

CZECH

1 / 2024

JOURNAL

OF POLITICAL

SCIENCE

Politologický časopis

Tomáš Jarmara

Distribution of Seats
in the New 2021 Czech
Government Coalition
in Terms of Coalition
Theories and Power
Indices of Political
Parties

**Richard Geffert,
Denisa Rovenská**

Social Justice and
the Old-Age Pension
System in the Slovak
Republic

Reviews:

Frank Dikötter: China
After Mao. The Rise
of a Superpower

Anton Shekhovtsov:
Russian Political
Warfare: Essays on
Kremlin Propaganda
in Europe and
the Neighbourhood,
2020–2023

CZECH JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE



Politologický časopis

Published by Masaryk University,
International Institute of Political Science

Editor in Chief: Vlastimil Havlík (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)

Managing Editor: Martin Jirušek (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)

Editorial Board:

Elisabeth Bakke (University of Oslo)

Magdaléna Baštář Leichtová (St. Anthony's College, University of Oxford)

Ladislav Cabada (Metropolitan University Prague)

Ondřej Císař (Charles University, Prague)

Kevin Deegan-Krause (Wayne State University),

Klaus Detterbeck (Otto von Guericke Universität Magdeburg)

Vlastimil Havlík (Masaryk University, Brno)

Martin Jirušek (Masaryk University, Brno)

Lukáš Linek (The Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague)

Dan Marek (Palacký University Olomouc)

Miroslav Novák (Charles University, Prague)

Ben Stanley (SWPS Uniwersytet Humanistycznospołeczny, Warsaw)

Maximilián Strmiska (University of Hradec Králové)

Milada Anna Vachudova (University of North Carolina)

Project Assistant: Lucie Mořkovská (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)

www.politologickycasopis.cz

ISSN 1805-9503 (Online)

is published by Masaryk University, International
Institute of Political Science three times a year
in February, June and October

All editorial correspondence should be addressed to:
International Institute of Political Science
of Masaryk University

Joštova 10, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic,
tel./fax: +420 549 495 769, e-mail: iips@fss.muni.cz,
www.iips.cz

Thematic group and subgroup: 02/58. Registered
by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic;
registration number MK ČR E 7130.

The journal is:

- indexed in Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI)
- submitted to the Committee of International
Political Science Abstracts – Documentation
Politique International
- included in databases – Elsevier; Scopus; ERIH
PLUS; Ulrich's Periodicals Directory; Central and
Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL); EBSCO

Table of contents

1/2024

ARTICLES

4

Tomáš Jarmara

Distribution of Seats in the New 2021 Czech Government Coalition in Terms of Coalition Theories and Power Indices of Political Parties

28

Richard Geffert, Denisa Rovenská

Social Justice and the Old-Age Pension System in the Slovak Republic

REVIEWS

49

Frank Dikötter: China After Mao:
The Rise of a Superpower (**Łukasz Świącicki**)

52

Anton Shekhovtsov: Russian Political Warfare:
Essays on Kremlin Propaganda in Europe
and the Neighbourhood, 2020–2023
(Volume 271 Of Soviet And Post-Soviet Politics
And Society Series) (**Đorđević Vladimir**)

Distribution of Seats in the New 2021 Czech Government Coalition in Terms of Coalition Theories and Power Indices of Political Parties¹

Tomáš Jarmara²

Abstract

This study is theoretically anchored in the office-seeking approach and coalition theory of political science. It is based on the most widespread theories of portfolio distribution in executive and legislative bodies (proportionality, power index, voting weights), and it tests these theories using data related to coalition negotiations in the Czech Republic for the new 2021 government coalition, a case of a surplus majority government. The study investigates the distribution of ministerial positions in the government, the office of President (Speaker) of the Chamber of Deputies, and the chairs of permanent parliamentary committees. The analysis also explores the types of electoral coalitions formed; the SPOLU coalition was a superadditive coalition, while the PirSTAN coalition was only an additive coalition. Grounded in the theory of electoral games, the Shapley-Shubik and Banzhaf power indices and the theory of coalition formation are applied in order to analyse the possible minimal winning coalitions that could be formed following the 2021 elections to the Chamber of Deputies.

Key words: Czech Republic; political parties; coalition theory; coalition formation; coalition government; office-seeking; voting weights; Gamson's Law; Shapley-Shubik; Banzhaf power index.

DOI: 10.5817/PC2024-1-4

CC BY 4.0 (<https://www.creativecommons.cz/licence-cc/>)

¹ The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions, which helped to significantly improve the quality of the manuscript.

² Assistant professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, CEVRO Institute, Jungmannova 17, 110 00 Prague, e-mail: tomas.jarmara@vsci.cz. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7861-0843>.

1. Introduction

Among the issues that political scientists attempt to explain by applying the office-seeking approach and coalition theory are appointments to cabinet departments (the Czech version of which is called the Office of the Government), ministerial positions, and parliamentary positions. Such issues can also be approached from the perspective of game theory. Political parties' negotiating strategies are limited by various power indicators, but their actual share of power does not always correspond with their electoral results and the number of parliamentary seats they occupy. For this reason, an analysis may also aim at a more comprehensive view of the distribution of appointments to executive positions or parliamentary committees, taking into account not only power indicators but also the political aspects of the final distribution. The formation of a new Czech government coalition under Prime Minister Petr Fiala in 2021 is an appropriate case for analysis. The coalition consists of the highest number of political parties yet to make up a Czech government coalition – five parties, which stood for election in two electoral coalitions (SPOLU and PirSTAN). This is the first ever Czech government coalition since the Czech Republic gained independence in 1993, which can be characterized as a surplus majority government consisting of more parties than necessary to achieve a majority.

The primary aim of the study presented here is to trace the distribution of government positions in terms of office-seeking and to explore its correlation with the power indicators of the individual coalition parties. The study further outlines the hypothetical possible alternative government coalitions that could emerge in the case of a government crisis, cabinet reshuffle etc. The analysis also focuses on the types of electoral coalitions that were formed (SPOLU and PirSTAN), which predetermined the subsequent formation of a government coalition.

The text is structured as follows. The first section provides a review of relevant literature and a theoretical conceptualization of the phenomenon of office-seeking, coalition theories, and the most frequently used power indicators for coalition formation – the Shapley-Shubik negotiating power index, the Banzhaf power index, Gamson's proportionality hypothesis, and several others. The paper then presents the methodology used for the study, the data, and the research questions. This is followed by the presentation of the analytical results, including an interpretation of the political circumstances in which the government coalition was formed and the various government and parliamentary positions were distributed. The conclusion highlights and discusses a number of key findings and outlines potential questions for future research.

2. Theoretical conceptualization

Office-seeking by political parties has received considerable attention from political scientists, including from the perspective of policy-seeking. This dilemma is aptly expressed by Helboe Pedersen in the title of his paper ‘What do Parties Want? Policy versus Office’ (2012). It has also been explored by numerous other studies (see Posey, 1994; Warwick, 2005; Strøm, Müller & Bergman, 2008; Wagner & Meyer, 2014; Mizrahi, Shlomo, Yuval, & Cohen, 2014; Michelangelo, 2016). Although political parties do not abandon their political interests and electoral manifesto, they need to occupy offices in order to implement their commitments (Mershon, 1996), as ‘similarly, policy can be pursued both as an end in itself and as a means to achieve office’ (Budge & Laver, 1986, p. 486).

The phenomenon of office-seeking also correlates with the type of government that is in office, making it essential to consider typologies of government coalitions. Czech political scientists have explored this issue both from a theoretical perspective (see Klíma, 1998; Fiala, 2003; Říchová, 2006; Just, 2012; Cabada, Charvát, & Stulík, 2015) and in case studies analyzing executive coalitions (Balík, 2006; Švec, 2010; Svačinová & Chytilék, 2009; Charvátová, 2020). From the perspective of power indices for political parties (the Shapley-Shubik and Banzhaf indices), there has also been an analysis of the distribution of government and parliamentary positions in the period 1992–2009 (Svačinová & Chytilék, 2009). An innovative approach comes from political economics, in a study focusing on the concentration of political power in the Prague City Assembly and mayoral team. This study draws on game theory and analyzes the strategies of the players (i.e., office-seeking political parties) from the perspective of the value of their output function (Dlouhý, 2016, p. 1).

When involved in coalition negotiations, political parties choose strategies with regard to their input conditions and political preferences (Strøm, 1990; Svačinová & Chytilék, 2009). The rationality of actors is associated with their expectation that they possess complete information about the other actors, and that this information is mutually shared. A party adapts its game strategy in order to become a part of an emerging coalition. It attempts to maximize its gains (in the form of offices held), but it is also aware of its negotiating power and its limitations (Riker, 1967). However, the final number of offices gained may diverge substantially from the party’s electoral performance, expressed in the number of seats and its negotiating power. This has recently been reflected in the distribution of government positions within the new Czech government coalition headed by Prime Minister Petr Fiala (2021). Political circumstances also play a role. Especially in Europe, research has explored the correlation between the usual type of coalition formed and the political system; different types of political systems offer different levels of motivation for parties to participate or not to participate in government. Parties operate differently in polarized systems

(with a tradition of majority governments) than in systems that tend to produce majority government coalitions. An extensive analytical study (Strøm, Müller, & Bergman, 2008) has demonstrated that in many European countries, parties are not always motivated to participate in the government if they are able to implement some of their manifesto commitments while in opposition. In other words, entering the government does not necessarily create a stronger position for political decision-making; indeed, government participation brings certain risks, potentially compromising a party in the eyes of voters (Strøm, Müller, & Bergman, 2008). An extensive body of literature, ranging from classic studies to more recent research, has explored this issue (Leiserson, 1968; Axelrod, 1970; de Swaan, 1973; Lijphart, 1984; Luebbert, 1984; Strøm, 1990; Schofield, 1995; Colomer, 2000; Strøm, Müller, & Bergman 2008; Pedersen, 2011).

Another phenomenon that enters the issue of coalition formation is the question of ‘who gets what in coalition governments’ (2011), working with the hypothesis that parties usually get the government portfolios related to themes they emphasized in their electoral programmes (Bäck, Debus, & Dumont, 2011, pp. 441–478). A number of studies deal with the formation of coalitions, when the study of coalition politics has traditionally focused on Western Europe. One of the better-known works is *Coalition Governments in Western Europe* (Müller & Strøm, 2000). Among the newer ones is *Coalition Governance in Western Europe* from 2021 (Bergman, Torbjörn, Back, & Hellström, 2021). However, one can also note the relatively new work *Coalition Governance in Central Eastern Europe* (2019), which provides information and analyses of the coalition life cycle, from pre-electoral alliances to coalition formation, portfolio distribution and governing in coalitions (Bergman, Ilonszki, & Müller, 2019). Worth noting is the work with the characteristic title ‘Early Marriages Last Longer: Pre-electoral Coalitions and Government Survival in Europe’ (2015), which uses examples of Western and Eastern European government coalitions to confirm the hypothesis that successful pre-electoral coalitions show a significantly lower degree of instability if they form a government coalition together (Chiru, 2015, pp. 165–188).

To end this theoretical part, let us recall that in political science the ideal and most stable type of coalition is considered to be a *minimal winning coalition* (Axelrod, 1970; de Swaan, 1973; Lijphart, 1984; Schofield, 1995). A coalition of this type consists of parties that share the greatest area of common ground in their manifestos or are ideologically close to each other in terms of their positions on the right–left axis. A characteristic feature of a minimal winning coalition is intense rivalry among its members, who are competing for the support of the same voters. The parties in such a coalition are also dependent on each other, as the creation of a future ideologically based minimal winning coalition is dependent on the success of them all (Schofield, 1995).

2.1. Indices of electoral power

The notion of an electoral game focusing on coalition-forming is adopted from game theory, a discipline of applied mathematics. The roots of game theory reach back to the seminal work *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* by John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern (1944). This concept involves a zero-sum cooperative game which determines the basic axioms of possible forms of coalitions. An electoral game is a cooperative nonconstant-sum game, in which the players' interests are not necessarily different; if one player makes a gain, the other player does not necessarily incur a loss. When investigating electoral negotiations, political scientists construct differentiated power indices based on the fact that the mere distribution of positions among individual political parties is not an adequate indicator of the parties' power and influence (Fiala, 2003).

Among the most frequently applied power indices are Gamson's model of proportional prediction and Shapley's power vector. These were modified to create the Shapley-Shubik index, which is used to measure the power of players in an electoral game. Other widely used indices, named after their originators, are the Johnston, Coleman, Deegan-Packel and Banzhaf power indices. A full overview of the various power indices used in political science research can be found in a large body of literature (Deegan & Packel, 1978; Straffin, 1994; Felenstahl & Machover, 2004; Turnovec, 2007; Pacelli & Taylor, 2008; Svačinová & Chytilék, 2009; Dlouhý & Fiala, 2015).

It is important to bear in mind that all the models of electoral power are merely statistical representations of a particular situation. They help players to assess their position in terms of implementing their demands or to prevent other players from implementing theirs. This means that power indices do not take into consideration the varying opinions and preferences of the players. They are not able to explain the negotiating positions taken by coalition actors in terms the more effective possible minimal winning coalitions (Riker, 1962).

2.2. The conceptual framework of the study

It is usual to distinguish two traditions in approaches to coalition theory: American and European.¹ The American approach is associated with William H. Riker (1962). It applies game theory in the form of zero-sum games, in which a party that does not enter the government loses the game. It is based on the model of the individual rationality of each actor (political party) and the assumption that each actor always attempts to maximize its participation in executive power. It assumes that minimal winning coalitions will be formed in which the votes of each coalition partner are necessary in order to achieve a majority. If one of the partners withdraws from the coalition, it loses its legislative majority (Balík,

2006, p. 54). Post-electoral negotiations are primarily viewed as a struggle for government positions (office-seeking) rather than as an attempt to implement a political manifesto (policy-seeking).

The European model emphasizes empirical research. It incorporates analyses of a wide spectrum of political circumstances (political traditions and cultures, ideological positions of political parties, relationships among actors, specific circumstances in which coalitions emerge etc.). As has been mentioned above, this approach also explores correlations between the usual types of coalition and different political systems, which create different degrees of motivation for a political party to participate in government.

It is evident from the outline given above that the European tradition of empirical research is an appropriate framework for the case study presented here. This approach makes it possible to consider the relationships between the participants in coalition negotiations as well as the overall political context (Švec, 2010), and it represents a basis for explaining the emergence of a government coalition or the unwillingness of some political parties to participate in it (Říchová, 2006, pp. 120–121).

3. Aims, research questions, methodology

This case study does not offer predictive hypotheses. Instead, its aims are as follows:

- to analyse the SPOLU and PirSTAN electoral coalitions as an input factor which subsequently determined the emergence of the government coalition;
- to describe and analyse the distribution of positions in government and in key parliamentary committees across the government coalition that was formed after the 2021 elections to the Czech Republic's Chamber of Deputies, applying Gamson's proportional predictive model;
- to predict hypothetical alternative variants of minimal winning coalitions that could be formed from the current distribution of seats in the Chamber of Deputies in the case of a political crisis, cabinet reshuffle etc. The alternative variants will be based on the power indices of the individual political parties, applying the Shapley-Shubik and Banzhaf indices.

