Voting under Different Rules / Governing under Different Rules

The Politics of Electoral Reforms in the Czech Republic[1]

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Abstract:

The average cabinet durability in the Czech Republic stretches to about 21 months. The poor stability and efficiency of these governments has been traditionally attributed to the proportion-based electoral system. This was the single biggest source of argumentation in favour of an electoral reform. Three electoral reforms have been written into law since 1993. They are the focus of this article. One of the reform bids was defeated in parliament (2009); the core parts of another were cancelled by the Constitutional Court, although the reform itself had been previously passed (2000); and the third reform was embraced and led to a change of election rules (2002) and is still applicable today. The main objective of this article is to map the development of electoral reform policy in the Czech Republic. The text will present the details of a planned electoral reform, including the motivation they were based upon. We shall also examine if, and to what extent, an election reform is truly a lasting solution for chronically weak Czech governments. Many political scientists and political leaders still say that election reform is necessary. However, the roots of government crises show that disputes between partners frequently are not the reason. More often, internal tensions in the parties alone are to blame. Parties are not internally cohesive and are weaker for that. Therefore, it would be wrong to assume that a change of electoral system can pre-empt any type of government crisis.

The average service life of Czech governments barely amounts to half of the normal four-year term of the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house of Parliament). The average cabinet durability in an independent Czech Republic stretches to about 21 months[2]. The poor stability and efficiency of

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[2] Data for the period from 1993 to 2015: the governments count was 13. One could actually talk about 14 governments, because the Petr Nečas cabinet was abandoned by

these governments has been traditionally attributed to the proportion-based electoral system. This was the single biggest source of argumentation in favour of an electoral reform, which would help adorn the system with a more concentrated form. Reform proponents argue that such a party system would lead to more stable and effective governance. Ideas galore, concerning possible goals of the election reform, have emerged in the past 20 years, germinating in the academic environment and the political parties alike. However, only three electoral reforms have been written into law. They are the focus of this article. One of the reform bids was defeated in parliament (2009), the core parts of another were cancelled by the Constitutional Court, although the reform itself had been previously passed (2000), and the third reform was embraced and led to a change of election rules (2002) and is still applicable today.

My objective here is to map the development of electoral reform policy in the Czech Republic. My intention is neither to test theories nor to expand the general findings of political science. Indeed, my aim is much less ambitious. The following text will present the details of a planned electoral reform, including the motivation they were based upon. We shall also examine if, and to what extent, an election reform is truly a lasting solution for chronically weak Czech governments.

Here we discuss only the election reform aspects that have direct bearing on the proportionality of results and thereby also the character of ensuing cabinets. Although many ideas about transition to the majority system have emerged, serious proposals have never ventured out of the proportional electoral system envisaged by the Czech Constitution. None of them has envisaged a change of constitution. Therefore, we shall primarily examine the four basic variables that inform the character of written proportional systems, namely the *district magnitude*, the *electoral formula*, the *legal threshold*, and the *number of levels of electoral districts*[3].

1. The original electoral system

The original system for elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic was introduced in the former Czechoslovakia for elections to the Czech National Council[4]. Its core parameters were delineated before the first free elections in 1990 and

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one of the coalition parties in 2011 (or more precisely the bigger part of a party that split up) and the government carried on as part of a different coalition.

[3] This article uses parts from author´s previous publications: Lebeda (1998, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2007). All models in this text were computed by author on the basis of Czech Statistical Office election data – available on the web page www.volby.cz.

[4] The Czech National Council (ČNR) was a representative of the Czech Republic while it was part of a federal Czechoslovakia. The Federal Assembly ceased to exist with the demise of the federation, while the ČNR became the lower house of the new independent Czech Republic.

amended before a second election in 1992.[5] On Czechoslovakia's division date (1 January 1993), the Czech National Council became the Chamber of Deputies of an independent Czech Republic. It inherited an electoral system from Czechoslovakia. The first electoral system of the Czech Republic was applied to elections in 1996 and 1998.

The original electoral system was based on the principle of proportional representation. Each voter had one vote to cast in favour of the regional party list of choice. In theory, the voter could change the order of candidates on the party list by casting four preferential votes[6]. Deputies' seats were distributed on two levels of districts – in eight regions and on the national level. The allocation of seats was open solely to the parties whose national election results exceeded a 5% legal threshold. The threshold was raised to 7% for two-party coalitions, 9% for three-party coalitions, and 11% for multi-party coalitions[7].

At the first district level, seats were distributed at the level of eight districts on the basis of the Hagenbach-Bischoff formula. It was not combined with any additional allocation method and usually it was not able to allocate all seats. Districts ensued from an old territorial administration system of seven regions and the Capital City of Prague. Regions were not allocated a set number of seats: these were apportioned according to voter turnout on the basis of the Hare Formula. This arrangement remains unchanged. On average, one region was allocated 25 seats. In the 1996 and 1998 elections, the smallest South Bohemian Region received 14 and the largest, South Moravia, received 41 seats. Unused residual votes were relocated to the second national level. There the parties had their remaining votes from the regions added to the score, and seats were again allocated using the Hagenbach-Bischoff Formula in combination with the largest remainder method. On the second level in the national district, the allocation concerned the number of votes which it was not possible to allocate in the eight regional districts. At the second district level, seats were allocated according to the party lists that parties compiled only after the close of the first level allocation (!), i.e. when district election results were already known.

The way the system was conceived prevented smaller parties from entering the lower house of Parliament due to its 5% threshold. That was the limit of its reductive effect on the party system. On the other hand, it ensured a fairly high degree of proportionality among the parliamentary parties. This was an interaction of three positive variables. Election districts (regions) were quite large and had a minimum of distorting effects on

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[5] Debates about the form of the early 1990s electoral system and its amendments in 1990-1992 are thoroughly discussed by Jan Filip (1999), Jakub Šedo (2009) and Jakub Charvát (2013).

[6] Strictness of the rules minimized the personalization effect.

[7] The coalition thresholds were raised in 1992.

election results. Any slight disproportion in the allocation of seats to regions was safely compensated for at the second level in the national district.

