In a non-institutionalized party system, politicians often change parties, which is the case in Serbia as well.

Effects of party system on MPs' behavior. Different party systems produce different responsibility of MPs. The “personally elected” MPs behave in a more autonomous manner as they received their mandate directly from citizens, while those elected on the party lists, i.e. indirectly elected by parties, keep more in line with the party discipline and show a higher level of loyalty to their parties. Open lists depend on personal support of voters, and therefore imply weaker relations with the party, and therefore a weaker party discipline (Gallagher 2008: 557). Closed lists lead more towards the dependence of candidates on their parties.

Connection with the constituency. One of the problems of electoral system with a single national-level constituency is that it reduces the contact between elected MPs and voters. Undoubtedly the strongest connection between MPs and voters is in majority electoral systems (simple majority) with single-mandate constituencies, and the weakest is in proportional electoral system with closed lists and a single constituency. Politicians elected on open lists show higher level of commitment to the voters in comparison to the ones elected on closed lists (Carter and Farrell 2010: 38). The same is true for campaign performance. When a whole country is a single constituency, as is the case in Serbia, the connection between MPs and voters is weak(est).

„Identifiability“ of the government. Electoral system influences the identifiability, i.e. the capacity of voters to identify options offered to them in the elections (Powell, G. B. cf., Gallagher and Mitchell 2008: 21). In proportional systems, the identifiability of options is lower, while in non-proportional systems it is higher. When the options are not entirely clear and visible, i.e. in an event of poor identifiability of options, the voters vote “in darkness“ (Gallagher 2008: 563). Therefore the question of who wants or do not want to enter the coalition is often speculated. Identifiability is high in majority electoral systems of simple majority. Voters have a more clear choice and already in the aftermath of the election it is usually known which party should form the government. In proportional electoral systems parliamentary majorities after election are rare, and more frequent in majority electoral systems of simple majority. Blais i Carty (1987), in their study of 510 elections in 20 countries, show that such majority is composed in 10% of elections in proportional system (Blais and Massicotte 1996: 71–72). In Serbia, identifiability of options offered to voters is poor due to unavoidability of coalition governments and multitude of actors and options. This is partly reduced by bipolarity of party system.

Effects of electoral system on formation of government (single party or coalition government). It is a general position that there is a strong connection between the electoral system and the manner of formation of government. Proportional electoral system leads to coalition governments, whereas majority system, of simple majority, leads to single party governments (Britain and Canada). In majority electoral system of simple majority, voters in fact themselves elect their government, while in proportional system government is to be decided after the election, on the basis of post-electoral agreements (Orlović

2010b:97-125). In states applying proportional electoral system, it is rare that a single party can compose a government, so that coalitions are unavoidable. This reduces or at least blurs the responsibility of such government, as everybody is hiding behind somebody. In that manner, pre-electoral promises given to voters are usually neglected. Serbia had a single party government only after the first multiparty elections when majority two-round system was applied. Since 1992, when proportional electoral system has been introduced, all governments were coalition. Two governments were minority, in the years 1993 and 2003.

Conclusion

The parliament plays a very important role in the process of democratic transition and consolidation. As commented by Sodaro, „English parliament is the historical paradigm of how institutions can play the role of „incubator of democracy“ (Sodaro: 2004: 208). The Serbian parliament in recent years was exactly the one of weak points of democratization. The National Assembly of Serbia is an excessively party fragmented parliament. Personal and party composition of the parliament are often been changed; certain parties became parliamentary even without elections; quite frequent “mandate trade-off”, i.e. transfer of MPs from one party to another, or changes of parliamentary group, are also present.

One of the most important institutional reasons for fragmentation of party system and particularly fragmentation of the parliament is the electoral system and certain solutions being implemented in Serbia. Electoral system can influence the manner of running campaigns, behavior of voters, politicians and MPs, the very nature of party organization, options placed before voters, manner of election of MPs, number of parties in the parliament, nature of parliamentary representation, representation of certain social categories in the parliament (number of women, ethnic groups, minorities), manner of formation of government – single party or coalition. There are several criteria for assessment of electoral systems (such is the representation of diverse groups – minority, women; social interests and political opinions). None of the electoral systems can meet all the requirements. Meeting one requirement (a function to be fulfilled) leads to negligence of another. Frequent changes or anticipations of changes of electoral system can deprive from its long term effects. Sometimes the goals are non-connectable or

priorities are not established in terms of which requirements are necessary and should be fulfilled. Fragmentation of party system can be reduced with threshold grading or with introduction of a sort of majority or mixed electoral system. Increase of number of constituencies would reduce the proportionality and therefore the fragmentation of party system. There are several grounds for reconsideration of effects and performances of electoral system in Serbia and for its change, primarily towards personalization of election. This means the introduction of a certain kind of mixed, i.e. personalized proportional system. Expression of citizens' preferences for a certain candidate would increase the responsibility and autonomy of elected MPs and reduce the influence of parties, which would in the same time reform them from inside. The effect would also be the reduction of partocracy which slows down the consolidation of democracy in Serbia. Klaus von Beyme poses perhaps an essential question: "Could parties be more democratic than the system in which they fought for power?" (Beyme 2002: 127). Non-institutionalized party system and fragmented parliament are one of the obstacles for consolidation of democracy in Serbia.

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