The data for the analysis were taken from the Czech Republic Government Office (2021) and the Czech Statistical Office – Volby.cz (Český statistický úřad, n.d.). The share of offices held by the individual parties is calculated from the input *Coalition Agreement* on the distribution of seats (Vláda České republiky, 2022). These sources, including the agreement, are available on the websites of the Czech government and the political parties themselves. Data on the history of electoral support for the parties in both electoral coalitions, and the electoral

support models for SPOLU and PirSTAN, are taken from the Public Opinion Research Centre (Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění – CVVM), which is a department in the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (CVVM IS CAS), the STEM Empirical Research Centre (Středisko empirických výzkumů STEM), and the KANTAR.CZ agency for Czech Television.

The analysis of the distribution of government offices applies Gamson's indicator of the proportionality principle (1961). This is based on the assumption that a political party entering a coalition expects that all the actors will demand a proportion of positions equal to the proportion of seats that they bring to the coalition (Gamson, 1961, p. 376). The formation of a coalition on the basis of such proportionality is an easy-to-understand principle for the distribution of positions, and it can be expected that all the participants will agree on it (De Winter, 2005, p. 190; Svačinová & Chytilék, 2009, p. 4). A generally agreed advantage of Gamson's Law is its intuitive comprehensibility, its ex-post regularity, and its independence from the negotiating process (Fréchette, Kagel, & Morelli, 2005, p. 366; Svačinová & Chytilék, 2009, p. 4).

The Shapley-Shubik index is used as an indicator of the political power of a hypothetical coalition member, applying the notion of a pivot (i.e., a party whose participation makes a non-winning coalition into a winning one) and taking into consideration all permutations of possible coalitions (Shapley & Shubik, 1954). The index is expressed as a value between zero and one, which denotes the number of variations for which a particular party is a pivot. An actor's negotiating power should thus be reflected in the number of positions it acquires (Felenstahl & Machover, 2004, p. 9). Banzhaf's power index expresses the power of a player whose withdrawal from a winning coalition would turn it into a non-winning coalition (Banzhaf, 1965). This index works only with minimal winning coalitions, quantifying the total number of critical withdrawals for a coalition member. Both indexes are calculated using the software Computer Algorithms for Voting Power Analysis, which is available on the University of Warwick website (Warwick website, n.d.).²

4. The Czech government coalition

The Czech government coalition was formed on the basis of electoral results which gave seats in the Chamber of Deputies to two electoral coalitions and two other political groupings. The subsequent division into groups of deputies, i.e., the number of elected deputies from each political party, is shown in Table 1. The ODS party leader Petr Fiala was appointed to head the negotiations on the formation of the new government. On 22 October 2021 the new government was formed; consisting of five parties (ODS, STAN, KDU-ČSL, TOP 09, Pirates), it commanded 108 votes in the Chamber of Deputies. The government coalition

can be classified as a surplus majority government, having more members than are necessary to give a majority. The surplus member is the Pirate Party, which has just four deputies.

Table 1:
Political parties and movements in the Chamber of Deputies and the number of parliamentary mandates gained in the 2021 elections

ANO	ODS	STAN	KDU-ČSL	SPD	TOP 09	Pirates
72	34	33	23	20	14	4

Source:
Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky, n.d.

4.1. The SPOLU and PirSTAN electoral coalitions

The government coalition consists of two electoral coalitions, SPOLU and PirSTAN. Previous successful electoral coalitions in the Czech Republic were ODS/KDS in the 1992 elections³, followed by the coalition of KDU-ČSL and US-DEU in the 2002 elections. In the past, the possibility of forming electoral coalitions was limited by the fact that the five per cent electoral threshold applied separately to each party in the coalition, so for example an electoral coalition with two members would need a threshold of ten per cent, but in 2021 the Constitutional Court changed this rule, such that it is now sufficient for a two-member coalition to obtain eight per cent of the votes, and eleven per cent for multiple coalitions.

The motivation for forming an electoral coalition is to maximize electoral gains by creating a higher-quality entity that will attract more votes than would be the case if the coalition members remained separate. Depending on their electoral performance, types of electoral coalitions can be distinguished (Kamiński, 1997):

- *a subadditive coalition*, which gains fewer votes than its members would have expected to gain had they remained separate; the parties in the coalition fail to attract the votes of their original electorate and also fail to attract new voters;
- *an additive coalition*, which gains essentially the same number of votes as its members would have expected to gain had they remained separate; the voters maintain their original preferences regardless of the possible negative consequences of collaborating with another party or parties, and each party manages to retain its original ideological or manifesto profile in the eyes of voters despite its participation in the coalition;
- *a superadditive coalition*, which gains more votes than its members would have expected to gain had they remained separate; such a coalition attracts new voters by creating a higher-quality political grouping in response to political demand.

The electoral coalition SPOLU (meaning ‘together’) was a multi-party coalition; based on the proportions of the candidates from the individual parties, it can be described as a grouping of one medium/large party (ODS) and two smaller parties (KDU-ČSL and TOP 09). The PirSTAN coalition consisted of one medium/large party (the Pirates) and a smaller partner (STAN). These proportions were reflected in the composition of the candidate lists, but not in the percentages of mandates actually obtained, which are shown in Table 2. Comparing the parties’ percentage shares of candidates in the top five places on the lists (the so-called electable positions) with the number of mandates obtained, within the SPOLU coalition KDU-ČSL obtained eight per cent more mandates than would have corresponded with their share of candidates in the top five places, while ODS obtained 6.5% fewer mandates and TOP 09 obtained 2.5% fewer mandates than their corresponding shares. Expressed in numbers of deputies, KDU-ČSL obtained an extra six mandates, TOP 09 lost one mandate, and ODS lost five mandates (see Table 4). Preferential voting substantially altered the situation within the PirSTAN coalition: the STAN movement gained almost 54% more mandates from the top five places than expected, entirely marginalizing the Pirates by obtaining 22 mandates at their expense. The Pirates have just four mandates – the smallest number of mandates held by any party in the history of the Chamber of Deputies.

Table 2:
Representation of political parties on candidate lists
and the number of mandates obtained (%)

Parliamentary elections 2021	Coalition parties	Share of candidates: total	Share: top ten places	Share: top five places	Share: leaders	Mandates obtained
SPOLU	ODS	54.23	51.25	53.28	64.28	47.88
	KDU-ČSL	25.44	27.37	24.43	24.42	32.39
	TOP 09	22.32	21.37	23.28	14.28	19.71
PirSTAN	Pirates	54.09	61.42	64.28	71.42	10.81
	STAN	45.90	38.57	35.71	28.57	89.19

Sources:

Český statistický úřad, n.d.; Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky, n.d.

Table 3 shows the types of coalitions from the perspective of electoral gains. In January 2021 the polling agencies began to publish not only respondents’ preferences for individual parties, but also electoral models showing the strength of support for electoral coalitions.⁴ These were based on the expected electoral behaviour of politically engaged citizens (who intended to vote), combined with party preferences (STEM), or they were based on the probability that respondents would vote (CVVM). The KANTAR.CZ agency used two electoral models – one for party preferences and another simultaneously for coalitions (KANTAR.CZ). All the available polling data for individual parties are presented in Table 3 and

compared with the electoral models for coalitions in the same period (CVVM, 2021; KANTAR, n.d.; Česká televize, 2021; STEM, 2021).

Table 3:

Development of electoral preferences of individual political parties and electoral coalitions

Political parties	KANTAR Jan 2021	KANTAR Feb 2021	KANTAR March 2021	KANTAR April 2021	STEM April 2021	KANTAR May 2021	KANTAR June 2021
ODS	10.5	9.5	9	11.5	8.7	11.5	11.5
KDU-ČSL	4.5	4.5	4	3.5	3.5	4	7.5
TOP 09	4.5	5.5	6.5	6.5	4.1	6.5	3
Total	19.5	19.5	19.5	21.5	16.3	22	22
SPOLU	19.5	17.5	19	21.5	16.6	21.5	23.5
Pirates	21	22	20	19	18.6	16.5	14
STAN	9.5	13	12	11	11	11.5	13
Total	30.5	35	32	30	29.6	28	27
PirSTAN	29.5	34	30	27	27.9	26	24

Political parties	STEM June 2021	CVVM July 2021	KANTAR August 2021	STEM August 2021	STEM Sept 2021	STEM – end Sept 2021	Election result 2021
ODS	10.9	-	11.5	13.0	11.5	10.3	SPOLU
KDU-ČSL	3.2	-	4.5	4	3.8	5.1	
TOP 09	3	-	5	4.1	4.1	4.8	
Total	17.1	-	21	21.1	19.4	21.2	
SPOLU	17.4	21.3	21	21.7	20	21.4	PirSTAN
Pirates	15.5	-	12.0	11.3	11.4	10.6	
STAN	8.7	-	10.5	7.8	6.9	6	
Total	24.2	-	22.5	19.1	18.3	16.6	
PirSTAN	24.1	21	21	18.7	18	17.4	

Sources:

Český statistický úřad, n.d.; CVVM, 2021; KANTAR, n.d.; STEM, 2021.

At the beginning of 2021, the PirSTAN coalition was the clear favourite for the upcoming elections. Its popularity reached a peak of 34% in a KANTAR.CZ poll taken in February 2021, and the sum of support for both parties individually was as high as 35% in the same month. By contrast, SPOLU experienced its lowest polling figures (just 17.5%) in February 2021. The turning-point came in May 2021, when support for PirSTAN (and particularly for the Pirates as an individual party) began to wane. The SPOLU coalition began to gain popularity, with figures topping 20%. In terms of individual parties, the dominant partner in SPOLU was ODS, whose popularity was growing steadily. From May onwards, support for KDU-ČSL and TOP 09 began to drop below five per cent. The best result for TOP 09

was five per cent (in August), and for KDU-ČSL 5.1% (in September). However, the actual result achieved by SPOLU was more than six per cent better than had been predicted by any electoral model or the sum of individual party preferences. SPOLU can thus be considered a superadditive coalition, which responded to political demand by creating a higher-quality political grouping. Even the last STEM poll, taken ten days before the elections (which put support for SPOLU at 21.4%), did not capture the last-moment surge that may have reflected emotions in the immediate run-up to the elections (see Fournier, Nadeau, Blais, Gidengil, & Nevitte, 2004; Bengtsson, Hansen, Harðarson, Narud, & Oscarsson, 2011). SPOLU evidently managed to secure the support of floating voters just before the vote; around 360,000 more votes were cast in 2021 than in the 2017 elections, and SPOLU may well have gained the support of these extra voters. A further key factor was the very high level of support received by SPOLU in Prague and its metropolitan area (40.02%).

The excellent performance of all three parties in SPOLU disproved the fear that participation in the coalition would weaken the parties' individual identities. This applied particularly to the smaller partners (KDU-ČSL and TOP 09), whose polling figures had been under (or just above) the five per cent electoral threshold for a long time. TOP 09 was defending seven mandates from the previous elections; it ended up with a 100% gain, obtaining 14 mandates. KDU-ČSL recorded a gain of 130%, leaping from ten mandates to 23. Of the SPOLU partners, ODS made the smallest gain (36%), with 34 mandates compared to 25 in the previous elections (Table 4).

Table 4:
The impact of the electoral coalitions on mandates:
a comparison of the 2017 and 2021 elections

Political parties	Number of parliamentary mandates 2017	Number of parliamentary mandates 2021	Difference in percentage	Difference in mandates
ANO	78	72	-7.69	-6
ODS	25	34	+36	+9
STAN	6	33	+162	+27
KDU-ČSL	10	23	+130	+13
SPD	22	20	-9.09	-2
TOP 09	7	14	+100	+7
Pirates	22	4	-396	-18

Sources:
Český statistický úřad, n.d.; Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky, n.d.

When the PirSTAN electoral coalition was formed, it appeared to be the favourite for the 2021 elections. However, throughout the period during which opinion polls were compiled, support for PirSTAN remained essentially the same

as the sum of support for its two members individually, and support for the coalition gradually waned until the elections. The election results confirmed that PirSTAN was merely a simple additive coalition. The weaker partner was the Pirate Party. From January to April 2021, the party polled around 20% as an individual entity. From May onwards, support for the Pirates began to weaken, reaching its lowest point in September, just before the elections (KANTAR 10.6%). STAN likewise lost support, with its polling figures dropping from 13% in February to six or seven per cent in September. This fall in support was less dramatic than the slump experienced by the Pirates, and it appears to have been alleviated by the last-minute decisions of some floating voters; this, combined with preferential voting, entirely changed the balance of power within the PirSTAN coalition and the numbers of mandates obtained. STAN was defending six mandates from the previous elections; it made a 160% gain, ending up with 33 mandates. The Pirates suffered a 396% drop, losing 18 mandates out of its previous 22 (Table 4).

4.2. Government coalition, profit prediction according to bargaining power – real distribution

The government coalition headed by Prime Minister Petr Fiala was appointed on 17 December 2021 and won a vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies on 13 January 2022. Its members were ODS, STAN, KDU-ČSL, TOP 09 and the Pirate Party. It can be characterized as a surplus majority coalition, comprising more members than are necessary for a majority. The surplus member is the Pirate Party, with four mandates; even if the Pirates withdrew from the coalition, it would still command a majority in the Chamber of Deputies. The government rests on the mandates of 108 deputies, and it assigned 18 ministerial positions and ten chairs of parliamentary committees (see Table 5).

The strongest party (ODS) played the key role in forming the government. It gained a higher percentage of positions than would have corresponded with its proportion of deputies, taking the highest number of ministerial positions (six). The Pirates likewise gained a higher than proportional number of positions (more than four times higher). This was due to two factors. The first was the distribution of positions within the government coalition; the PirSTAN coalition gained four per cent more than its proportional share, and ministerial positions were assigned to the Pirate Party at the expense of its electoral coalition partner STAN, because STAN (as the second strongest party in the government coalition) took the position of Deputy Prime Minister. The second factor involved political circumstances; the real distribution of ministerial positions within the PirSTAN block of the government coalition did not correspond with the principle of proportionality, but instead reflected the guarantee given by STAN to the Pirates in the electoral coalition agreement. According to Gamson's proportionality principle,

the lower proportion of ministerial positions assigned to the SPOLU block of the government coalition was evidently compensated for by the allocation of the position of President (Speaker) of the Chamber of Deputies, the third-highest role in the Czech Republic's political system, to TOP 09. This created a situation in which KDU-ČSL had the lowest number of ministerial positions compared with its proportional share – both within the SPOLU grouping and within the government coalition as a whole. KDU-ČSL thus showed the greatest willingness as a coalition partner – and this willingness was not rewarded in the distribution of the parliamentary committee chairs.