2. First electoral reform

The 1996 elections presaged the first two-year period of unstable, stymied executive power. The minority government of Václav Klaus (Civic Democratic Party, Občanská demokratická strana – ODS) with 99 seats in the lower house[8] survived about a year and half. It was finally toppled by a government crisis in late 1997. This was followed by an extra-constitutional agreement on the modalities of calling an early election by means of a special constitutional act, and forming an interim caretaker government of Prime Minister Josef Tošovský (unaffiliated). Parliament was dissolved by a snap election early in the summer of 1998. However, no majority government ensued from the polls. Although quite promising at first glance, their outcome could not produce a stable majority executive for the next four years. Another by-product of the post-election impasse was an unprecedented "Opposition Agreement" between the two biggest parties – the Social Democrats (Česká strana sociálně demokratická – ČSSD) and the liberal-conservative ODS. The deal installed a Social Democrat minority cabinet of Prime Minister Miloš Zeman (the current Czech President). It enjoyed exceptional stability thanks to the Opposition Agreement. In it, the opposition ODS (led by Václav Klaus – later Czech President) undertook not to express no confidence in the government for the duration of its four-year term. In exchange for that, the ODS obtained many control functions and a promise of changes to the Constitution and the election system[9]. Zeman's cabinet was the most stable government in Czech history, being the only one to last for the four-year duration of one election term. But efficient it was not. A minority of 76 seats in the Chamber of Deputies effectively precluded any self-contained, responsible government policy and survived on handouts from the rightist ODS.

Bound by the Opposition Agreement, the two strongest parliamentary parties in 1998 set up a joint commission to systematically devise and propose the concrete outlines of an election reform. Its aim was chiefly to stabilize the executive arm of power. The ambition was to prevent problems, after elections, with forming a homogenous, operational government with a majority support in the Chamber of Deputies and capable of working in a longer prospect. Looking for a compromise between the ČSSD and ODS was a difficult challenge, dominating nearly a half of the election period. Public

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[8] For an absolute majority the government needs at least 101 seats in the 200-seat house.
[9] The agreements were designed to strengthen the influence of the two main political rivals – ODS and ČSSD. In addition to constitutional amendments which would curb presidential powers and a change of electoral rules designed to boost both big parties, the agreements envisaged changes in the state system of funding political parties and establishing tighter control of public media. The two main parties thus almost completely achieved what Katz and Mair (1995) call a cartel party.

discourse was virtually non-existent during the joint commission's work. It ensued spontaneously the instant the reform reached public ears. The secretive way in which a change of the electoral system was negotiated and enforced enhanced the criticism the reform reaped.

The concrete shape of the electoral reform was strongly inspired by two academic treatises. Before the 1996 parliamentary elections, when the Czech Republic still had a relatively stable and operational government, Czech political scientist Miroslav Novák warned of a hidden snag in the extant electoral system, namely the omission of the fact that a period of executive stability need not last forever. He proposed amendments to the proportional representation principle by means of a substantial downsizing of district magnitude (1996: 297). I expanded these theses in my subsequent papers (Lebeda 1998, 1999). By modelling election results from 1996 and 1998, I attempted to find an electoral system alternative that could help create stable and effective governments. I chose a combination of small, on average five-seat districts with the most disproportional formula - Imperiali divisor. The system thus proposed would almost completely eliminate extremist parties with a limited coalition potential. We thought that the other small parties would really opt for cooperation within a collation that would shield them against the disproportionate effects of election rules if they teamed with any of the big parties (Lebeda 1998).

A closer specification of electoral reform initially appeared in a January 2000 amendment to the Opposition Agreement. The goal was to "…*find an electoral system which would significantly help to form a functional majority government of not more than two political entities*"[10]. In the same year, the reform was created, translated into the legislative process and passed by both chambers of parliament. The authors of the new electoral system made significant departures from the original rules. The proportional representation principle was retained, but changes were made in all four key variables. District magnitude was greatly reduced, district levels were downsized from two to one, and the election formula and legal threshold were changed.

The number of districts increased from eight to 35 and while retaining the original number of members of the lower house at 200[11] the average district magnitude was down from 25 to 5.7. According to the law, the smallest district would never have had fewer than four seats[12] while the largest districts theoretically should not have had more than eight seats. The eight-seat limit could have been theoretically exceeded only if a large district had reported a higher turnout than the rest. Seats would have been allocated to districts in the way applicable earlier and now, meaning after

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[10] Cf. Agreement from 14 Jan 2000.
[11] ODS-ČSSD negotiations also produced proposals to reduce the number of deputies to 162 (twice exceeding the count of senators), which would have reduced the average magnitude while retaining the same count of districts.
[12] Stipulated by election law amendment (§ 48 para 4).

the closure of booths in accordance with the Hare Formula. The balance between the smallest and largest district indicates the magnitude differences. The balance was 1:2.93 in the old system to 1:2 of the system as amended.

Tab. 1 Comparing the district magnitude: Original system vs First reform model

	Number of electoral districts	Average magnitude M_{av}	Effective magnitude $M´$	Smallest magnitude M_{min}	Largest magnitude M_{max}	Smallest magnitude /largest magnitude
Original system	8	25	28.1	14	41	1 : 2.93
First reform model	35	5.7	5.9	4	8	1 : 2

Source: Author. Comparison based on 1998 election results/model

Tab. 2 First reform: Number of districts according to magnitude[13]

	4 seats	5 seats	6 seats	7 seats	8 seats
Number of districts	2	14	14	2	3

Source: Author. Based on 1998 election model

The main criticism of the new electoral system targeted precisely these 35 small districts. Opponents considered small districts as a disproportional "majority element", or even the main reason why it ceased to be a proportional representation system. The impact of district magnitude was enhanced by a disproportional election formula, a modified D'Hondt.

While the Opposition Agreement parties were as one regarding the number of districts and their magnitude, this was not so in case of the electoral formula. Having dropped its unrealistic demand for a plurality system, the ODS insisted on the application of the Imperiali divisor to the proportional system. On the other hand, the ČSSD promoted D'Hondt. While D'Hondt is of slight help to the big partiers, Imperiali puts them at a decisive advantage. Naturally, the effects of both formulas come to the fore especially in small districts. The ODS and ČSSD eventually settled for an "equalizing D'Hondt" (a term coined by reform authors). This artificial compromise ensued from a modification similar to what the political science knows as the modified Sainte-Laguë Method. The initial divisor was raised to

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[13] Numbers tally in all model computations for elections in 1992, 1996 and 1998.

1.42 and the sequence continued with integers 2, 3 and 4, emulating the classic D'Hondt.

Tab. 3 Modified D'Hondt compared with original ODS and ČSSD proposals (models)

2002 Election Models	ČSSD	ODS	KSČM	Coalition			Deviation from modified D'Hondt (seats)[14]
D'Hondt (ČSSD proposal)	77	59	37	27			10
Modified D'Hondt	**84**	**62**	**37**	**17**			
Imperiali (ODS proposal)	88	60	36	16			4
1998 Election Models	ČSSD	ODS	KSČM	KDU-ČSL	US		
D'Hondt (ČSSD proposal)	88	71	22	11	8		30
Modified D'Hondt	**101**	**88**	**4**	**6**	**1**		
Imperiali (ODS proposal)	108	83	4	5	0		7
1996 Election Models	ODS	ČSSD	KSČM	KDU-ČSL	SPR-RSČ[15]	ODA	
D'Hondt (ČSSD proposal)	89	74	19	11	5	2	24
Modified D'Hondt	**102**	**85**	**6**	**6**	**1**	**0**	
Imperiali (ODS proposal)	104	87	3	6	0	0	4

Source: Author. Models were carried out in 35 districts defined by the law.

It would be assumed from Table 3 that the effect of the modified D'Hondt more closely approximates that of the Imperiali, originally demanded by the ODS. But the magnitude and the mutual comparative size of parties also play an important role. The smaller the districts, the closer the modified D'Hondt gets to the Imperiali effects. Conversely, it ever more closely resembles the classic D'Hondt as the districts become larger. If one or two dominant parties run, their seat gain will significantly increase at the expense of small parties and get closer to the effects produced by Imperiali. If, however, three or even four relatively equal parties run, the first two parties' seat gain will

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[14] Computed according to the formula $\frac{1}{2}\sum\left|s_i - s_j\right|$ where s_i is the number of the concrete

party's seats within the model under investigation (either D'Hondt or Imperiali) and s_j is the number of seats of that party in the control model (modified D'Hondt).

[15] Association for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (Sdružení pro republiku – Republikánská strana Československa)

not be increased so much. In such case the overall result will be closer to D'Hondt.

The Hagenbach-Bischoff formula, employed by the original electoral system, was one of the election quotas that enabled transferring undistributed seats and drop votes from the districts to the national level. It enabled the existence of two levels of districts that ushered a higher level of proportionality. But the modified D'Hondt relied on a single district level, which was another step to suppressing the resultant proportionality.

The original electoral system used the 5% legal threshold for political parties, and 7%, 9% and 11% respectively for two, three and multiple-member coalitions. A government proposal, sent to the lower house of Parliament, followed the same principle. However, the Chamber of Deputies passed an amendment[16] which modified the coalition threshold as follows: 10% for two-member, 15% for three-member and 20% for four-member and larger coalitions. This unusual arrangement called "additional threshold" had a parallel in long-serving Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar's Slovakia, etc. The reform's authors argued that it was an instrument against "circumventing" the electoral law, i.e. the forming of purposeful pre-election coalitions. ODS and ČSSD lawmakers were inspired by the Four Party Coalition associating small democratic opposition parties wary of an ODS-ČSSD collusion.

One of the key characteristics of the original version of the new system reflected the parties' unusually strong motivation to establish cooperation ahead of elections, which I personally see as something positive. However, due to the additive threshold for coalitions, whose effects indicated the very opposite, the coalition-conducive effect became marred. But paradoxically, this particular variable remained intact, due to a Constitutional Court ruling, and has survived to date in the Czech electoral law.

Changing the appearance of the party system was the main ambition of the election reform proponents. The two Opposition Agreement parties did not hide the fact that they sought an electoral system which would "*significantly assist the forming of functional majority government of not more than two political entities*"[17]. The authors obviously considered model computations from the previous elections (1996, 1998). However, their general predicative skills were limited: 1) it was a mechanical translation of votes cast in favour of a very proportional electoral system. The strategy of voters anticipating a more disproportionate system would have probably changed. 2) parties would have probably altered their strategies under the impact of the new electoral system. Smaller parties would have attempted to change their pre-election coalitions the way they had by forming the Four Party Coalition. 3) computations could not anticipate possible positive/negative voter response to the given type of pre-election coalition. 4) election reform could inform the electorate's choice between the

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[16] Presented by Jan Vidím (ODS) and agreed by both Opposition Agreement parties.
[17] ODS-ČSSD agreement from 14 January 2000.

proponents and opponents of the reform. 5) model computations reflected the given situation, but it was not very possible to generalize them.

Tab. 4 Comparison of 1996 and 1998 models

1996	ODS	ČSSD	KSČM	KDU-ČSL	SPR-RSČ	ODA
Classic model	102	85	6	6	1	0
Hypothetical pact between KDU-ČSL and ODA	93	78	2	27	0	+KDU
Hypothetical ODS-ODA pact	114	79	2	5	0	+ODS
Two hypothetical alliances	100	99	1	+ČSSD	0	+ODS
1998	ČSSD	ODS	KSČM	KDU-ČSL	US	
Classic model	101	88	4	6	1	
Hypothetical pact between KDU-ČSL and US	93	72	2	33	+KDU	
Hypothetical ODS-US pact	90	102	3	5	+ODS	
Two hypothetical alliances	108	91	1	+ČSSD	+ODS	
2002	ČSSD	ODS	KSČM	Coalition		
Classic model	84	62	37	17		

Source: Author. Comparison based on my own 1996, 1998 and 2002 election models.

Table 4 offers comparison of more variants of election model computations in 1996, 1998 and 2002. In addition to classic models emanating from how the parties actually ran, it offers also a few theoretical types of pre-election alliances.

If the parties had run in their original settings and voters had not changed their behaviour, it could be said that this electoral system could have been strongly biased in favour of the two biggest parties, and the winner could have gained the absolute majority. However, this variant appeared the least probable as it did not count with the electoral rationality of parties and voters.

More probably, a third strong entity would have appeared and united small democratic parties. The party system thus could have gravitated towards an analogy of a two-and-half party system. However, a coalition of smaller parties would have played the role of pivotal party. In a certain power equation, it could have played a decisive role in forming government coalitions. If sustainable, this variant would have required a high degree of consensus inside such a centrist entity and considerable resistance against outside disintegration pressures. But this variant began spontaneously to arise in the form of Four Party Coalition and later Coalition.

In case of more equitable gains for three or even four political entities, a relatively balanced gain of seat would have occurred, which would not have necessarily created larger disproportions.

Neither would it have precluded close pre-election cooperation between small parties and their ideologically and programmatically allied big brothers. Such interaction would have been basically advantageous for both the big and the small parties. Due to its majority-forming effect, a gain scored by a small party could help a big party to thwart an election victory to its benefit. In such a case, the party system could stream towards the forming of two blocs – a firm alliance that would trade power between them. In principle, it might be analogous to the former French party system. The motivation here would not be a second round of elections, but a natural bonus in the form of larger political grouping.