Table 5:
Government/parliamentary committees: Gamson's law prediction and real distribution

Government: 18 members	ODS	STAN	KDU-ČSL	TOP 09	Pirates	SPOLU	Pir STAN
No. of deputies	34	33	23	14	4	71	37
Gamson's Law	31.48	30.55	21.29	12.96	3.70	65.73	34.25
No. of ministers %	33.33	22.22	16.66	11.11	16.66	61.10	38.90
No. of ministers	6	4	3	2	3	11	7
No. of committees: 10	ODS	STAN	KDU-ČSL	TOP 09	Pirates	SPOLU	Pir STAN
Gamson's Law	31.48	30.55	21.29	12.96	3.70	65.73	34.25
No. of committees %	30	20	20	30	-	80	20
No. of committees	3	2	2	3	-	8	2

Sources:

Český statistický úřad, n.d.; Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky, n.d.

Gamson's Law can also be applied to the distribution of the parliamentary committee chairs. According to the *Coalition Agreement*, the government parties distributed among themselves the chairs of nine (or ten) out of 18 parliamentary committees. The *Coalition Agreement* does not mention the chair of the Organizational Committee, which is customarily held by the President (Speaker) of the Chamber of Deputies; this is the tenth chair. The distribution of the committee chairs was impacted by the fact that none of the chairs went to the Pirates; this reflected practical executive considerations, as the Pirates only have four mandates, with one deputy serving as a government minister and another deputy as the Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies. SPOLU thus took almost 15% more committee chairs than proportional predictions would have indicated. It is worth noting that TOP 09 proved able to negotiate itself into a strong position within the SPOLU block; the party was granted three committee chairs, 18% more than its proportional claim. ODS occupied essentially a proportional number of chairs (just 1.5% more than its proportional claim), and KDU-ČSL occupied fewer chairs

than its proportional claim (as was also the case with the ministerial positions, though its shortfall in parliamentary committees was only 1.5%).

This brief outline shows that both in ministerial positions and in parliamentary committees, ODS exploited its position as the strongest party in the government coalition. TOP 09 proved highly capable in the negotiations, as reflected in the numerical data and in political terms. KDU-ČSL showed the greatest coalition willingness, taking the lowest number of positions in comparison to its proportional claims. Leaving aside a speculative evaluation of the ministerial positions and committee chairs allocated to KDU-ČSL, which lack a substantial degree of power or prestige (agriculture, environment, labour and social affairs, the Committee for European Affairs, the Committee for Social Policy), a more exact explanation can be seen to lie in the number of mandates obtained by KDU-ČSL, which marked a substantial improvement over the party's usual performance. KDU-ČSL saw a 130% growth in the number of mandates obtained compared with the previous elections; see Table 4. This was the highest percentage growth out of all the members of SPOLU. With 23 deputies, KDU-ČSL equalled its highest ever number of mandates (2002). In the 2002 elections, the party was likewise part of an electoral coalition (with US-DEU), and KDU-ČSL voters used preferential votes in the same manner as STAN voters did 19 years later within the PirSTAN coalition: the party gained 22 mandates out of 31 instead of the 14 mandates that would have ensued from the candidate lists without preferential voting, thus making substantial gains at the expense of their coalition partner US-DEU.

In the case of PirSTAN, the gap between the Pirates' proportional claim and the actual distribution of ministerial positions (both within the entire government coalition and within PirSTAN) was a consequence of political circumstances. The coalition agreement probably took into consideration the number of mandates obtained due to the unusually high level of preferential voting. A second factor may have been the course of the election campaign; according to some analysts, the ANO movement chose a highly confrontational approach, directed mainly against the Pirate Party (see e.g., Aktuálně.cz, 2021; iRozhlas, 2021). This, combined with the Pirates' own not entirely effective campaign, evidently influenced the electoral results.⁵ The final distribution of ministerial positions can thus be explained by the fact that it was influenced by the political commitments of the government parties to the Pirate Party. A further role may have been played by the repeated declarations of unity by both electoral coalitions, SPOLU and PirSTAN, which described themselves as a united democratic opposition to the Prime Minister and ANO leader Andrej Babiš, going so far as to rule out any possibility of post-election cooperation with ANO (see e.g. Surmanová, 2021; Aktuálně.cz, 2021; Echo24.cz, 2021).

4.3. Hypothetical possibilities for the formation of minimal winning government coalitions in the Czech Republic

If we take the American approach to the theory of coalition-forming and apply it to the composition of the Czech Chamber of Deputies following the 2021 elections, we find seven variants of Riker's minimal winning coalitions (Table 6). According to the measured indices, the strongest party is ANO, which has a Shapley-Shubik power index of 46.66% and a Banzhaf index of 75%. ANO is an essential component of five minimal winning coalitions (Table 7). KDU-ČSL is capable of participating in four coalitions. Four parties (ODS, STAN, TOP 09, SPD) can participate in three coalitions. The Pirates are the only parliamentary party that (with just four mandates) lacks the power to turn any winning coalition into a non-winning coalition by withdrawing from it.

There are two winning coalitions (ANO/STAN, ANO/ODS) which could hypothetically form an effective cabinet (Leiserson, 1968; de Swaan, 1973; Švec, 2010); the fewer the number of partners in the coalition, the more viable the cabinet (and the coalition) will be (Leiserson, 1968; de Swaan, 1973; Švec, 2010; Colomer, 2000, p. 8). In the case of the ANO/STAN coalition, this would not be a coalition of political parties, but of two political movements without clearly defined ideological or manifesto profiles, which could theoretically make it easier for them to collaborate; from a purely power-based perspective, such a coalition would be a rational choice.

Table 6:
Possible minimal winning coalitions in the Chamber of Deputies

Minimal winning coalition	Number of coalition MPs	Ability to participate in a coalition
ANO + STAN	105	ANO x 5
ANO + ODS	106	KDU-ČSL x 4
ANO + SPD + TOP 09	106	ODS x 3
ANO + KDU-ČSL + TOP 09	109	SPD x 3
ANO + KDU-ČSL + SPD	115	TOP 09 x 3
ODS + STAN + KDU-ČSL + TOP09	104	
ODS + STAN + KDU-ČSL + SPD	110	

Sources:

Český statistický úřad, n.d.; Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky, n.d.

For the other coalitions, with three or more members, the higher number of parties in the coalition reduces the number of positions available to each, as well as increasing the probability of conflicts and raising negotiating costs (Leiserson, 1968). If we accept the hypothesis that SPD is an anti-systemic party (see

Capoccia, 2002; Sartori, 2005), three possible variants for winning coalitions would be excluded; there are thus only four variants of minimal winning coalitions. Further, if we accept the assumption that the vehemence of the campaign against ANO and its leader Andrej Babiš by both electoral coalitions (SPOLU and PirSTAN) makes it impossible for either coalition to collaborate with ANO, the only minimal winning coalition that can exist in the Chamber of Deputies consists of ODS, STAN, KDU-ČSL and TOP 09.

Table 7:
Government/parliamentary committees: Gamson's law prediction and real distribution

Political parties	Total no. of 200 deputies No. of mandates	Shapley-Shubik power index	Banzhaf power index
ANO	72	46.66	75
ODS	34	16.66	25
STAN	33	16.66	25
KDU-ČSL	23	6.66	12.5
SPD	20	6.66	12.5
TOP 09	14	6.66	12.5
Pirates	4	0	0

Sources:

Český statistický úřad, n.d.; Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky, n.d.

5. Final considerations

Partial conclusions have been presented at the end of each section above. A general conclusion can be summarized as follows: the analysis of electoral coalitions found that SPOLU is a strongly superadditive coalition which succeeded in responding to current political demands and created a higher-quality grouping. SPOLU is the first ever case of this type of electoral coalition in the political system of the Czech Republic. The PirSTAN coalition was merely an additive coalition, its support commensurate with the sum of the support of both members. This represented a repetition of the result achieved by the KDU-ČSL/US-DEU coalition in 2002, which was the Czech Republic's first additive electoral coalition.⁶

Interesting insights can be gained from the preferential voting within the PirSTAN electoral coalition (2021) and the KDU-ČSL/US-DEU electoral coalition (2002), which substantially impacted the distribution of power within each coalition – though when taking into account the top five positions on the regional candidate lists, the percentage drop in the number of mandates gained by the Pirates (-53.47) was greater than that of US-DEU (-24.8). The two coalitions were also similar in terms of their type. KDU-ČSL and STAN are parties with a strong

representation in municipal and regional politics, which can rely on voters' personal familiarity with their candidates, thus enabling them to gain preferential votes. By contrast, US-DEU and the Pirates can be characterized as liberal parties with a primarily urban support base, and the electorate of both parties (though representing two distinct groups) feel a bond with their party that is based more on its manifesto or ideological profile. US-DEU and the Pirates became members of government coalitions, but the position of US-DEU (albeit the weakest government party) was different because it formed part of a minimal winning coalition and was essential to the functioning of the 2002–2006 government. However, the ultimate fate of US-DEU, which eventually ceased to exist, indicates the potential risks of participating in a government coalition if a party has only a small number of mandates. The latter factor limits a party's options because the party receives a set amount of funding from the state budget for each mandate, so a substantial loss of mandates brings with it a substantial financial loss. A further aspect of this issue concerns the wages of deputies' assistants and (particularly) the cost of running deputies' constituency offices, which help to organize and support the parties' activities within the constituency or the wider region.

A further finding of the analysis concerned the consistently excellent performance of KDU-ČSL when competing as part of an electoral condition. Thanks to preferential voting, KDU-ČSL proved to be the most successful member of the SPOLU coalition in 2021 (see Table 1). It obtained 23 mandates, equal to its previous record, which it had achieved in 2002 as part of an electoral coalition with US-DEU. Just for comparison, as an independent party KDU-ČSL had its best result of 20 parliamentary mandates in 1998, in the era of the significant personality of chairman Josef Lux. The party's average number of mandates obtained in the other five parliamentary elections (campaigning as a separate entity) was just 14.⁷

Viewed in terms of Gamson's Law, the distribution of ministerial positions and chairs of parliamentary committees has to be interpreted in the light of political circumstances, i.e., the results of preferential voting, the nature of the campaign, and the declared political goals of the parties. More detailed conclusions were presented at the end of the relevant section above. In brief, it can be stated that the distribution of positions to ODS corresponded most closely with the principle of proportionality, TOP 09 achieved the best result, and KDU-ČSL achieved the worst result compared with its proportional claim. With regard to the real distribution of ministerial positions compared with the coalitions' proportional claims, the PirSTAN coalition achieved a four per cent better distribution than the SPOLU coalition, but it was weaker in the distribution of committee chairs; SPOLU had a proportional claim to 65% of committee chairs, but it actually took 80% of the chairs (chairing eight out of ten committees). STAN as an individual party took a lower than proportional number of ministerial positions, surrendering a large part of its share to its coalition partner the Pirates, who occupied a substantially higher than proportional number of ministerial positions.

The final part of the analysis concerned the possible minimal winning coalitions and the power indices of the political parties. Applied to the composition of the Chamber of Deputies following the 2021 elections, the Banzhaf index showed that seven minimal winning coalitions could have been formed. ANO had the highest index, being an essential component of five minimal winning coalitions. KDU-ČSL was essential for four minimal winning coalitions, and three parties (TOP, ODS, SPD, STAN) for three. The Pirates had a value of zero for both the Shapley-Shubik and Banzhaf indices, and its four mandates make it entirely dispensable for the purposes of forming a minimal winning coalition.

Future research could potentially explore a number of issues connected with the distribution of ministerial positions, particularly with a focus on the distribution of specific ministries. Gamson's Law merely operates with a prediction and a result, but clearly the political and economic importance of individual ministries is a relevant qualitative criterion. Research could focus on which political parties occupy which ministerial positions. Of particular interest would be appointments to the more powerful ministries (finance⁸, interior, industry and trade, defence) or the more prestigious ones (foreign affairs etc.). However, other factors may also play a role besides the size of ministerial budgets; these may include the ministry's purview and prestige, as well as the different manifesto priorities of individual parties, which may have a stronger motivation to occupy some ministries than others.⁹

A further avenue for future research could involve the creation of ministerial positions without portfolio, which expand the cabinet and may influence voting within it. Likewise, it would be interesting to explore the appointment of political deputy ministers and ministerial secretaries; these political appointments do not fall within the purview of legislation governing the civil service. Another area of potential investigation would be whether government parties create new positions in the executive, whether this secondary distribution of offices forms part of coalition agreements, and the rules that apply to such appointments.

6. Conclusion

The primary goal of this study was to arrive at a better description of the Czech case using extensive data, interpreted using an analytical-theoretical framework.

From the point of view of the overlap of the case with the theory, the relevance of the European empirical analytical approach and interpretation of the formation of electoral and government coalitions was clearly confirmed. It is an approach that allows considering the relationships between the participants in coalition negotiations and the overall political context (e.g., Schofield, 1995; Müller & Strøm, 2000; Bergman, Back, & Hellström, 2021).

In the opinion of the author, in the case of the Czech government coalition, it also turned out that the application of the proportionality hypothesis principle is a suitable indicator for the analysis and interpretation of the distribution of governmental and parliamentary functions, when each participant entering a coalition expects that all actors will demand a share on the principle of proportionality, that is, the share they brought to the coalition (Gamson, 1961, p. 376; De Winter, 2005). The advantage of the proportionality hypothesis proved to be its straightforward empiricism and comprehensibility (Fréchette, Kagel, & Morelli, 2005; Svačinová & Chytilék, 2009), which created a suitable initial premise for the application of political circumstances that explained the distribution of seats in the Czech government.

The contribution of the study to empirical knowledge of Czech politics was presented in the previous chapter. A case with a more general meaning pointing to possible causality can be derived from it. It is represented by the result of preferential voting in the electoral coalitions KOALICE (2002), formed by US-DEU and KDU-ČSL, and PirSTAN (2021), formed by Pirates and STAN. The distribution of mandates to the individual parties of both coalitions is very similar (as detailed in the previous chapter). The Pirates and US-DEU suffered significantly in the preferential vote and defended a small number of parliamentary mandates, especially in Prague and the Central Bohemia region. Here, the Pirates won three mandates out of a total of four representatives and the US-DEU five mandates out of eight. It is possible to formulate the thesis that a coalition of political parties with the predominant characteristics of an urban-type liberal party (with a loose link between voters and candidates, e.g., US-DEU, Pirates) with a more conservative-type party (with a voter base in smaller towns/villages and probably a more direct connection between voters and candidates, e.g., KDU-ČSL, STAN), leads to preferential voting that favours parties of the second type.

Finally, other research possibilities can be pointed out. There is an opportunity to test the hypothesis about the stability of the Czech government coalition, which is now half way through its four-year mandate. As part of a general theoretical concept, one can use the often-cited study with the characteristic title 'Early marriage lasts longer: pre-election coalitions and government survival in Europe', which, using the example of Western and Eastern European government coalitions, confirms the hypothesis that successful pre-election coalitions show a significantly lower degree of instability if they jointly form a government coalition (Chiru, 2015, pp. 165–188).