In any case, such a system would bring lesser harm to small local parties than small parties with an evenly spread regional support. Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party (Křesťanská a demokratická unie – Československá strana lidová – KDU-ČSL) was that locally anchored party, among others. Furthermore, small districts can enhance the contact between voters and lawmakers.

It would have taken several election periods for the party system to achieve its final form. Probably it would not have settled for the form it would have achieved after the first elections. Doubtless it would have been also informed by a psychological effect of the electoral system not unlike the one Duverger ascribed to the FPTP and cited also by Miroslav Novák (2005).

On 24 January 2004, the election reform was cancelled by a Constitutional Court ruling. President Václav Havel and a group of opposition senators had proposed that key parts of the electoral reform be scrapped as they were in conflict with Article 18, Paragraph 1 of the Czech Constitution, which stipulates that *"Elections to the Chamber of Deputies shall be held… under the principle of proportional representation"*. The Constitutional Court rejected both the 35 districts and the modified D'Hondt Formula and ruled that *"…the increase of the number of election districts to 35… and the method of calculating shares and allocating seats with the help of a modified D'Hondt Formula represent, in their sum, a concentration of integrating elements that ultimately leads to abandoning a continuum still capable of at least 'turning' the model 'in favour' of proportional representation"* (Constitutional Court Finding 64/2001 Coll.). However, the court did not abrogate the "additive threshold" (amounting to 5, 10, 15, and 20%).

The court ruling sparked a range of political reactions from vocal support to accusing the Constitutional Court of making political decisions. A convincing expert critique of the Constitutional Court ruling was presented e.g. by Michal Kubát (2004). For political scientists, the ruling was problematic especially because such an electoral system can be hardly

described as other than proportional, though it would probably yield less proportional outcomes than its precursor.[18]

3. Second Electoral Reform

Following the Constitutional Court's 2001 ruling, the Czech Republic had no law to enable Chamber of Deputies' elections in 2002. The original election law had ceased to apply and the torso of a reform attempt was not usable. The parliamentary parties were thus "condemned" to agree new election rules that would not contravene the Constitutional Court's ruling but be an acceptable compromise even for the changed majority in the Senate, the upper house of Parliament[19].

Negotiations of the form of electoral law were reduced to debate about the main variables, namely the election districts, electoral formula, and legal threshold. The only thing all parties heartily agreed with was that the new electoral law must be passed at all costs. That eventually happened.

For the second reform to pass, it had to be a broad compromise of almost all parliamentary parties. From 2000 the opposition had maintained a Senate majority, and the Constitution required that an electoral law be passed by a majority in both houses. The second reform produced an election system with all key variables changed. But its effects were more reminiscent of the original 1990 system than the first reform from 2000. In the text below, the second reform will be measured against the original electoral system from 1990, which was applicable until the elections in 1998. The second reform was applied for the first time in the elections in 2002.

The first change, concerning the mechanism of seat allocation, replaced the Hagenbach-Bischoff formula by the D'Hondt - the most widely used proportional representation formulas around the world. It is often thought to slightly prefer strong parties. This could show in comparison with the Hagenbach-Bischoff Quota, which is commonly described as neutral and not prone to favour a certain type of parties due to their size. The table below compares real election gains (D'Hondt) with the Hagenbach-Bischoff Formula (model). It is evident that the latter approach would allocate seats in 14 regions in a slightly more proportional way than D'Hondt. It is safe to consider the change of electoral formula as a measure with a relatively small impact on election results.

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[18] Rein Taagepera (2000) published a very interesting and inspiring note about principle of proportionality in connection with Czech electoral reform.

[19] After Senate elections in autumn 2000, the Opposition Agreement parties lost their majority in the upper house of Parliament. Passing the electoral law required consent from other political parties.

Table 5 Comparing seat allocation proportionality in terms of D'Hondt and Hagenbach-Bischoff in 2002 elections

| | Number of seats | | | | Proportionality* |
	ČSSD	ODS	KSČM	Coalition	
D'Hondt (applicable results)	70	58	41	31	1.48
Hagenbach-Bischoff (model)	70	57	40	33	1.16

* Loosemore-Hanby Index of Proportionality (Loosemore, Hanby, 1979)[20] exclusively calculated for parliamentary parties (discounting parties below threshold). The goal is to shield measurement from the impact of other variables.

Source: Author. Based on 2002 election model

The form of the legal threshold was the second reformed variable. Its value for single parties remained unchanged at 5%. However, values for coalitions were altered. The original electoral system had required 7%, 9% and 11% for two-, three- and multimember coalitions, respectively. The first ODS-ČSSD reform had introduced an additive threshold of 10%, 15% and 20%, respectively, for coalitions of two, three and more parties. Neither the Constitutional Court nor the second reform eliminated the additive threshold.

It played a role in the first elections in 2002. The small-party opposition group, called the Four Party Coalition, started changing before the 2002 polls. Initially, the stronger Freedom Union (Unie svobody – US) absorbed the weaker Democratic Union (Demokratická unie – DEU) to form the US-DEU. Subsequently, the Civic Democratic Alliance (Občanská demokratická alliance – ODA) was expelled from the club, which transmogrified into a Coalition (called just so) of two parties, namely KDU-ČSL and US-DEU. These rational steps pre-empted potential effects of the additive threshold. The value of the threshold limit for single parties (5%) remained unchanged. The proportionality index for all the running parties, if calculated, has the following value: D = 12.53. This is eight times more than the index calculated only for parliamentary parties (Table 5) and betrays the threshold's dominant effect on proportionality. A virtually identical effect could be observed in the original system.[21]

The third reform variable projected into the number of district levels. The original electoral system was two-level. Party lists were submitted for the second district level after the elections, which invited justified criticisms, since voters were not able to see the list before going to the polls. This relic

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[20] Index pattern: $D = \frac{1}{2}\sum |v_i - s_i|$ The resulting index shows the percentual deviation of

the final result from proportionality. v_i is the percentage of votes cast in favour of the party and s_i is the percentage of seats for that party. Returns amount to 0-100 (percentage: max proportionality – max disproportionality).

[21] The proportionality index for the 1998 elections was 11.32 and, adjusted for the legal threshold effects, it was 0.79.

of the pre-WWII electoral system was eliminated by the introduction of a single district level. The deletion of the second level was largely given by the choice of election formula. Unlike the original Hagenbach-Bischoff Quota, D'Hondt always distributes all seats and there is nothing left to transfer to the second level. On the other hand, D'Hondt (or any other divisor formula) does not rule out a second level in the form of compensatory seats, like in Sweden or Denmark. However, such adjustments were not considered due to the time restrictions in adopting the second reform and would not have found majority support anyway.

The last primary variable to change was the district magnitude. Thus far it was safe to say that the electoral reform did not usher in any remarkable change. But redrawing borders and thereby also changing the district magnitude doubtless was a significant change. The eight original election districts were replaced by 14 new regional districts. They exactly mesh with the new regional self-governed system. As such, the change appears to be most logical and sensible.

The new districts became very inconstant in their magnitude. While between 23 and 25 deputies are elected in the four largest regions (Prague, Central Bohemia, South Moravia and Moravia-Silesia), Liberec elects only eight and Karlovy Vary only five deputies. In the remaining eight regions, 10–14 seats are distributed. Thus the new election system acquired three different forms at once. It yields very proportionate results in the four largest regions which share almost half of the 200 seats in the lower house between them. Here the natural threshold has a smaller value than the legal threshold. But in the two smallest regions the districts can produce a disproportional effect so big they can be the source of almost "majority" results. The remaining eight districts produce fairly proportional results, but representation of the small parties can be prevented by a natural threshold that always exceeds the 5% legal threshold.

The Green Party's (Strana zelených – SZ) 2006 election results were the most graphic proof of the impact of the new election districts. For the first time, a party that crossed the legal threshold remained under-represented. The Greens suffered due to a high natural threshold in most districts. Although they crossed the threshold and collected 6% of the vote, they eventually earned seats only in the five largest districts. In the remaining nine districts of a magnitude between five and 13 seats, they did not win any seats. Paradoxically, they did not win seats in the Liberec Region, where they scored the biggest electoral gain (9.6% of the vote).

Such fragmentation of district magnitude is not unusual in Western democracies, where it is often common occurrence. Some districts are allocated a single seat even though the electoral system is largely proportional and most other districts allocate relatively many seats. However, many countries use a multilevel district system that wipes out differences in the proportionality of districts (e.g. Sweden, Denmark, etc.).

Larger disproportions occur where this is not common (e.g. Spain or Switzerland).

In light of the hurried gestation of the second reform, it is safe to say that it harbours no serious structural problems. But the chief goal of the first reform, the elimination of government instability and inefficiency, remained unfulfilled. The first election under the new law (2002) failed to change the party system and the governments were stuck with it. The impact of the electoral system on the party system was minimal.

In the 2002 elections, ČSSD repeated its victory from 1998, albeit under the aegis of Vladimír Špidla, who replaced Miloš Zeman as premier. ČSSD formed a coalition cabinet with KDU-ČSL and US-DEU. This government had a razor-thin majority in the Chamber of Deputies – 101 seats. Its fragility was further enhanced by programme and ideological differences between the leftist Social Democrats, conservative Christian Democrats, and liberal US-DEU. It was permanently threatened by disunities within the ČSSD parliamentary club and a plethora of internal party problems. The four-year election term saw a succession of three cabinets – those of Premiers Špidla, Stanislav Gross and Jiří Paroubek – all in the same coalition setup. Each of the 101 deputies was crucial for the survival of all three coalitions.

If the 101-seat government majority of 2002 came as an extreme phenomenon, the outcome of the 2006 polls came as something of a shock. The elections ended in a draw. The left wing (ČSSD and KSČM[22]) had 100 deputies and the right wing (ODS and KDU-ČSL), together with the Greens[23], also had 100. Few people expected such an impasse, perhaps the worst precondition for forming a government. ODS won the elections with a record gain of 35.4% of the vote and 81 seats. No other party in the history of the independent Czech Republic had ever scored so big. But the second-placed ČSSD's gain was also quite unique at 32.3% of the vote and 74 seats. A second-ranking party would usually collect 24–28%. In an unprecedented way, voters leaned towards two big parties. In the previous three elections, the sum of ODS and ČSSD gains had been around 54–60%. This time, however, their shared score climbed to 67.7%. The two big parties also improved over the preceding polls in another unprecedented first.

If, in the second reform, lawmakers had not deleted the second national district level from the election system, there would not have been a stalemate. The second level would have taken three seats off the ODS result but would have also helped its potential coalition partners. The Greens would have improved from six deputies to 11, and KDU-ČSL would have gained an extra seat. In a more proportional system, the right-of-centre coalition would have won 103 seats and the left only 97. In perfect

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[22] Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy)

[23] The Greens could not be considered a leftist party at that time. They predominantly relied on young voters, who have traditionally gravitated to the right in the post-communist Czech Republic. Moreover, their cooperation with the left was precluded by their total rejection of the Communists.

proportionality, informed only by the 5% threshold, the centre-right coalition would even have had 104 seats. Paradoxically, the very slight privilege brought to strong parties by the second reform further complicated government-forming efforts in 2006.

The first attempt – a minority ODS government – failed to win parliamentary confidence. It was replaced, in January 2003, by a coalition government of ODS, KDU-ČSL and the Greens. It won confidence thanks to the support of two ČSSD deputies. Political corruption was often cited in speculations about their defection. Both governments were led by Prime Minister Topolánek; however, not even his second cabinet survived long, losing a confidence vote in spring 2009. That time around, several government MPs joined the opposition and helped to topple the cabinet. The term was completed by a caretaker government of Jan Fischer. Once again, three governments changed hands in four years.

From the angle of overall impact on the proportionality of election results (2002) and representation of parties, the new system was hardly more efficient than its precursor. Several small shifts slightly increased the stronger parties' edge. However, the very small differences discerned in the efficiency of both systems (2002 example) were strongly influenced by the mutual relative size of the four parliamentary entities that shared the seats. Even the weakest coalition could be still considered a midsize and not a small party. Due to the absence of small parties in the scrutiny (parties with a 5–12% vote gain), the effects of both systems are quite similar. If, however, any of the subjects (e.g. Coalition), split up and seats were allocated to a greater number of parties, some of which were quite small, a greater disproportionality of the new system could be expected. In such case, its effects would depart from those of the old electoral system, which was quite proportional in all circumstances.