Endnotes:

1. For more details on the differences between the American and European traditions in their approach to coalition-forming, see Laver & Schofield, 1998; Řířhová, 2006.
2. Power indices are calculated using the program Computer Algorithms for Voting Power Analysis, which is available via the University of Warwick website (Warwick website, n.d.). Besides the Shapley-Shubik and Banzhaf indices, the program also offers a wider range of indices (e.g., Penrose and Colman etc.)
3. In 1992, a coalition of ODS and KDS entered the elections to the Czech National Council as well as the elections to the People's Chamber and the Chamber of Nations of the Federal Assembly of the Czecho-Slovak Federative Republic. Due to an absence of data on electoral preferences, this coalition does not form part of the present study, and it is mentioned here solely for the sake of completeness.
4. Party preferences, and especially electoral models for coalition results, should be viewed with the awareness that different polling agencies use different methodologies, though these do not differ substantially. The STEM agency has noted a difficulty with its model, which is based solely on the expected behaviour of a subset of politically engaged citizens (who intend to vote), and which is not able to take into account how other possible factors may impact the electoral results (e.g., last-minute emotions). The CVVM agency's electoral model takes into account respondents' answers to a number of questions concerning electoral participation, choice of party, and degree of certainty (or hesitation, in the case of voters weighing up which party to vote for). KANTAR.CZ worked with two different groups of respondents – one for the model of party preferences, and the other for the model of coalitions. However, none of the respondents stated that they would not vote, and none of them considered it likely that they would change their choice of party or coalition. For more details, see the links to the agencies in the References.
5. For comparison, this table shows the development of electoral preferences for the KDU-ČSL/US-DEU (KOALICE) coalition from 2002. The result shows that it was also an additive coalition.

Political parties	STEM January 2002	CVVM March 2002	CVVM April 2002	Election Result 2002
KDU-ČSL	6.4	9	8.5	KOALICE
Unie svobody	3.7	6	6	
ODA	0.3	no data	no data	
DEU	0.2	no data	no data	
Sum	10.6	15	14.5	14.27
4KOALICE	11.9	17	no data	
Sources: Český statistický úřad, n.d.; CVVM, 2021; STEM, 2021.				

6. The aim of this study was to analyse the election campaigns of the political parties. The characterization of the Pirates' campaign as 'not entirely effective' is based on an analysis conducted by the party itself, extracts from which appeared in the media, as well as on comments by political analysts. These comments and observations are widely known and were frequently reported in the media, so no specific sources are given here.
7. Number of mandates obtained by KDU-ČSL: electoral period 1993–1996: 15; 1996–1998: 18; 1998–2002: 20; 2002–2006: 23; 2006–2010: 13; 2010–2014: 0 (the party failed to reach the five per cent threshold); 2013–2017: 14; 2017–2021: 10; 2021–2025: 23 (PS PČR České republiky, n. d.)
8. The last two governments headed by ODS prime ministers (Mirek Topolánek 2007–2009, Petr Nečas 2010–2013) somewhat unusually appointed representatives of other coalition parties to the position of Finance Minister. Although no direct causal connection exists, both governments were eventually forced to resign. A more usual situation is when the prime minister and the minister of finance are colleagues from the same party. Another exception to this rule was Andrej Babiš (ANO), who was the minister of finance in the government headed by Social Democratic Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka (2014–2017). In the following elections (2017),

the Social Democrats (ČSSD) suffered their worst-ever electoral result, obtaining their lowest-ever number of mandates in the Chamber of Deputies.

9. A clear example of this is the dispute between ČSSD and US-DEU over the Regional Development Ministry, which represented an obstacle to the August 2004 reshuffle of Prime Minister Stanislav Gross's government. Although this ministry lacked prestige, it was potentially of great economic importance, as it was responsible for distributing EU funds via subsidy programmes, so the position went to a ČSSD minister. US-DEU was given the Ministry of Justice – a more prestigious portfolio, but one with less economic importance. See e.g., *Nová vládní sestava* (České noviny, 2004).

References:

- Aktuálně.cz. (2021). Babišův spot útočící na Piráty zafungoval, mobilizuje voliče ANO, zjistil výzkum. *Aktuálně.cz*. Retrieved from <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/babisuv-spot-utoci-ci-na-piraty-zafungoval-mobilizuje-volice/r-9cb37efe24ed1ec98380cc47ab5f122/>
- Axelrod, R. (1970). *Conflict of Interest*. Chicago, IL: Markham.
- Bäck, H., Debus, M., & Dumont, P. (2011). Who gets what in coalition governments? Predictors of portfolio location in parliamentary democracies. *European Journal of Political Research*, 50(4), 441–478.
- Balík, S. (2006). Typologie exekutivních koalic v Českém prostředí. In L. Cabada a kol., *Koalice a koaliční vztahy* (pp. 53–66). Plzeň: Vydavatelství a nakladatelství Aleš Čeněk.
- Banzhaf, J. F. (1965). *Weighted voting doesn't work: a mathematical analysis*, *Rutgers Law Review*, 19, 317–343.
- Bengtsson, Å., Hansen, K., Harðarson, Ó., Narud, M. H., & Oscarsson, H. (2011). *The Nordic Voter: Myths of Exceptionalism*. London: ECPR Press.
- Bergman, T., Back, H., & Hellström, J. (2021). *Coalition Governance in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bergman, T., Ilonszki, G., & Müller, W. C. (2019). *Coalition Governance in Central Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Budge, I., & Laver, M. J. (1986). Office Seeking and Policy Pursuit in Coalition Theory. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 11(4), 485–506.
- Cabada, L., Charvát, J., & Stulík, O. (2015). *Současná komparativní politologie*. Praha: Metropolitní univerzita Praha.
- Capoccia, G. (2002). Anti-System Parties. A Conceptual Reassessment. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 14(1), 9–35.
- Česká televize. (2021). Trendy Česka. *Česká televize*. Retrieved from <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/tema/206312-trendy-ceska>
- České noviny. (2004). Nová vládní sestava. *České noviny*. Retrieved from <https://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/nova-vladni-sestava/80609>
- Český statistický úřad – Volby.cz. (n.d.). Výsledky voleb a referend. Retrieved from <https://www.volby.cz/>
- Charvátová, L. (2020). Local Coalitions in the Czech Republic: Crucial Cohesion Factor. *Czech Journal of Political Science*, 27(1), 45–64.
- Chiru, M. (2015). Early marriage lasts longer: pre-election coalitions and government survival in Europe. *Government and Opposition*, 50(2), 165–188.
- Colomer, J. (2000). How Political Parties, rather than Member-States, Are Building the European Union. *Economics Working Papers* 489, Department of Economics and Business, Universitat Pompeu Fabra.
- CVVM. (2021). Volební model v červenci 2021. CVVM. Retrieved from <https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/cz/tiskove-zpravy/politicke/volby-a-strany/5419-volebni-model-v-cervenci-2021>
- De Swaan, A. (1973). *Coalition Theories and Cabinet Formations*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- De Winter, L. (2002). Parties and Government Formation, Portfolio Allocation and Policy Definition. In K. R. Luther & F. Müller-Rommel (Eds.), *Political Parties in the New Europe: Political and Analytical Challenges* (pp. 169–170). Oxford, Oxford University Press.

- Deegan, P. J., & Packel, E. W. (1978). A new index of power for simple n-person games. *Internat. J. Game theory*, 7, 113–123.
- Dlouhý, M. (2016). Teorie her, formování koalic a koncentrace politické moci v zastupitelstvu hlavního města Prahy. *Politická ekonomie*, 4(6), 747–761.
- Dlouhý, M., & Fiala, P. (2015). *Teorie ekonomických a politických her*. Praha: Nakladatelství Oeconomica.
- Echo24.cz. (2021). Koalice SPOLU a PirSTAN se dohodly na vládě společně. S nikým jiným jednat nebudou. *Echo24.cz*. Retrieved from <https://echo24.cz/a/S4MxY/koalice-spolu-a-pirstan-se-dohodly-na-spolecne-vlade-s-nikym-jinym-jednat-nebudou>
- Felsenthal, D. S., & Machover, M. (2004). *A Priori Voting Power: What Is It All About?* London: LSE Research Online. Retrieved from <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/423/1/PSRms.pdf>
- Fiala, P. (2003). *Modely a metody rozhodování*. Praha: Vysoká škola ekonomická v Praze.
- Fournier, P., Nadeau, R., Blais, A., Gidengil, E., & Nevitte, N. (2004). Time-of-Voting Decision and Susceptibility to Campaign Effects. *Electoral Studies*, 23(4), 661–81.
- Fréchet, G. R., Kagel, J. H., & Morelli, M. (2005). Gamson's Law versus non-cooperative bargaining theory. *Games and Economic Behavior*, 51(2), 365–390.
- Gamson, W. A. (1961). An experimental test of a theory of coalition formation. *American Sociological Review*, 26(4), 376–377.
- iRozhlas. (2021). Výsledků se dotkla dezinformační kampaň. *iRozhlas*. Retrieved from https://www.irozhlas.cz/zpravy-domov/ivan-bartos-pirati-dezinformace-kampan-starsotove_2110092021_sto
- Just, P. (2012). Praxe demokratického vládnutí a vývoj vládních koalic v ČR. In: J. Bureš, J. Charvát, P. Just & M. Štefek (Eds.), *Česká demokracie po roce 1989: institucionální základy českého politického systému* (379–425). Praha: Grada.
- Kamiński, M. M. (1997). Koalicje wyborcze: lekcja roku 1993. In J. Wasilewski (Eds.), *Zbiorowi aktorzy polskiej polityki* (143–166). Warszawa: Instytut studiów politycznych PAN.
- KANTAR. (n.d.). Trendy a vývoje volebního modelu. KANTAR. Retrieved from <https://cz.kantar.com/trendyceska/>
- Klíma, M. (1998). *Volby a politické strany v moderních demokraciích*. Praha: Radix.
- Laver, M. & Schofield, N. (1998). *Multiparty Government: The Politics of Coalition in Europe*. Michigan: University of Michigan.
- Leiserson, M. 1968. Factions and Coalitions in One-Party Japan: An Interpretation Based on the Theory of Games. *The American Political Science Review*, 62(3), 770–787.
- Lijphart, A. (1984). *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Counties*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Luebbert, G. M. (1984). Theory of Government Formation. *Comparative Political Studies*, 17(2), 248.
- Mershon, C. (1996). The Costs of Coalition: Coalition Theories and Italian Governments. *American Political Science Review*, 90(3), 534–554.
- Michelangelo, V. (2016). Coalition Politics and Inter-Party Conflict Management: A Theoretical Framework. *Politics & Policy*, 44(2), 168–219.
- Mizrahi, S., Yuval, F., & Cohen, N. 2014. Alternative Politics and Attitudes toward the Welfare State: Theory and Empirical Findings from Israel. *Politics & Policy*, 42(6), 850–880.
- Müller, W. C., & Strøm K. (2000). *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Neumann, J., & Morgenstern, O. (1944). *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Pacelli, A. M., & Taylor, A. D. (2008). *Mathematics and Politics Strategy, Voting, Power, and Proof*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Pedersen, H. H. (2012). What do Parties Want? Policy versus Office. *West European Politics*, 35(4), 896–910.
- Pedersen, H. H. (2011). Policy-seeking parties in multiparty systems: Influence or purity? *Party Politics*, 18(3), 297–314.
- Posey, K. H. (1994). The Electoral Consequences of Coalition Behavior. *Southeastern Political Review*, 22(3), 549–557.

- Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky. (n.d.). Společná česko-slovenská digitální parlamentní knihovna – Dokumenty českého a slovenského parlamentu. *Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky*. Retrieved from <https://www.psp.cz/eknih/index.htm>
- Riker, W. H. (1962). *The Theory of Political Coalitions*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Riker, W. H. (1967). Bargaining in a Three-Person Game. *The American Political Science Review*, 61(3), 642–656.
- Říchová, B. (2006). *Přehled moderních politologických teorií*. Praha: Portál.
- Sartori, G. (2005). *Strany a stranické systémy. Schéma pro analýzu*. Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury.
- Schofield, N. (1995). Coalition Politics: A Formal Model and Empirical Anylysis. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 7(3), 245–281.
- Shapley, L. S., & Shubik M. (1954). A Method for Evaluating the Distribution of Power in a Committee System. *American Political Science Review*, 48(3), 787–792.
- STEM. (2021). Data volebních preferencí. *STEM*. Retrieved from <https://www.stem.cz/category/stranicke-preference/>
- Striffin, P. D. (1994). Power and Stability in Politics. In R. Aumann & S. Hart (Eds.), *Handbook of Game Theory with Economic Applications* (pp. 1127–1151). Amsterdam: North-Holland.
- Strøm, K. (1990). *Minority Government and Majority Rule*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Strøm, K., Müller, W. C., & Bergman, T. (2008). *Cabinets and Coalition Bargaining: The Democratic Life Cycle in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Surmanová, K. (2021). Ano poprvé ochutnalo prohru, Piráty zaskočila volební anomálie a ve sněmovně skončila tradiční levice. *Lidovky.cz*. Retrieved from https://www.lidovky.cz/domov/ano-poprve-ochutnalo-prohru-piraty-zaskocila-volebni-anomalie-a-cssd-se-poprve-nedostala-do-snemovny.A211009_200123_ln_domov_tmr
- Svačinová, P. & Chytilík, R. (2009). Distribuce postů ve vládě a PS PČR z hlediska teorie koalic. *Středoevropské politické studie*, 7(1), 1–22.
- Švec, K. (2010). Analýza voleb do krajských zastupitelstev v roce 2008 v kontextu teorie koalic a srovnání s volbami v roce 2000 a 2004. *Acta Politologica*, 2(2), 186–204.
- Turnovec, F. (2007). New Measure of Voting Power. *Czech Economic Review*, 1(1), 4–14.
- Vláda České republiky. (2022). Koaliční smlouva. Vláda České republiky. Retrieved from <https://vlada.gov.cz/cz/media-centrum/dulezite-dokumenty/koalicni-smlouva-193771>
- Wagner, M., & Meyer, T. M. (2014). Which Issues do Parties Emphasise? Salience Strategies and Party Organisation in Multiparty Systems. *West European Politics*, 37(5), 1019–1045.
- Warwick website. (n. d.). Computer Algorithms for Voting Power Analysis. Retrieved from <http://homepages.warwick.ac.uk/~ecaae/index.html>
- Warwick, P. V. (2005). Do Policy Horizons Structure the Formation of Parliamentary Governments? The Evidence from an Expert Survey. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(2), 373–378.