Table 6 Comparing effects of old and new electoral systems in 1998 and 2000 elections (seats)

Lower House elections 2002	ČSSD	ODS	KSČM	Coalition		Total shift	Proportionality index
Original election system (model)	70	56	42	32			12.53
New election system (second reform)	70	58	41	31			12.53
Balance	*0*	*+2*	*-1*	*-1*		*+/- 2*	

Lower House elections 1998	ČSSD	ODS	KSČM	KDU-ČSL	US	Total shift	Proportionality index
Original election system (model)	74	63	24	20	19		11.32
New election system (second reform)	79	66	22	16	17		12.45
Balance	*+5*	*+3*	*-2*	*-4*	*-2*	*+/- 8*	

Source: Author. Comparison based on 1998 and 2002 election results/models

The above conclusions are corroborated by Table 6. It shows the distribution of seats in the 2002 and 1998 elections. The actual 2002 result is complemented by a model computation in accordance with the old system. Likewise, actual results from 1998 come complete with a model computation according to the new election system. The 2002 difference of both systems' effect was minimal (+/-2 seats). This is corroborated by exactly the same value of proportionality index. Conversely, the 1998 balance is four times higher (+/-8 seats). The higher divergence is due to a higher degree of disproportionality of the new system when applied to the 1998 election results. At that time, US and KDU-ČSL ran separately and KSČM scored a weaker result. Typologically they emerged as small parties, disadvantaged by the new electoral system, and big parties profited from their losses. This is evidenced also by different proportionality index values. Presumably, the overall effect and proportionality of the new system will be strongly informed by the structure of the party system, i.e. mutual relative size of the parties contesting elections.

4. Third electoral reform

Long-term experience with weak unstable governments in 2007 inspired the ODS/KDU-ČSL/Greens government coalition to look for a new form of election system. The government actually outlined this goal in its coalition agreement. However, the prepared election reform eventually crashed along with the premature demise of this cabinet. The third electoral reform also invited doubts of constitutional character. It was not seen as being in compliance with the "proportional representation principle" required by the Czech Constitution (Article 18, Paragraph 1). The new system was "suspected" of being mixed rather than proportional.

It took more than a year to find the outlines of a third electoral reform. The process started in late 2007 and went on long into 2008. Premier Mirek Topolánek chose Justice Minister Jiří Pospíšil to supervise preparations. The justice ministry set up an "expert group" to draw up proposals. The author of this paper was in that group. Specification largely ensued from the text of the coalition agreement between the ODS, KDU-ČSL and Greens: *"We shall adjust the election system so it guarantees a higher degree of proportionality*

(Hagenbach-Bischoff) and guarantees an 'election premium' to the winner in the framework of seat redistribution at the second district level, the form of which will be subject to discussion."[24] The allusion to the preferred electoral formula was most unfortunate. The Hagenbach-Bischoff Formula was a synonym for the earlier proportional results the small coalition parties wished to return to. However, no concrete formula was mentioned in the specification for the expert team. Two main requirements were articulated: 1) a higher degree of proportionality and in particular ensuring sufficient representation of small parliamentary parties (KDU-ČSL and Greens)[25] and 2) an election premium for the winning party to facilitate forming majority coalition governments.

Members of the expert team worked out six mutually independent proposals concerning possible adjustments of the electoral system. Various sub-variants eventually produced 11 alternative versions, but not even this sum represented all options weighted. The first reduction of the proposed alternatives came about in August 2008[26], when the government selected four variants to be further refined, analysed and translated to clause wording. The working titles of these were "Scottish, Greek and Dutch". But they had little to do with the respective national election systems. The Czech Statistical Office had computed models of the likely outcomes of Chamber of Deputies elections in 2006, 2002, 1998 and 1996[27].

Early in February 2009, the government decided in favour of one of the proposals, which it endorsed and submitted to the Chamber of Deputies[28]. This version of electoral reform was known as the "Greek Variant"[29]. The authors of the version selected by the government were political scientists Ladislav Mrklas and Petr Sokol of the CEVRO Institute, which is quite close to ODS. Only this variant employed the Hagenbach-Bischoff Formula in relation to the coalition agreement. The other two final options approached the government specification with the help of other election engineering instruments.[30]

The winning Greek Variant ensued from the principle of written proportional system employing three levels of districts. At its basic level, the level of election districts consisted of 14 extant regions, dubbed NUTS 3. The

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[24] Coalition Agreement between ODS, KDU-ČSL and Greens
[25] The two parties were under-represented after the 2006 elections - KDU-ČSL slightly and the Greens more prominently. For details see Lebeda 2007.
[26] Czech Government Resolution 1072 of 27 August 2008.
[27] These model computations are also used in this paper.
[28] Czech Government Resolution 165 of 9 Feb 2009.
[29] Blueprints for the government session, *Draft legislation modifying variants of election system changes for elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic* marked the "Greek Variant" as Variant II.
[30] Although not enforced during the preparation of electoral reform variants, this "condition" eventually emerged as one of the arguments in favour of the "Greek Variant" as an argument presented by its authors as a n advantage of the system they proposed (CEVRO 2009).

second level comprised eight NUTS 2 regions, dubbed "Associated Regions". Finally, the third level, NUTS 1, covered the whole Czech Republic.[31]

Like before, the core districts, i.e. 14 self-governed regions (NUTS 3), would accept party lists from political parties. They would also be a stage for real political competition and a receptacle for the ballots cast. Nothing would have changed from the voter's view. However, seats would be allocated to parties at the level of eight NUTS 2 districts. On three counts the NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 are identical and nothing is changed. In the remaining cases, votes cast for parties under NUTS 2 would be a sum from the respective core NUTS 3 districts. In four cases a NUTS 3 comprises two NUTS 3s and in one case a NUTS 2 comprises three NUTS 3s.

Seats would have been allocated only to parties exceeding the 5% national threshold, and coalitions collecting the respective multiple of 5%, depending on the number of coalition parties (max. 20%). Initially, seats were to be allocated in eight districts (NUT 2) by the Hagenbach-Bischoff Formula, which usually cannot allocate all seats and produces residual votes and seats that must be somehow allocated. In this case, all unfilled seats from eight districts were transferred to the third level of the national district (NUTS 1).

But no proportional reallocation of the remaining seats happened in the national district, where they would go to the winning party as a kind of premium or bonus for the winner. Understandably, the seat-allocation mechanism is majority-based. The "winner takes all" principle is applied as a Party block vote to a multi-member district. The number of seats to be allocated in this way was not previously known. It was a type of "floating" bonus the size of which depended on the number of unallocated seats in eight amalgamated districts.