Supplement 1: Abbreviations of political parties and coalitions

ANO 2011	Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (Akce nespokojených občanů)
DEU	Democratic Union (Demokratická unie)
KOALICE	Coalition – electoral coalition (KDU-ČSL, US-DEU)
KDU-ČSL	Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party (Křesťanská a demokratická unie – Československá strana lidová)
KDS	Christian Democratic Party (Křesťanskodemokratická strana)
ODA	Civic Democratic Alliance (Občanská demokratická aliance)
ODS	Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana)
Piráti	The Czech Pirate Party, or Pirates (Česká pirátská strana – Piráti)
PirSTAN	Pirates and Mayors – electoral coalition (Piráti a Starostové)
SPD	Freedom and Direct Democracy (Svoboda a přímá demokracie)
SPOLU	Electoral coalition – ODS, KDU-ČSL, TOP 09
STAN	The Mayors and Independents (Starostové a nezávislí)
TOP 09	Tradition, Responsibility, Prosperity 09 (Tradice, Odpovědnost, Prosperita 09)
US	Freedom Union (Unie svobody)
US-DEU	Freedom Union (Unie svobody) – Democratic Union (Demokratická unie)

Source: The author.

Social Justice and the Old-Age Pension System in the Slovak Republic¹

Richard Geffert, Denisa Rovenska²

Abstract

The aim of the contribution is to examine how eligible voters in the 2020 parliamentary election perceive social justice in relation to the old-age pension system in the Slovak Republic. The sub-objective is to analyse possible significant differences in the perception of social justice among eligible voters in the 2020 parliamentary election in relation to the old-age pension system in terms of their political orientation. 701 respondents (349 women and 352 men) responded to questions asking about their political orientation as eligible voters in the parliamentary election in Slovakia in 2020 and the degree of perceived social justice in relation to the old-age pension system of the Slovak Republic. The results showed the fair distribution of deposits and returns is important for the respondents' perception of social justice in relation to the old-age pension system of the Slovak Republic. The analyses showed that respondents with different political orientations had different opinions on the extent to which the calculation of the old-age pension should depend on the amount of income.

Key words: social justice; old-age pension system; 2020 parliamentary election; the Slovak Republic

DOI: 10.5817/PC2024-1-28

CC BY 4.0 (<https://www.creativecommons.cz/licence-cc/>)

¹ This paper is part of the output of the VEGA project 1/0290/20 Social Justice and Old-Age Pension Savings in the Slovak Republic.

² Associate Professor at the Department of Public Policy and Theory of Public Administration, Pavol Jozef Šafarik University in Košice, Popradská 66, 040 11 Košice, e-mail: richard.geffert@upjs.sk. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4873-8691>. Psychologist in the Counselling and Prevention Centre, Slovenskej Jednoty 29, 041 32 Košice, e-mail:denisa.andrasiova@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3506-5280>.

1. Theoretical background

The issue of systematically exploring and analysing (re)distributive social justice in today's globalized and metamodern world represents an ever-present space for the creation of new perspectives. Social justice in the old-age pension system as a subsystem of social security is a primary or secondary subject of interest for several scientific disciplines. As a polyparadigmatic object of study, it has received attention from researchers in the field of economics such as Staněk and Ivanová (2016), Košta (2017), Páleník et al. (2012), and Baláž (2012a, 2012b); in the field of law, scholars such as Tkáč (2007), Barinková and Trojan (2001), and Matlák (2012); in the fields of politology and sociology, Radičová (2003), Radičová and Potůček (1998), Geffert (2014), and Kusá (2016); and in the field of psychology, Dalajka (2008), Džuka, Dalbert, and Schmitt (2013), and Rovenská (2017).

Social justice is a separate motive with its own characteristics and influences on each person's cognitive, affective, and behavioural framework. Schmitt and Maes (2006) say that the assessment of what is fair depends not only on personal and social agreement, but also on the relationships between the parties involved. People need to be sure that they get what they deserve and that they live in a world where these rules are respected and fully operational.

Summarizing the common elements of diverse professional perspectives, social justice can be understood as a state in which (1) deposits and returns are distributed based on certain distributional rules; (2) procedures, norms, and rules regulate the form and manner of decision-making; and (3) the individual is treated with deference and respect, not only by those in authority, but also by others in society (Jost & Kay, 2010).

The vision of social justice lies in system changes through the search for institutional and organizational alternatives that will result in correcting, maintaining, and improving equity and fairness on social, economic, educational, and interpersonal levels (Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002). It is therefore not surprising that concern for social justice also plays a key role in current discourses on the old-age pension system and its possible reforms.

The old-age pension system, in any country, is one of the areas of social security in which distributive justice can be traced in its level of application. It represents a complex in which the intersection of science and practice is realized; this means research for practice, not just research for research's sake. Social justice, as an underlying category of social policy, but also of politics as such, is a natural pragmatic object of interest for those who create and administer the system – the subjects – but also for those by whom the system is constructed and who depend on it – the objects. In the fields of theory and research, as well as real-world practice, we can find a number of authors who focus their interest on solving problems of social justice in the social security system – in the old-age pension system at the general level, but also at a narrowly and specifically defined level.

Among the important foreign authors, from the Slovak perspective, who have been dealing with the issue comprehensively for a long time, we can mention, for example, the following researchers and their works – Schokkaert and Van Parijs (2003), Arza and Kohli (2008), Hyde and Shand (2017) and Ponthière (2020).

The fact that this is a global topic is evidenced by a number of works from different parts of the world such as Huber and Stephens (2000), Marier and Mayer (2007), Carmelo (2014), Narayana (2019) and Thovoethin and Ewalefoh (2018).

In the territory of the Slovak Republic, prominent researchers and authors who focus their attention on this complex area of the pension system, including in the context of social justice research, include Lesay (2006), Polonský and Plachá (2017), Bačová et al. (2017) and Bačová and Kostovičová (2018).

The theoretical basis of the analysis is the typology of social policy models by Titmuss (1974), who identified three basic models of social policy – redistributive, corporatist, and residual. The models in question were characterized on the basis of the degree of participation of the state, as the basic subject in social policy processes, as well as on the basis of the position of the objects in terms of their responsibility for their socio-economic situation, both *ex ante* and *ex post*. These social policy models can also be used to identify the social policy subsystem – social security – within which the state (together with other public or private actors) (co-)creates the old-age pension system. Social justice is identified through the paradigms of political ideologies – socialism, liberalism, conservatism and their modifications through Heywood's (2003) typology.

In the Slovak Republic, the old-age pension system is based on three separate fundamental pillars. The first (pay-as-you-go) pillar, compulsory pension insurance, is a benefit-defined and continuously funded insurance scheme, administered by the state-owned Social Insurance Agency (Sociálna poisťovňa a.s.). Its legal basis is Act No. 461/2003 Coll. on Social Insurance, as amended. The second (capitalization) pillar, old-age pension savings, is a contribution-defined insurance scheme funded through capitalization, which is managed by private pension fund management companies. The legislative basis for this pillar is Act No. 43/2004 Coll. on Old-age Pension Savings. The last, third (supplementary) pillar, voluntary supplementary pension savings, is a contribution-defined insurance scheme funded through capitalization, which is managed by supplementary pension fund companies and its normative foundation is Act No. 460/2004 Coll. on Supplementary Pension Savings. The first pillar is primarily based on the application of the principle of merit, but also on the principle of social solidarity in the welfare system. Social justice as another of the key principles of social policy in the old-age pension system is manifested in a number of ways and can be identified predominantly in the second pillar (but also in the third), which is strictly merit-based (for more detail see Geffert, 2020).

Based on the intent of the paper and based on a review of the specialist literature and the theoretical starting points presented above, we pose the following research questions:

- How do eligible voters perceive social justice in relation to the old-age pension system in the Slovak Republic?
- To what extent are there significant differences in the perception of social justice among eligible voters of social justice in relation to the old-age pension system in terms of their political orientation?

The aim of this paper is to examine how eligible voters in the 2020 parliamentary election perceive social justice in relation to the old-age pension system in the Slovak Republic. The sub-objective is to analyse possible significant differences in the perception of social justice among eligible voters in the 2020 parliamentary election in relation to the old-age pension system in terms of their political orientation.

2. Research sample

701 respondents were involved in the research. The research population consisted of 349 women (49.80%) and 352 men (50.20%). The age of the respondents ranged from 20 to 55 years, with a mean age of 37.14 years ($SD = 10.19$). In terms of highest educational attainment, primary education was completed by 58 respondents (8.30%), secondary education without leaving certificate was completed by 208 respondents (29.70%), secondary education with leaving certificate was completed by 288 respondents (41.10%), and university education was completed by 147 respondents (21.00%). The analysis of employment status showed that 378 respondents (53.90%) were in permanent employment, 71 respondents (10.10%) were on parental leave or stay-at-home, 59 respondents (8.40%) were unemployed, 49 respondents (7.00%) were receiving old-age or disability pension, 49 respondents (7.00%) were self-employed, 48 respondents (6.80%) were studying, 39 respondents (5.60%) were working part-time or on contract, and eight respondents (1.10%) were the owner or managing director of a business. Potential participants were recruited to the research through the 2muse agency as part of an online panel. The research population was obtained by quota sampling on the basis of gender, age, region, settlement size, and education. All research participants were treated in accordance with the ethical principles of research.

3. Method of work and research methodology

The data collection method used to achieve the objective was the online questionnaire method. The author questionnaire entitled 'Social justice and the old-age pension system of the Slovak Republic' was developed. The questionnaire was based on knowledge about social justice in the area of Western civilization, as well as on information about the old-age pension system of the Slovak Republic since 1993. We looked for inspiration in research on old-age pension systems in selected EU countries. The questionnaire was supplemented with selected items from the European Social Probe of the main questionnaire of the 2018/2019 ESS9 Round 9: Justice and Fairness (European Social Survey, 2018), Eurobarometer 56.1: Social Exclusion and Modernization of Pension Systems 2001 (Eurobarometer, 2001) and the Investment Profile Questionnaire of Baláž (2009). Titmuss' (1974) social policy typology and Heywood's (2003) axiological models of political ideologies were also used in the development of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of a total of 39 items focusing on social justice issues (six items), the old-age pension system (29 items), and the political orientation of the respondents (four items). The questionnaire battery also included ten socio-demographic variables measuring gender, age, place and nature of residence, level of education, marital status, number of children, employment relationship, and extent of professional experience in finance.

Data collection was provided by the 2muse agency as part of an online panel and took place in December 2021.

4. Analytical strategy

The data were processed using SPSS 20. Content analysis is quantitative (focused on counting and measuring) and qualitative (focused on interpreting and understanding).

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize data from the sample using measures such as the mean and standard deviation. The chi-square test for independence and Fisher's exact test were used to discover if there is a relationship between two categorical variables. All statistical methods were implemented according to their conditions.

5. Results

In the first step of the analyses, we focused on the basic description of each key variable. Our interest was focused on the respondents' views on the old-age pension system and the role of the state in it.

We were interested in how respondents think the state itself should fund old-age pensions. The results showed that most of the respondents (52.90%) believed that the state should provide an adequate old-age pension for all, which would be equal for everyone (Table 1). The result suggests that distributional equity is important to the respondents, which emphasizes the equality of deposits and returns that should be ensured by the state.

According to the most preferred answer, 'the state should provide an adequate pension for all, which would be equal for everyone', it can be concluded that the majority of respondents perceive the social justice of distribution through the dominance and responsibility of the state as the basic subject of social policy. This answer represents a preference for a redistributive left-wing model of social policy.

Table 1:

The state can provide pensions in different ways. According to your opinion, how should the state provide pensions? The state should provide ... (sorted in descending order) (N = 701)

Type of answer	N	%
... an adequate pension for all, which would be equal for everyone	371	52.90
... higher pensions for people who earned more and contributed more to the welfare system	268	38.20
... a minimum pension for poor people that would cover only their basic living needs	62	8.80

Source: The authors.

Thus, equitable distribution in relation to the provision of old-age pensions by the state as the basic subject of social policy emerged as significant in respondents' perceptions of social justice. So our next question was naturally directed towards a deeper understanding of this social problem and focused on how much money from the state should go to citizens for their old-age pensions. The largest proportion of respondents (60.50%) said it should be a proportionate share (Table 2). We believe it is possible to identify in that response a need for equitable distribution, the essence of which lies precisely in the fact that individuals judge their relationships with others through an assessment of the ratio of what they put into the relationship to what they get out of it, relative to others. In other words, respondents are of the opinion that what they invested in the state should be returned to them later by the state so that the ratio of deposits to returns is fair. The specific results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2:

How much money from the state should go to citizens for their old-age pensions?
(sorted in descending order) (N = 701)

Type of answer	N	%
Proportionate share	424	60.50
As much as possible	269	38.40
As little as possible	8	1.10

Source: The authors.

The results clearly point to the importance of the distribution of deposits and returns for perceptions of social justice. Justice as a social construct is evaluated through the formal indicators of the given society or state. However, the perception of justice is a psychological construct that rests more on the subjective view of the individual, and therefore the notion that ‘justice is in the eye of the beholder’ applies here. This idea is important for the interpretation of further results, because it is not only necessary to know that respondents consider distributional fairness to be an important factor in the old-age pension system, but it is also indispensable to know what exactly they mean by a fair deposit-return ratio. As we found out, the largest proportion of respondents (57.80%) think that the amount of the old-age pension should partly depend on the amount of income earned when the citizen worked (Table 3). This result thus points to the nature of reciprocity in the citizen-state relationship. If a citizen has worked and actively participated in the economic growth of the state during his or her economically productive period, he/she expects the state to subsequently participate so that he/she can live with dignity in retirement. The citizen needs to feel that he/she is not alone in this relationship. The results for this question, in a sense, replicate the proportion of respondents’ answers from the previous question. Also in this case, the largest number of respondents reflects the direction of a ‘proportionate share’ of money from the state to savers – future old-age pensioners. The question of specifying an ‘adequate’ old-age pension again seems to be crucial. Questions also arise in various subjective cases where the citizen – the future old-age pensioner – has not worked. The specific results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3:

According to your opinion, the amount of a citizen's old-age pension should ...
(sorted in descending order) (N = 701)

Type of answer	N	%
... partly depend on the amount of income earned when he/she worked	405	57.80
... not depend at all on the amount of income earned when he/she worked	154	22.00
... depend entirely on the amount of income earned when he/she worked	142	20.30

Source: The authors.

The mindful reader has certainly noticed the fact that the results in Table 1 and in Table 3 offer different conclusions despite the formally similar answers. We assume this contradiction can exist as a consequence of the wording of the questionnaire items. Table 1 shows how respondents perceive the state should provide old-age pensions. Table 3, in contrast, evaluates more general perceptions of how old-age pensions should be distributed. In other words, if respondents focus only on the role of the state in relation to old-age pension distribution, then to a greater extent they lean towards the idea of the humanistic illusion that everyone deserves equality. However, if the state does not figure as a significant element responsible for old-age pensions, then the majority of respondents rather lean towards the idea of individual appreciation and individual merit in terms of old-age pension distribution. Hence, justice is in the eye of the beholder. These results raise new questions in the context of individual perceptions of social justice and old-age pensions and the old-age pension system and offer new stimuli for the research.

Since the citizen sees the state as an equal partner in the context of providing old-age pensions and related matters, in most cases he or she is aware that he or she also has to contribute a certain share to this relationship (again emphasizing the essence of distributive justice – the assessment of the ratio of contributions to returns). Therefore, when asked how much of the money that respondents currently earn needs to be put aside for the old-age pension, the largest proportion of respondents answer that a reasonable proportion needs to be put aside because how much they put aside today only partly determines how much they will have in old age (Table 4). One reason that most respondents answer the question in this way may be the fact that they perceive the Slovak pension system as unstable and risky, as they believe that they will have only a certain part of the money in their old age that they put aside today. However, even this part of their finances is not secure. Another reason may be the negative perception of the current economic situation in the EU, but also in the whole globalized financial world. The overall socio-political-economic insecurity that people (i.e. citizens, and at the same time future old-age pensioners) experience in their daily lives can also be a problem. Again, each respondent may interpret the phrase ‘a reasonable proportion’ quite differently. The answers to this question may also be influenced by how familiar the respondents are with the old-age pension system, in particular the second capitalization and the third voluntary pillars. It reflects to a large extent social justice in terms of percentage contributions in the second pillar, the amount of voluntary contributions in the third pillar and the subsequent appreciation of the invested funds in the guaranteed or non-guaranteed funds of pension fund management companies operating on the Slovak market. The specific results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4:
Of the money I currently earn, I need to put aside ... (sorted in descending order) (N = 701)

Type of answer	N	%
... a reasonable proportion for my retirement, because how much I put aside today only partly determines how much I will have in my old age	452	64.50
... as little as possible for my retirement, because how much I put aside today does not at all determine how much I will have in my old age	137	19.50
... as much as possible for my retirement, because how much I put aside today determines how much I will have in my old age	112	16.00

Source: The authors.

After examining the basic descriptive parameters of the selected variables, we decided to investigate whether the political orientation of the respondents is related to their opinions about the old-age pension system. Of the total number of respondents identified as eligible voters in the 2020 parliamentary election (N = 701), 225 identified themselves as right-wing oriented eligible voters (32.10%), 146 identified themselves as centre-oriented eligible voters (20.80%), and 69 identified themselves as left-wing oriented eligible voters (9.80%). 261 respondents were 'uncategorized' (37.20%). This category consisted of respondents who (1) did not provide any answer (N = 165), (2) gave the option 'other political party' (N = 27), (3) gave the option 'do not remember' (N = 21), or (4) gave the option 'do not want to mention' (N = 48). The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5:
Descriptive analysis of respondents' political orientation

Category	N	%
Right-wing oriented	225	32.10
Centre-oriented	146	20.80
Left-wing oriented	69	9.80
Uncategorized	261	37.20

Source: The authors.

The chi-square test for independence was used to analyse possible associations between political orientation and selected items measuring respondents' views on the old-age pension system. All items described above in the descriptive analyses section were included in the analyses.

First of all, the aim was to find out whether respondents' political orientation is related to opinions on how the state should provide old-age pensions. Based on the analyses, we found that there is no statistically significant association between political orientation and opinion on how the state should provide old-age pensions ($\chi_{(6)}^2 = 11.23$; $p = 0.081$). Respondents with different political orientations do not

have different views on how the state should provide old-age pensions, and most of them, regardless of their own political orientation, think that the state should provide an adequate pension for all, which would be equal for everyone (Table 6).

Table 6:
Political orientation and opinion on state provision of pensions

The state can provide pensions in different ways. According to your opinion, how should the state provide pensions? The state should provide...	R	C	L	U	Total
... an adequate pension for all, which would be equal for everyone	101	79	40	151	371
... higher pensions for people who earned more and contributed more to the welfare system	101	57	25	85	268
... a minimum pension for poor people that would cover only their basic living needs	23	10	4	25	62
Total	225	146	69	261	701
R – Right-wing oriented, C – Centre-oriented, L – Left-wing oriented, U – Uncategorized					

Source: The authors.

Next, we wanted to know how respondents' political orientation relates to their views on how much money from the state should give to citizens for their old-age pensions. As is evident from Table 7, four cells (33.30%) had expected frequencies of less than five. It is known that to use the chi-square test for independence, the expected frequencies in each cell must be greater than five. Since in this case it was not possible to meet all the conditions for using the chi-square test for independence, an alternative – Fisher's exact test – was used. The analyses showed that there is no statistically significant association between political orientation and views on how much money from the state should go to citizens for their old-age pensions (the value of the Fisher's exact test was 8.05; $p > 0.196$). Respondents with different political orientations do not have different views on how much money from the state should go to citizens for their old-age pensions, as most of them, regardless of their own political orientation, think that a proportionate share of money should go from the state to citizens for their old-age pensions (Table 7).

Table 7:
Political orientation and opinion on the share of state money in the old-age pension

How much money from the state should go to citizens for their old-age pensions?	R	C	L	U	Total
As little as possible	4	0	0	4	8
Proportionate share	143	94	44	143	424
As much as possible	78	78	52	114	269
Total	225	146	69	261	701

R – Right-wing oriented, C – Centre-oriented, L – Left-wing oriented, U – Uncategorized

Source: The authors.

We were also interested in how respondents' political orientation might be related to opinions on the extent to which the amount of old-age pension should depend on the amount of income. The results showed that there was a statistically significant association between political orientation and opinions on the extent to which the amount of old-age pension should depend on the amount of income ($\chi_{(6)}^2 = 20.77$; $p = 0.002$) (Table 8). Phi (0.172; $p = 0.002$) and Cramer's V (0.122; $p = 0.002$) tests indicated that there is a weak relationship between the variables. Respondents with different political orientations have different opinions on the extent to which the amount of the old-age pension should depend on the amount of income. As can be seen in Chart 1, the most significant differences in the respondents' opinions are found in the answer that (1) 'the amount of a citizen's old-age pension should depend entirely on the amount of income earned when he/she worked', where this opinion is shared mainly by right-wing oriented voters (43.70%); and (2) 'the amount of a citizen's old-age pension should not depend at all on the amount of income earned when he/she worked', where this opinion was shared mainly by uncategorized voters (45.50%).

The research also produced a number of interesting findings on the issue of political orientation in relation to opinions on the amount of old-age pensions and the amount of income. However, these findings are not surprising and largely confirm the inclination of citizens – voters to the classic political value orientation on the scale of right, left, centre. As shown in Chart 1, respondents only had a choice of responses that were related to the amount of income they expected to earn if they worked during their economically active life. Based on the results, it can be stated that the largest share of respondents who perceive as socially fair that the old-age pension should depend entirely on the amount of income earned when the citizen worked is located on the right side of the political spectrum, up to 43.70%, compared to left-wing voters, who perceive this alternative as socially fair – only 9.90%. The socially fair alternative, where the amount of the old-age pension should not depend at all on the amount of income earned when the citizen worked, was found to be supported by the so-called politically 'value-neutral', at 45.50%. Their political axiological orientation cannot be identified explicitly

on the basis of their choice of a particular political subject, but it can be deduced precisely from their inclination towards a certain type of distributive social justice. Again, the finding that the smallest proportion of politically axiologically identified voters on the left of the political spectrum – 11.00% – agree with the proposition that the amount of an old-age pension should not depend at all on the amount of income a citizen earned while he/she worked is not surprising, either. The relatively smallest differences between the politically axiologically right-wing, left-wing and uncategorized respondents can be seen in the alternative understanding of social justice, in the sense that the amount of the old-age pension should depend partly on the amount of income earned when the citizen worked (the so-called golden middle way).

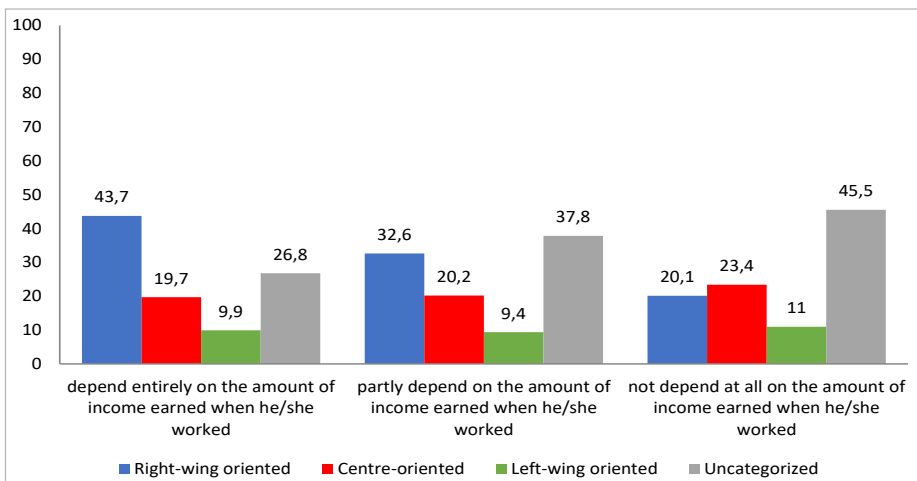
Table 8:
Political orientation and opinions on the amount of the old-age pension in relation to the amount of income

According to your opinion, the amount of a citizen's old-age pension should ...	R	C	L	U	Total
... depend entirely on the amount of income earned when he/she worked	62	28	14	38	142
... partly depend on the amount of income earned when he/she worked	132	82	38	153	405
... not depend at all on the amount of income earned when he/she worked	31	36	17	70	154
Total	225	146	69	261	701

R – Right-wing oriented, C – Centre-oriented, L – Left-wing oriented, U – Uncategorized

Source: The authors.

Chart 1:
Political orientation and opinions on the amount of the old-age pension in relation to the amount of income



Source: The authors.

Finally, we focused on finding out how respondents' political orientation is related to the opinion on how much money they should put aside for their retirement. We found out that there was no statistically significant association between political orientation and opinion on how much money a respondent should put aside for retirement ($\chi_{(6)}^2 = 7.24$; $p = 0.299$). Respondents with different political orientations do not have different views on how much money they should put aside for their old-age pension, with most of them, regardless of political orientation, believing that they should put aside a reasonable proportion because how much they put aside now only partly determines how much they will have in their old age (Table 9).

Table 9:
Political orientation and opinions on the share of money put aside for old-age pensions

Of the money I currently earn, I need to put aside ...	R	C	L	U	Total
... as much as possible for my retirement, because how much I put aside today determines how much I will have in my old age	32	29	8	43	112
... a reasonable proportion for my retirement, because how much I put aside today only partly determines how much I will have in my old age	145	96	50	161	452
... as little as possible for my retirement, because how much I put aside today does not at all determine how much I will have in my old age	48	21	11	57	137
Total	225	146	69	261	701

R – Right-wing oriented, C – Centre-oriented, L – Left-wing oriented, U – Uncategorized

Source: The authors.

6. Discussion

The old-age pension system and the role of the state in it is the subject of diverse discussions among experts and ordinary citizens alike. There are, therefore, a number of views on what an efficient and, in particular, fair old-age pension system should look like.

The aim of the present paper was to find out what views the selected respondents, as eligible voters in the 2020 parliamentary election, have in relation to the old-age pension system in the Slovak Republic through the perception of social justice.

Of all eligible voters, 65.80% took part in the parliamentary election in the Slovak Republic in 2020. As many as 34.20% of voters did not exercise their civic right and political will (Štatistický úrad Slovenskej republiky, 2020). The big question remains what values are represented by this large part of the population, which in the last election and in this dimension did not express itself clearly and

decisively in terms of opinions and values. The reason may be that these citizens did not identify politically, personally, ideologically or in terms of values with any of the political entities running for office.¹ The results of our research in a sense replicated the results of the parliamentary election in the Slovak Republic in 2020 and also confirmed the existence of a considerably large number of citizens who are uncategorized in terms of participation in the election – up to 261 of our respondents (37.20%). The remaining 62.80% of respondents participated in the parliamentary election in the Slovak Republic in 2020 with the following political orientation – 32.10% right-wing oriented, 20.80% centre-oriented, 9.80% left-wing oriented.

There may be a number of reasons why many people did not participate in the last parliamentary election or did not answer the survey the question about who they voted for. However, finding the answers to such questions was not the aim of the research. Therefore, we believe that there is room for further research that could focus on this issue. As theory and practice show, there is still a significant proportion of citizens – eligible voters who do not participate in elections, and therefore it should be the intention not only of researchers, but also of practitioners to find out what factors are behind the reluctance or disinterest of citizens – eligible voters to engage in public affairs. Findings from such structured research could be an effective tool for designing behavioural interventions based on an understanding of human behaviour and a benefit to policy makers.

The most significant findings of the research showed that, overall, respondents, as eligible voters, primarily shared the view that (1) the state should provide an adequate pension for all, which would be equal for everyone; (2) the state should direct to citizens a proportionate share of the money for their old-age pensions; (3) the amount of a citizen's old-age pension should depend in part on the amount of income earned when he/she worked; and (4) a reasonable proportion of money should be put aside for old-age pensions because how much people put aside now affects only in part how much they will have in old age.

In our view, these responses thus represent perceptions of social justice within a redistributive leftist model of social policy. Referring to Titmuss (1974), the civic redistributive model, as one of the three basic models of social policy used in OECD member states, is based on the dominance of the state as the basic subject and on extensive redistribution. This approach is highly demanding on public finances, as it does not make the across-the-board allocation of social benefits (financial or material) conditional on explicit means-testing of the objects. It is largely based on the across-the-board (re)redistribution by the state of that which has already been initially distributed by the market, thus transferring a large degree of responsibility from the citizen to the state and its subsystems. Here the state plays the role of a fair redistributor against an unfair distributor – the market. Despite the various modifications of this theoretical model in practice, where it is always dependent on the political system of a particular state

and the current government coalition at a particular time, it can be said that it is always about identifying social justice in the welfare system, which is based on a significantly higher degree of responsibility of the state compared to the responsibility of the individual, both for people's social situations and for the amount of their old-age pensions.

In the Slovak Republic, the essence of (re)distribution is the first pillar of the old-age pension system – the state-owned Social Insurance Institution (Sociálna poisťovňa a.s.), which, to a large extent, essentially decides on the amount of a citizen's old-age pension (naturally, on the basis of the legislation in force). In fact, this pillar, which in the socialist system was the only pillar of the old-age pension, may be the reason why people historically still perceive the state as the one and only entity that should be responsible for the amount of a citizen's future old-age pension. This may also explain the fact that the second capitalization pillar² within the three-pillar old-age pension system of the Slovak Republic is not functional in such a way that it is potentially economically effective for future pensioners. The second and third pillars of old-age pension saving/investment are based predominantly on the personal responsibility and economic performance of the individual – the citizen saver or investor.

However, the paper did not seek to focus exclusively on the perceptions of eligible voters on social justice in relation to the old-age pension system in general. On the basis of our own experience, as well as knowledge gained from other theoretical or empirical studies, we were interested in whether and to what extent there are possible significant differences in views on the subject from the point of view of political orientation.