It remains to be seen how seats would be allocated to specific candidates. Here one must distinguish between the seats allocated within the amalgamated districts and the "bonus" seats allocated on the national level. To begin with, parties would have been allocated seats within eight amalgamated districts (NUTS 2), but party lists were submitted one level lower, in 14 election districts (NUTS 3). Where NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 were not identical, in-party seats had to be divided to two (or even three) party lists. The D'Hondt formula would have been used. However, smaller regions could be underrepresented to the benefit of the larger units. The "bonus" seats from the third national level, allocated to the wining party, would be nominally filled within the national party list, to be submitted by the parties ahead of the elections.

The third reform's main controversy was due to that winner bonus. The majority mechanism of the party block vote logically made one ask if this is still a proportional representation or a mixed system. In the latter case, the

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[31] NUTS is an EU-wide system of territorial statistical units (La Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques).

reform would have contravened Article 18, Paragraph 1 of the Czech Constitution, similarly to how the Constitutional Court ruled in the case of the first reform. The question was where the line is between the proportional and mixed system.

A system with both proportional and mixed components is commonly viewed as mixed. The international election encyclopaedia defines the mixed electoral system as "*involving a combination of various election formulas (relatively majority and proportional or absolutely majority and proportional) for elections to a single elected body*" (Rose 2000: 165). Most experts define the mixed system similarly to Massicote and Blais, who wrote the relevant chapter in Rose's encyclopaedia. However, Shugart and Wattenberg somewhat problematically add a "multi-criteria" aspect to the classic view, based on several levels of either nominal or written districts. [32]

The cardinal question in the third electoral reform context is if all systems with two diametrically opposed components, e.g. majority and proportional, necessarily need to be mixed. In some countries, a single chamber of parliament is filled by a combination of both, but nobody argues it is a mixed system. In many such electoral systems, proportional voting clearly prevails, but some seats are filled in the majority way. One such example is Spain, where two seats are majority (North African Ceuta and Mellila enclaves) and the remaining 348 are proportional. At the same time, however, the Spanish Constitution stipulates that "*elections in each district follow the proportional representation system*" (Constitution of the Kingdom of Spain, Article 68, Paragraph 3). I don't think anyone would call the Spanish system mixed. Similarly, the elections to the Swiss National Council follow the majority principle in six single-seat districts, representing the smallest cantons (Appenzell Ausserhoden, Appenzell Innerhoden, Glarus, Nidwalden, Obwalden and Uri). Three percent of seats are filled in a majority way. At the same time, the Swiss Constitution requires election in line with proportional representation (Swiss Constitution, Article 149, Paragraph 2). I have never heard anybody conclude that the Swiss electoral system is mixed.

The Spanish and Swiss examples would seem to suggest that the application of the majority party block vote mechanism within the third Czech election reform would have been acceptable in certain circumstances. The question is what circumstances. Two criteria should be considered.

The first, less important in my view, is the presence of the majority component. In Spain and Switzerland, a majority vote logically ensues from the existence of several single-seat districts. This is because all districts there are based on the country's administrative system. The single-seat districts have not been created by election engineers and they have a natural

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[32] Due to the lack of space it is not possible to take issue with this approach to defining mixed systems. I might point out that proportional systems can assume a nominal character, such as STV, and conversely, majority systems might be written, such as a party block vote. The inclusion of MMP with the mixed systems would betray total lack of understanding for the mechanism.

character, which is not the case of the majority component of the third Czech electoral reform. It purposefully introduced majority seats to a contract designed to reward the winner with a bonus.

The other, more important yardstick is the count; or rather share of the seats to be distributed with the help of the majority component. The Swiss example shows that 3% of the seats allocated in the majority way still give no reason to question the whole election system. Louis Massicotte and André Blais, perhaps the greatest authorities on mixed electoral systems, shifted the border further ahead. They set, as the criterion of the mixed system, an at least 5% share of each component in the total count of seats (Massicotte, Blais 1999: 345). Obviously, however, the 5% threshold is arbitrary, and Massicotte and Blais can hardly find a theoretical or other explanation for that. However, the professional credibility of these specialists throws no small weight in support of their definition of the mixed system.

But other experts might label as mixed even a system which clearly does not meet the 5% requirement formulated by Massicote and Blais. The literature offers examples that leave one at a loss for words. Thus, Shugart and Wattenberg (2003: 10) spoke about a mixed system when referring to the elections to Israel's Knesset at the time the prime minister was elected by direct ballot. Likewise, Reuven Hazan gives a detailed account of Israel's "mixed" system in the same book (Hazan 2003: 351-379), although the directly elected premier's seat was the only majority artefact. The rest of the house was elected proportionally through a mechanism which, by the way, produces one of the most proportional outcomes anywhere in the world.

One has to ask, in the context of the third electoral reform: "How many seats should have been allocated in the majority way?" They were the leftovers from the seat allocation in eight "amalgamated districts" (NUTS 2), allocated by means of the Hagenbach-Bischoff Formula. Two methods are on hand to determine their count: theoretical and empirical.

The first method first: it holds for the Hagenbach-Bischoff formula that the number of seats left unallocated may maximally achieve a value of two fewer than the number of parties to which seats are apportioned. Thus, if there are five parties around, not more than three seats can be left over in a single district. Understandably, zero is the bottom limit. This applies regardless of the district magnitude.[33] In case of eight districts (NUTS 2), this means that not even theoretically can the total majority bonus exceed eight times the upper limit per district. See the first three lines of Table 7.

The second method recalculates previous election results as if the elections were held according to the proposed model. The model computations were supplied by the Czech Statistical Office[34]. These models

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[33] Except for very small districts which however do not figure in the draft electoral reform
[34] See Draft bills modifying variants of electoral system changes

clearly indicate how many seats would have earned a majority bonus in previous elections.

Table 7 Amount of winner's election bonus

	Number of parties above 5% of valid votes				
	3 parties	4 parties	5 parties	6 parties	7 parties
Min	0	0	0	0	0
Max	8	16	24	32	40
Mean value	4	8	12	16	20
Election Model 1996				16	
Election Model 1998			9		
Election Model 2002		8			
Election Model 2006			10		

Source: Author. Own calculations, primary election data source: Czech Statistical Office

Table 7 offers a comprehensive estimate of the possible size of election bonus for the winner. The minimal and maximal values are only theoretical and the probability of the real values approximating them is very small. The number of seats per election bonus will most often move around the mean value, as evidenced by models based on the results of four previous elections to the Chamber of Deputies. The bonus was somewhere between eight (2002) and 16 seats (1996). The winner's election bonus increases with the growing fragmentation of the party system.

Regarding the 5% Massicotte-Blais rule, it applies for the Czech Republic that with a 200-member lower house of Parliament, the number of majority-held seats would have to be below 10, i.e. nine at most. Our calculations show that this condition would be impossible to meet in all cases.