Based on the analyses, we found out that there are no significant differences among eligible voters in terms of their political orientation in three of the four opinions about the old-age pension system. In other words, eligible voters with different political orientations do not hold different views on selected issues regarding the old-age pension system. Although respondents have different political orientations as eligible voters, their values and ideologies may be the same (regardless of political orientation). In this respect, it is important to recognize that the values and ideologies of eligible voters may, in practical terms, differ from their political orientation. In our research, we only surveyed political orientations, and did not focus on the specific values and ideologies of the selected respondents, and this may be the reason why the analyses did not reveal significant differences in views on the old-age pension system in terms of the political orientation of the selected respondents – eligible voters. As Bain (in Steele & Breznau, 2019) notes, conceptually the concepts of 'values' and 'ideology' are distinct from the concept of 'political orientation', but empirically they are often measured by the same items in the same research. As noted above, our results indicated a preference for a redistributive leftist model of social policy, and such a model assumes that the individuals who prefer it hold values of fairness and egalitarianism (Steele

& Breznau, 2019). Future research should therefore be oriented towards this conceptual level, where values and ideologies are clearly distinguished from political orientation. A research study constructed in this way could contribute to a deeper understanding of citizens not only from the perspective of their behaviour as eligible voters, but also from the perspective of their behaviour as future old-age pensioners.

Thus, significant differences in terms of political orientation were confirmed only in the respondents' opinions on the extent to which the amount of the old-age pension should depend on the amount of income. As for the respondents – voters for centre-right political entities – it is not surprising to find a relatively high number of them inclined towards a conservative perception of socially fair old-age pensions based on a high level of individual responsibility. The right-wing conservative-liberal voter in the Slovak Republic is, in general, oriented towards a preference for individual responsibility in relation to state redistribution, not only in matters of old-age pensions, but in fact in regard to most socio-economic phenomena. More surprising is the finding that left-wing voters identify themselves only to a small extent with the claim that the amount of a citizen's old-age pension should not depend at all on the amount of income earned when he/she worked. A possible explanation for this lies in the statement preferred by the majority of the so-called 'uncategorized respondents'. It can be stated that the largest part of the 'uncategorized respondents', up to 45.50%, think that the level of income during one's economically active life should not be at all decisive in determining the amount of the old-age pension. Such a perception of redistribution is characteristic of those on the centre-left to left-wing side of the political spectrum, where the responsibility for the social situation of objects is transferred to the state as the basic subject of social policy, and hence of social security in old age. Based on a comprehensive assessment of the answers to the question, it can be said that the overwhelming majority of respondents in this respect are situated in the left side of the political spectrum, and it is assumed that if they were to participate in an election, they would prefer to choose a political entity with a left-wing agenda in terms of its understanding of social justice and the dominant responsibility of the state for the future amount of old-age pensions. This assumption is supported by other research studies that consistently argue that people with more left-wing oriented political ideologies lean towards a redistributive model of social policy (see, for example, Laméris, Garretsen, & Jong-A-Pin, 2020; Schwander & Vlandas, 2020).

In medias res (to the heart of the matter) – it has been confirmed that the political entities on the Slovak political scene which have a centre-left to left axiological colouring and emphasize the responsibility of the state in fixing the amount of the old-age pension, appeal to voters who, in terms of their understanding of social justice, identify themselves in the centre-left to left part of the political spectrum. In contrast, centre-right to right-wing voters prefer to choose

political entities that build their understanding of social justice in the area of old-age pensions on the self-responsibility of the objects of social policy – future old-age pensioners (or their descendants).

It is still relevant that leftist political actors perceive social justice in terms of the dominance of the state, as manifested, for example, in the across-the-board increase in old-age pensions. Right-wing political actors emphasize a lifetime of work and merit, which should also be reflected in the mechanism of valorization of the old-age pension through percentage increases. The values base of politics is still a historically stable indicator that resists various transformations even in today's globalized metamodern world.

The empirical analysis, focused on social justice in the old-age pension system of the Slovak Republic, yielded many interesting findings. These make it possible to form a comprehensive picture of the perception of social justice in the system. Many are interesting but certainly not surprising.

The quantified form of our basic and statistically processed data allows us to work with the data not only at the level of reasoning and hypothetical assumptions, but also in the sense of an initial base supported by empirical facts. The empirical findings show that social justice takes a relative form and depends on its application in practice. It has also been confirmed that there is a relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals and their perceptions of social justice, but not in every case.

The limitations of the research in terms of interpretation of the results and their argumentation are shown primarily in the fact that (1) there may naturally be other alternative explanations of the phenomena studied; (2) the questionnaire used in the research was created by the author questionnaire and is not standardized on the Slovak population, and therefore it may not be accurate; (3) the concepts of 'values', 'ideology' and 'political orientation' were empirically measured through the same items in the questionnaire and were not sufficiently conceptually differentiated; (4) the research was only cross-sectional; and (5) the research population was not representative.

Regardless of the above limitations, we are convinced that the overall contribution of the research, despite the fact that the results cannot be considered universally valid for the entire population of the Slovak Republic, can be beneficial for the further development of science and research in the field.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to examine how eligible voters in the 2020 parliamentary election perceive social justice in relation to the old-age pension system in the Slovak Republic. The sub-objective was to analyse possible significant differences in the perception of social justice among eligible voters in the 2020 parliamentary election in relation to the old-age pension system in terms of their political orientation. At the same time, the aim was to find out how the axiological orientation of Slovak political entities in terms of social justice corresponds with the classic typology of political ideologies and with classic models of social policy.

Given the aim of the research, two research questions were asked, with the intention of the research being to find relevant and substantively valuable answers. Summarizing the collected data, we came to the following conclusions:

1. How do eligible voters perceive social justice in relation to the old-age pension system in the Slovak Republic?
 - Our respondents – eligible voters prefer a redistributive left-wing model of social policy; they perceive social justice in the context of distribution through the dominance and responsibility of the state as the basic subject of social policy; in their opinion, the ratio of deposits to returns should be fair (i.e. what they contribute to the state should be returned to them by the state at a later date);
2. To what extent are there significant differences among eligible voters in the perception of social justice in relation to the old-age pension system in terms of their political orientation?
 - A significant difference was identified only in opinions on the amount of the old-age pension in relation to the amount of income; the opinion that the amount of a citizen's old-age pension should depend entirely on the amount of income earned when he/she worked is held to the greatest extent by respondents who are right-wing oriented voters; the opinion that the amount of a citizen's old-age pension should not depend at all on the amount of income earned when he/she worked is shared mainly by our respondents who are uncategorized voters;
 - Based on Titmuss' (1974) typology of social policy models, we conclude that social justice in the Slovak Republic is defined through a redistributive left-wing model of social policy.

We consider that the aim of the paper, and the research as well, has been fulfilled and we assume the research questions have been properly answered.

The issue of perception of social justice in relation to the old-age pension system is topical because the population of the Slovak Republic, as well as of the entire Old Continent, is dying out. As demographic research confirms, the ratio

of the economically active population to the economically inactive population is evolving significantly to the detriment of current and future beneficiaries of old-age pensions. In Western civilization, although we are living longer and the quality of life is increasing, the birth rate has been significantly lower than the mortality rate in recent decades. The quality of life of the senior population, as well as that of other social groups today and ex ante, is directly dependent on resources and socio-demographic and economic indicators. Although the situation in this area varies widely from country to country, the governments of most countries, as well as those of federations of countries such as the EU, are looking for effective solutions to provide the economically inactive population with adequate, appropriate, sufficient social benefits.

Future research should focus on identifying the views of eligible voters on the principles of meritocracy and social solidarity in the old-age pension system of the Slovak Republic in the context of the principle of social justice analysed here. There are also opportunities for exploring potential gender or generational differences in perceptions of social justice in relation to the old-age pension system. Another interesting and certainly valuable research direction would be to analyse the nature of the relationship between social justice and selected socio-demographic indicators, personality factors, political ideology, belief in a just world and views on the old-age pension system in the Slovak Republic.

Endnotes:

1. The political system of the Slovak Republic, as well as other political systems, especially parliamentary democracies, is characterized by the abandonment of partyocracy and the weakening of political parties of the classic type. The Slovak political scene, both national and municipal, is dominated by political entities that cannot be described as political parties. Nor do they meet the basic characteristics of the phenomenon.
2. On the basis of monitoring the distribution of assets in pension fund management companies (PFMC) as of January 2022, it can be stated that Slovak citizens who have their finances invested in the capitalization pillar have the most funds in bond state-guaranteed funds, totalling EUR 7,267,874,518.26, which represents 61.3% of the total amount of assets. This is followed by investments in index funds amounting to EUR 2,643,527,323.67, which is a 22.5% share in the total assets of the PFMC. In third place are investments in equity funds amounting to 14.9% of assets, with a total value of EUR 1,764,343,373.66. Mixed funds account for the smallest share in PFMC assets, where clients have invested monies amounting to EUR 146,484,885.95, representing only 1.5% of assets (Asociácia dôchodkových správcovkých spoločností, n.d.).

References:

- Arza, C., & Kohli, M. (2008). *Pension Reform in Europe. Politics, Policies and Outcomes*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203945681>
- Asociácia dôchodkových správcovkých spoločností. (n.d.). ADSS. Retrieved from <https://www.adss.sk/>
- Báčová, V., & Kostovičová, L. (2018). Too far away to care about? Predicting psychological preparedness for retirement financial planning among young employed adults. *Ekonomický Časopis*, 66(1), 43–63.
- Báčová, V., Dudeková, K., Kostovičová, L., & Baláž, V. (2017). Financial planning for retirement in young adults: Interaction of professional experience, knowledge, and beliefs. *Studia Psychologica*, 59(2), 84–99. <https://doi.org/10.21909/sp.2017.02.732>
- Baláž, V. (2009). *Riziko a neistota. Úvod do behaviorálnej ekonomie a financií*. Bratislava: VEDA.
- Baláž, V. (2012a). *Finančná Gramotnosť v Kontexte Aktívneho Starnutia – Výsledky Prieskumu*. Bratislava: Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky.
- Baláž, V. (2012b). Pociťovaná a skutočná finančná gramotnosť. *Ekonomický Časopis*, 60(7), 681–697.
- Barinková, M., & Trojan, J. (2001). *Právo Sociálneho Zabezpečenia*. Košice: Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach.
- Carmelo, M. L. (2014). *Reversing pension privatization. The experience of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Hungary*. Geneva: ILO.
- Dalajka, J. (2008). Možné prístupy ke zkoumání spravedlnosti v psychologii. *Československá Psychologie*, 52(5), 468–479.
- Džuka, J., Dalbert, C., & Schmitt, M. (2013). Belief in a just world and its protective function in relation to subjective well-being: study of specific coping reactions. *Československá Psychologie*, 57(1), 64–72.
- Eurobarometer. (2001). *Eurobarometer 56.1: Social Exclusion and Modernization of Pension Systems, September-October 2001 (ICPSR 3475)*. Retrieved from <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/ICPSR/studies/3475/publications>
- European Social Survey. (2018). *ESS9: Justice and Fairness*. Retrieved from https://www.crz.gov.sk/data/att/3797931_dokument1.pdf
- Geffert, R. (2014). *Sociálna Politika a jej Axiologické Orientácie*. Košice: Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach.
- Geffert, R. (2020). Druhý pilier starobného dôchodkového sporenia v Slovenskej republike a jeho výkonnosť v roku 2019. *Anales Scientia Politica*, 9(2), 16–29.
- Goldfarb, K., & Grinberg, J. (2002). Leadership for social justice: Authentic participation in the case of a community center in Caracas, Venezuela. *Journal of School Leadership*, 12, 157–173. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460201200204>
- Heywood, A. (2003). *Political Ideologies. An Introduction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Huber, E., & Stephens, J. (2000). The Political Economy of Pension Reform: Latin America in Comparative Perspective. *Geneva 2000 occasional papers* (7). Retrieved from <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38675/OP%20007b.pdf>
- Hyde, M., & Shand, R. (2017). *Retirement, Pensions and Justice. A Philosophical Analysis*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60066-0>
- Jost, J. T., & Kay, A. C. (2010). Social justice: History, theory, and research. In S. T. Fiske, D. Gilbert, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (pp. 1122–1165). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Košta, J. (2017). *Možnosti Riešenia Rizík vo Financovaní Dôchodkového Systému s Ohľadom na Príjmové Nerovnosti*. Working papers 93. Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied.
- Kusá, Z. (2016). *Predstavy o Spravodlivej Spoločnosti. Prvý Pohľad na Zistenia Fókusových Skupín k Výskumu Európskych Hodnôt EVS 2017 – Slovensko*. Retrieved from http://www.sociologia.sav.sk/pdf/Working_Papers_in_Sociology_022016.pdf
- Laméris, M. D., Garretsen, H., & Jong-A-Pin, R. (2020). Political ideology and the intragenerational prospect of upward mobility. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 62, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2020.101854>
- Lesay, I. (2006). *Pension Reform in Slovakia, the Context of Economic Globalization*. Brussels: ETUI-REHS.

- Marier, P., & Mayer, F., J. (2007). Welfare retrenchment as social justice: Pension reform in Mexico. *Journal of Social Policy*, 36(4), 585–604. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279407001195>
- Matlák, J. (2012). *Právo Sociálneho Zabezpečenia*. Plzeň: Aleš Čeněk.
- Narayana, M., R. (2019). Old Age Pension Scheme in India: Distributional Impacts. *South Asia Research*, 39(2), 143–165. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0262728019842016>
- Páleník, V. et al. (2012). *Strieborná ekonomika – potenciál na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied. Retrieved from http://ekonom.sav.sk/uploads/journals/263_monografia_v_palenik_a_kolektiv.pdf
- Polonský, D., & Plachá, J. (2017). *Sociálne Poistenie v Systéme Sociálneho Zabezpečenia na Slovensku od Roku 1990 po Súčasnosc*. Trnava: Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave.
- Ponthière, G. (2020). Pensions and social justice. From standard retirement to reverse retirement. *Revue de l'OFCE: Observations et Diagnostics Économiques*, 170(6), 193–226.
- Radičová, I. (2003). *S.O.S. Sociálna Ochrana na Slovensku*. Bratislava: SPACE.
- Radičová, I., & Potůček, M. (1998). *Sociální Politika v Čechách a na Slovensku po Roce 1989*. Praha: Karolinum.
- Rovenská, D. (2017). Vývoj konceptu procedurálnej spravodlivosti a jej súčasné postavenie v sociálnej psychológii. *Československá Psychologie*, 61(2), 169–182.
- Schmitt, M., & Maes, J. (2006). Equity and justice. In J. Bryant, & P. Vorderer (Eds.), *Psychology of Entertainment* (pp. 273–289). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Schokkaert, E., & Van Parijs, P. (2003). Debate on social justice and pension reform: Social justice and the reform of Europe's pension systems. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 13(3), 245–263. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09589287030133003>
- Schwander, H., & Vlandas, T. (2020). The Left and universal basic income: The role of ideology in individual support. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 36(3), 237–268. doi:10.1017/ics.2020.25
- Staněk, P., & Ivanová, P. (2016). *Štvrtá Priemyselná Revolúcia a Piaty Civilizačný Zlom*. Bratislava: Elita.
- Štatistický úrad Slovenskej republiky. (2020). *Vol'by 2020 do Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky*. Retrieved from <https://volby.statistics.sk/nrsr/nrsr2020/sk/data01.html>
- Steele, L. G., & Breznau, N. (2019). Attitudes toward redistributive policy: An introduction. *Societies*, 9(3), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc9030050>
- Thovoethin, P., & Ewalefoh, J. (2018). Universal old-age pension: Can Africa overcome it's challenges? *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 6(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v6i1.232>
- Titmuss, R. (1974). *Social Policy, An Introduction*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Tkáč, V. (2007). Európska únia, sociálne právo a prax. *Personálny a Mzdový Poradca Podnikateľa: PMPP*, 2007(4–5), 312–326.

Legal Sources:

- Act No. 461/2003 Coll. on Social Insurance (2003). Retrieved from <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2003/461/>
- Act No. 43/2004 Coll. on Old-age Pension Savings (2004). Retrieved from <https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2004-43>
- Act No. 460/2004 Coll. on Supplementary Pension Savings (2004). Retrieved from <https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2004-650>

Frank Dikötter: China After Mao: The Rise of a Superpower

New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing. 2022, 390 pages.

DOI: 10.5817/PC2024-1-49

CC BY 4.0 (<https://www.creativecommons.cz/licence-cc/>)

If one treats the histories of individual countries as stories, China's is one of the few narratives that is certain to hold the reader in suspense. A country of extraordinary complexity and historical depth, China stimulates the imagination and engages observers in meticulous analysis. Frank Dikötter's book *China After Mao* appears as a beacon of research, offering a fascinating lens through which the intricate layers of modern Chinese history are revealed. The book offers a vital contribution to the broader discourse on the nation's past, present and future, providing insights that resonate far beyond scholarly circles.

Frank Dikötter is a professor at the University of Hong Kong and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is the author of the magisterial *People's Trilogy*, which documents the lives of ordinary people under Mao and has been translated into many languages (Dikötter, 2010, 2013, 2016). This is the fourth and final volume in Dikötter's monu-

mental series of books devoted to the modern history of China, spanning the years 1949–2012. In this book, the author picks up where his previous work left off: he begins with the death of Mao Zedong and concludes with Xi Jinping being appointed for his first term. Drawing from Chinese eyewitness accounts and newly available archival records – including hundreds of documents from provincial archives, newspaper reports and unpublished memoirs – he calls into question much of what we believe we know about China. The book casts doubt on the image of a society moving unwaveringly towards growth. Instead, we get a picture of a China rife with party intrigues, disasters, extreme wealth and everyday poverty.

The book comprises a personal and introductory preface, ten chapters and an epilogue. Dikötter begins with an intriguing autobiographical perspective of China as a young student learning Chinese in the 1980s and later as a visitor to the country. Undoubtedly, he is

a historian who closely observes events and their documentation. His approach is to start from the grass roots. Primary importance is given to local sources and observations of individuals of lesser prominence, followed by official central sources. It is worth mentioning that the book pays special attention to the secret diaries of Mao's personal secretary, Li Rui. These provide an unofficial record of official meetings, conversations with high-ranking party members, official events and discussions with prominent party figures. Dikötter uses these journals to unveil what lies behind the scenes of power.

Dikötter distances himself from the methodologies previously applied in political observations of realities concerning the USSR and China. These methods historically focused on analysing external façades, for example, by seeking meaning in the arrangement of leaders in honour tribunes during official parades. From the very first lines of Dikötter's book, we discern a fusion of his brilliant scholarly approach with the perspective of an adept journalist, elucidating the intricacies of events and their mundane contexts. The reasons for this are not arbitrary but emanate from the nature of the examined reality. In the case of China, and perhaps all non-democratic states, 'every piece of information is unreliable, partial or distorted. We do not know the true size of the economy, as no local government will report accurate numbers; and we do not know the extent of bad loans, as banks conceal these. Every diligent researcher holds the Socratic paradox in mind: I know that I don't know. Howev-

er, where China is concerned, we don't even know what we don't know' (p. ix).

One of the more intriguing features of the book is its unveiling of the dualistic image of China. This becomes apparent when describing how China confronted the consequences of the 2008 financial crisis. Although a stimulus package worth over half a billion dollars was implemented in the aftermath of the crisis, resulting in the creation of hundreds and thousands of construction projects (evidenced by a boom in skyscraper construction), it came at immense social costs. Farmers had their land confiscated, residents were dispossessed from their homes, often new ones that were subsequently demolished. The quality of the newly constructed buildings left much to be desired – their anticipated lifespan was one-third less than in the West. Many buildings succumbed to construction disasters, giving rise to the term 'tofu buildings'. The housing market became subject to speculation and price inflation, leading to a situation where some individuals incurred debts and, often, residences, commercial spaces and entire buildings remained vacant. As Dikötter writes, in the midst of all this, China resembled 'a tanker that looks impressively shipshape from a distance with the captain and his lieutenants standing proudly on the bridge while below deck sailors are desperately pumping water and plugging holes to keep the vessel afloat' (p. xvi).

The book under review reveals the operation of what is effectively a secondary economy, where elements of a free market have emerged imperfectly, locally and far from the gaze of officials in the

capital. People were unwilling to wait for the central government to lift them out of poverty. In many instances, local officials took the initiative, wresting power from the central administration. They maintained an official façade to avoid starving the population to death. This leads Dikötter to the conclusion that, 'if the economy developed, it did so despite the heavy hand of the state and abrupt policy reversals engineered at the top. Real growth took place in the countryside, far away from the glare of official scrutiny' (p. 43).

Delving into the ideological aspects of China's history, Dikötter not only examines the role dogma has played in Chinese politics but also highlights how the West's underestimation of it obstructs a nuanced understanding of the country. He points out that China employs a tactic of simulacrum, mimicking the language of Western nations when it is advantageous (p. 273). For the international audience, statements and speeches were crafted by leaders discussing political reform, 'sending experts into a frenzy of speculation that the true transition towards democracy is about to begin, as carefully hidden forces within the party machine were finally gaining the long-deferred upper hand' (p. 279). These were outward-facing statements that did not reach the domestic audience due to censorship.

Dikötter critically assesses the belief that China has abandoned ideology, or at least attempted to do so. In both official and unofficial statements and ac-

tions of the Communist Party, there is a sincere faith in the superiority of the communist system, as well as a commitment and concern for the development of ideology (p. xii). In political practice, the current leader, often criticised for a supposed retreat from Westernisation, has not reversed the trend but rather leveraged tools established by his predecessors over the past decade (p. 279). These are undoubtedly issues that merit the reader's attention.

Significant in its own right, *China After Mao* is particularly intriguing as it emerges at a time when the world is grappling with daily updates on China's resurgence. Focused on the historical period preceding the onset of Xi Jinping's new era, the book offers a unique vantage point for examining contemporary events through a fresh historical lens. Dikötter's noteworthy accomplishment lies in crafting a book meant not only for experts, but for all those who are interested. With China getting stronger, interest in reading it should grow.

References:

- Dikötter, F. (2010). *Mao's Great Famine. The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe 1958–1962*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Dikötter, F. (2013). *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution 1945–1957*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Dikötter, F. (2016). *Cultural Revolution. A People's History 1962–1976*. London: Bloomsbury.

Łukasz Świącicki
Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Siedlce, Poland

Anton Shekhovtsov: Russian Political Warfare: Essays on Kremlin Propaganda in Europe and the Neighbourhood, 2020–2023 (Volume 271 Of Soviet And Post-Soviet Politics And Society Series)

Stuttgart: ibidem Verlag. 2023, 176 pages.

DOI: 10.5817/PC2024-1-52

CC BY 4.0 (<https://www.creativecommons.cz/licence-cc/>)

Anton Shekhovtsov's newest book on Russia, published in 2023 by ibidem Verlag, is a very insightful and valuable addition to the literature on the topic of Russian hybrid warfare. The author is well-established in his field, having contributed with, for instance, notable contributions on Russian and Ukrainian politics, respectively, as well as on (European and Anglo-Saxon) far-right ideas, political actors, and movements, and, finally, the relationship between the far and radical right in Europe to that in the Russian Federation. This volume takes a somewhat different turn, where- by the author focuses on the Kremlin

propaganda and hybrid warfare during the Covid-19 crisis and the immediate post-pandemic period.

Shekhovtsov's decision to produce a volume that consists of several different essays (read: case studies) dedicated to different countries has resulted in a piece that covers an array of issues within African and European political and societal contexts. To achieve this feat, the author provided a theoretical background that the case studies successfully communicate with, mainly by the author discussing the ways different concepts of power and influence are translated into practice. As the author

himself claims, much of the material provided in this volume was produced during the period of his ‘cooperation with two organisations, the European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE) and Free Russia Foundation (FRF)’ (p. 13). This indicates that the author was active (in civic terms), having cooperated with civil society organizations whose ultimate goal is, among others, democratization of the post-Soviet space, most notably Russia. This is undoubtedly a notable cause, bearing in mind the fact that it has been almost two years now since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has since been executed by an authoritarian regime in Moscow.

The volume consists of seven chapters, is organized logically, and reads very well. Nathalie Loiseau, a Member of the European Parliament who spent two years as the Minister for European Affairs of France, produced a foreword to this volume, indicating that the author managed to connect the academic to the political (executive) spheres: ‘this helped him expand his research agenda, and, in general, the field of research on “authoritarian regimes” political warfare against democracy in Europe and its neighborhood’ (p. 13).

The first chapter introduces a theoretical background and state-of-the-art, providing a stimulating though relatively brief review of the theoretical concepts his volume communicates with: i.e. power and influence. I especially appreciate the author referring to a relatively new concept set, connecting the notions of sharp, mimetic, and dark power to that of malign influence.

Therefore, he is right to claim that the ‘interpretations and definitions of sharp power, mimetic power and dark power suggest that these concepts are related to deception as an instrument employed by authoritarian regimes in their relations with democratic states. Hence, it seems natural that these types of power can be linked to specific forms of what the Soviet forces called maskirovka...’ (p. 21). After having introduced these, the author continues and speaks of malign influence (concerning political warfare), skilfully listing the forms it assumes (pp. 22–23), the goals it satisfies (pp. 27–28), as well as providing a review of ‘areas, tools, and operators’ of the Kremlin’s malign influence (pp. 30–32). The author concludes the chapter by indicating that the volume should be read as a discussion on said points of interest and the theoretical concepts introduced, obviously concerning different political and social contexts in, roughly speaking, the period of the Covid-19 pandemic and the years immediately following it (pp. 34–35).

The chapters that follow are dedicated to the case studies, the first of which is a discussion of Russian election interference operations in Africa, whereby the author successfully argues how damaging the operations of now-deceased Prigozhin were, focusing on Russian actions aimed at ‘concluding and executing business contracts with state and non-state entities, providing private military contractors to secure Prigozhin’s business interests; providing different types of support for African politicians and political forces seen as useful for Prigozhin’s endeavors. AFRIC,

as a network of agents of influence and loyal election “observers”, belongs to the third category, as its activities aim at advancing political interests of particular African politicians and can be qualified as interference in electoral processes’ (p. 71).

The second chapter discusses the case of the Covid-19 assistance that Russia provided to Italy, showing that ‘Russia was not the only beneficiary of its influence operations in Italy: representatives of German and Italian far-right parties, known for their pro-Kremlin foreign policy attitudes, had an opportunity to showcase their allegiance to Russia by reinforcing its self-imposed image of a well-meaning global power, and, therefore, seek support from Moscow in the future’ (p. 89). This chapter successfully argues the limits of Russian assistance not only in terms of its capabilities but chiefly in terms of meeting its goals: the assistance, though it was meant to ‘dazzle the world’ and show Russian might in assisting an EU country that took one of the hardest hits from the coronavirus, also revealed its sinister, anti-democratic, and illiberal side that was to satisfy the Kremlin’s political goals rather than anything else.

In a similar vein with respect to, above all, satisfying Moscow’s aims, Shekhovtsov discusses Russian aid to Serbia, indicating that at the time, ‘Belgrade was not important for Moscow’s geopolitical game – Russia used its resources instead to woo the EU and NATO member, Italy. Yet the absence of Russian aid undermined the Kremlin’s own narrative about the EU being “feeble” and “slow” in Serbia in com-

parison to China. And as Russia finally started sending aircrafts with humanitarian aid to Serbia after the EU had promised dozens of millions of euros to the country, the Kremlin media largely abandoned its anti-EU messaging in the context of the coronavirus-related developments in the Western Balkans’ (p. 106). The author is correct to claim that China benefitted the most from a somewhat partial Russian pandemic withdrawal, as Beijing has since solidified its position and influence in Serbia.

The following three chapters, dedicated to France, Poland, and Germany, are equally interesting. The one on France speaks of ‘the Kremlin’s use of Kadyrov as an instrument of its political warfare against France’ (p. 127), manifesting how and why Moscow was ready to abuse (and did do so) the outspoken nature of one of its politicians who relentlessly attacked French democracy, questioning the position of the Muslim population in France, its rights, and, above all, indicating supposed racism at the state level. The criticism served Moscow’s interests by undermining Macron’s presidency.

The chapter on Poland turns to the case of Russian ties to far-right individuals and organizations, such as Janusz Gabriel Niedźwiecki, who ‘had transformed from an activist of a marginal and non-registered far-right party into a coordinator of pro-Kremlin activities and, ultimately, into an agent of Moscow’s influence – albeit an unimpressive one, as by the time of his arrest in May 2021 none of his projects had effectively taken off. This transformation is not unique: a significant number of far-right politicians, especially

of anti-American persuasion, engage in pro-Kremlin activities' (pp. 170–171). The cases of France and Poland both show how skilful Moscow was in abusing whatever means necessary to achieve its foreign policy goals.

The last chapter, the one on Germany, is produced in a somewhat similar manner as the previous one, treating the issue of Moscow's abuse of extremist circles in this country by zooming in on the career of now-deceased journalist and far-right activist Ochsenreiter, who 'had been active in German far-right circles since the 1990s. In 2011, he became an editor-in-chief of the German far-right magazine *Zuerst!* (*At First!*), which – in the words of its editorial staff (probably Ochsenreiter himself)' – promoted the interests of, above all, the German nation, and tried to guard the European cultural heritage that he felt was increasingly threatened (p. 174).

The book ends with a postscript that brings to the reader's attention that the

material in this volume, bar the last chapter, had been produced before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, providing an update on the case studies discussed.

This volume comes at just about the right time, discusses a highly relevant topic, is written in a language that even those who are not akin to political literature may enjoy, and underlines that we are living at a time when authoritarian states and their regimes will do whatever is in their power to humiliate, undermine, and destroy democracy, which needs to be defended and cherished, for it may be lost. Therefore, the volume should be approached as a piece occupying a spot at an intersection between academic literature in political science and the genre of nonfiction, with its essay-like structure and mode of delivery.

Đorđević Vladimir,

Faculty of Regional Development
and International Studies,
Mendel University, Czechia