From the vantage point of political science, it would be hard to call the third electoral reform proportional. A significant presence of the majority party block vote mechanism offers the conclusion that it was a mixed system. It cannot be ruled out that the Constitutional Court would have chosen other criteria to call the system constitutionally comfortable. It could have been the proportionality of election results, which was not discussed in this text. It is not a yardstick for the political science to categorize election results.

The question is if this system would strengthen Czech governments. There is no definitive answer to that, but it was the only reform where disproportionality was not a game with a grand total of zero for big and small parties. If big parties grow stronger, their small coalition partners grow weaker. However, this need not alter the final share of wining coalition seats too much. But the winner received its bonus at the expense of all other parties, including the remaining biggies. This could make it easier to form governments, provided that the winning party was a part of the coalition.

However, in a parliamentarism, government may go not to the election winner but to a party capable of commanding a majority in parliament. We had just that in the Czech Republic in 2010, when the wining ČSSD went into opposition. The question is if the winner's bonus makes sense in the parliamentary governance logic. We are talking theory, because the third electoral reform was rejected by the Chamber of Deputies, which did not give confidence to the Topolánek cabinet that had proposed it.

5. Conclusion: Are electoral reforms a solution?

The second electoral reform, basically enforced by a Constitutional Court decision, ushered in an election system that is still applicable in the Czech Republic today. However, debates about election reform are a perennial issue. In 2015, Deputy Prime Minister Andrej Babiš proposed a transition to a plurality system. But elections in 2010 and 2013 had produced important changes in the context of discussions about electoral reforms.

The elections in 2010 changed a part of the Czech party system, and not even from this vantage point can they be assumed to have been a momentary lapse: all parliamentary parties without exception saw their voter support radically fall. Since the previous elections, ODS had lost 830,000 votes and ČSSD more than 570,000. The shared gain of both "hegemons" combined dropped from 68% to 42% of the vote. The two small parliamentary parties – the Greens and KDU-ČSL – fared even worse. For them, the loss of 150,000 and 200,000 votes, respectively, had fatal repercussions and neither qualified for lower house seats. Even the Communists lost 100,000 votes.

Conversely, the percentage of lost votes trebled. Voters seemed to have ceased to mind if their votes fall under because of 5% legal threshold. Nearly one Czech in five (18.9%) voted for the parties that did failed to enter the lower house. The Czech Republic had relapsed to 1990–1992, when such an amount of lost votes was last seen. It came as a surprise to many political analysts, as it was presumed that the psychological effect of the well-known legal threshold would discourage vote investment in parties with an uncertain future.

Most importantly, a quarter of the electorate voted for two new parties that subsequently entered the lower house and ultimately also the government. Between them, TOP 09 and Public Affairs (VV) collected an incredible 1,440,000 votes. Never before had new parties acting in unison gained such massive support, and they beat the winner, ČSSD, by 300,000 votes. The gains of new entities, which stopped at the parliamentary gates, are discounted here.

The 2013 elections confirmed this trend. Both big parties continued to weaken, ČSSD slightly (-1.6%) and ODS more massively (-12%). The new TOP 09 also lost 5.7%. KDU-ČSL staged a comeback to the Chamber of Deputies, from which VV bowed out. Only the Communists beefed up. But two new parties arrived: ANO 2011 of billionaire Andrej Babiš and the rightist-populist

Dawn of Direct Democracy led by Tomio Okamura. ANO actually took second place (18.7%) and entered the government. The lower house reached the peak of its fragmentation: Never before in history had seven parties won Czech parliament seats in an election.

In spite of the higher degree of fragmentation in the past two election terms, the majority governments have paradoxically overcome fragile majorities of just over 100 seats. The Nečas government (2010) started with 118 deputies and Sobotka's with 111. Both instances involved a three-party coalition, a customary occurrence in the past, but the desired stability did not prevail. Following an earlier internal transformation, the Nečas cabinet resigned after a scandal involving the prime minister. As usual, it was succeeded by an interim government. Sobotka's cabinet appears to be fairly stable, but the end of election term is still far away.

Many political scientists and political leaders still say an election reform is necessary. But a closer inspection of the roots of government crises should convince one that disputes between partners frequently are not the reason. More often, internal tensions in the parties alone are to blame. Parties are not internally cohesive and are weaker for that. Most Czech governments have fallen victim to internal party problems. In certain circumstances, this could happen to coalition and one-party governments alike. Close majorities, where every government MP wields an enormous power and can topple the cabinet at his discretion, also have played a role. However, an electoral reform is not a cure for such maladies. Therefore, it would be wrong to assume that a change of electoral system can pre-empt any type of government crisis. The roots of government instability are deeper than meets the eye.

Appendix I. - Key characteristics of Czech electoral systems and reforms

	Number of Districts (at the lower level)	Average Magnitude (at the lower level)	Number of District Levels	Electoral Formula	Legal Threshold (%)	Legal threshold for Coalitions of 2, 3 and more Parties (%)	Elections Applied
Original System	8	25	2	Hagenbach-Bischoff	5	7, 9, 11	1996, 1998
First Reform	35	5.7	1	modified D´Hondt	5	10, 15, 20	none
Second Reform	14	14.3	1	D´Hondt	5	10, 15, 20	2002, 2006, 2010, 2013
Third Reform	8 (14)	25	3	Hagenbach-Bischoff, D´Hondt and Block vote	5	10, 15, 20	none

Source: Author.

Appendix II. - Key characteristics of electoral results 1996 – 2013

	Number of running parties	Effective number of voting parties*	Number of parliamentary parties	Effective number of parliamentary parties*	Turnout (%)	Wasted votes (%)**	Invalid votes (%)	D – Loosemore Hanby Index of Proportionality ***
1996	16	5.33	6	4.15	76.41	11.16	0.61	11.16
1998	14	4.72	5	3.71	74.03	11.32	0.42	11.32
2002	28	4.82	4 (5)	3.67	58	12.53	0.44	12.53
2006	26	3.91	5	3.1	64.47	5.97	0.36	9.99
2010	26	6.75	5	4.51	62.6	18.83	0.63	18.83
2013	23	7.61	7	5.62	59.48	12.58	0.74	12.58

* Laakso-Taagepera Index of Effective number of Parties (Laakso, Taagepera 1979)
** Total votes percentage of parties that did not overcome 5% national legal threshold
*** Loosemore Hanby Index of Proportionality (Loosemore, Hanby 1979)

Source: Author.

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