

**Parties in the Parliament. Why, When
and How do Parties Act in Unity?**
Parliamentary Party Groups in the Chamber
of Deputies in the years 1998–2002

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Strany v Parlamentu. Proč, kdy a jak jednají strany jednotně. Parlamentní kluby v Poslanecké sněmovně v letech 1998–2002

Lukáš Linek, Petra Rakušanová

Abstrakt

Hlavním cílem předkládané práce je zodpovědět otázku, jak se rozhodují čeští poslanci a poslanecké kluby. Hlavní zájem autorů se proto zaměřuje na otázky jednotnosti českých poslaneckých klubů, mechanismy vnitřní kontroly a vyjednávání a zvláště na faktory, které ovlivňují, strukturují a omezují jednání jednotlivých poslanců a poslaneckých klubů. Práce se zaměřuje na třetí volební období Poslanecké sněmovny (1998–2002) a v některých případech využívá možnosti srovnání s předchozími obdobími.

V první kapitole autoři stručně nastiňují rámec, který používají pro konceptualizaci jednání poslaneckých klubů: institucionální pravidla a stranickou hierarchii. Ve druhé kapitole jsou detailně analyzována základní institucionální pravidla a rámce pro jednání poslaneckých klubů v České republice; jedná se zvláště o vztah mezi Poslaneckou sněmovnou a vládou, volební systém, povahu mandátu a pravidla pro ustavení poslaneckých klubů. Ve třetí kapitole jsou poslanecké kluby umístěny do struktury politické strany a jsou zkoumány základní vztahy mezi jednotlivými stranickými úrovněmi – poslanci tvořícími poslanecký klub, stranou ve vládě, stranickým vedením a členskou základnou strany. V kapitole 4 je zkoumáno hlasování poslanců a poslaneckých klubů na schůzích Sněmovny; jsou zkoumány zvláště otázky jednotnosti hlasování.

Klíčová slova

Poslanecké kluby – Poslanecká sněmovna – jednotnost hlasování – hlasovací chování

Parties in the Parliament. Why, when and how do parties act in unity? Parliamentary Party Groups in the Chamber of Deputies in the Years 1998–2002.

Lukáš Linek, Petra Rakušanová

Abstract

The main objective of the work is to answer the question of how Czech MPs and PPGs make decisions. Thus main concerns of the authors are issues of PPG unity, the adopted mechanisms of internal control and negotiation and, primarily, the factors that influence, structure and restrict the behaviour of individual MPs and PPGs. The work focuses on the 3rd electoral term of the Chamber of Deputies (1998–2002); in some cases a comparison with previous terms is provided.

In the first chapter the authors briefly outline the frameworks they use to conceptualise PPGs: the institutional rules and party hierarchy. Throughout the entire text they understand the shape of PPGs or the unity of PPGs to be a dependent variable. Chapters 2 and 3 present and explain the influence of independent variables. In Chapter 2, the basic institutional rules and framework for the behaviour of PPGs in the Czech Republic are examined in detail; the issues under focus include the relationship between the Chamber of Deputies and the cabinet, the electoral system, the nature of the mandate and the rules for establishing PPGs. In Chapter 3 PPGs are placed within the structure of the political party and the relationships between individual party levels – MPs constituting the PPGs: the party in the government, the party in the central office, and the party on the ground analysed. In Chapter 4 examines one of the basic activities of MPs and PPGs: voting in plenary sessions. Thus the unity of PPGs, and MPs' decision-making are explored. In the end, the authors attempt to answer the question of what the main factors influencing the unity of Czech PPGs are.

Key words

Parliamentary party groups – Chamber of Deputies – Czech political parties – party unity – voting behaviour – decision-making process

Parteien im Parlament. Wann, warum und wie Parteien kohärent vorgehen. Fraktionen in der Abgeordnetenversammlung in den Jahren 1998–2002.

Lukáš Linek, Petra Rakušanová

Abstraktum

Das Hauptziel der vorliegenden Arbeit ist die Beantwortung der Frage, wie tschechische Abgeordnete und Fraktionen ihre Entscheidungen treffen. Die Autoren befassten sich daher vor allem mit der Frage der Kohärenz der tschechischen Fraktionen, mit den Mechanismen der internen Kontrollen und Absprachen und insbesondere mit den Faktoren, welche das Verhalten der Abgeordneten und der Fraktionen beeinflussen, strukturieren und einschränken. Schwerpunkt der Arbeit ist die dritte Legislaturperiode der Abgeordnetenversammlung (1998–2002), wobei manchmal der Vergleich mit früheren Legislaturperioden herangezogen wird.

Im ersten Kapitel skizzieren die Autoren den Rahmen der Konzeptualisierung des Verhaltens der Fraktionen: die institutionellen Regeln und die Parteihierarchie. Im zweiten Kapitel werden die institutionellen Grundregeln und der Verhandlungsrahmen der tschechischen Fraktionen eingehend analysiert; dabei handelt es sich insbesondere um die Beziehung zwischen Abgeordnetenversammlung und Regierung, das Wahlsystem, Umfang und Inhalt des Abgeordnetenmandats und um die Regeln für die Aufstellung der Fraktionen. Im dritten Kapitel werden die Fraktionen in die Parteistruktur eingeordnet; untersucht werden auch die Beziehungen zwischen den einzelnen Parteebenen – den Abgeordneten, die zusammen eine Fraktion bilden, den Regierungsparteien, der Parteiführung und der Mitgliederbasis. Im vierten Kapitel wird das Abstimmungsverhalten der Abgeordneten und der Fraktionen insbesondere hinsichtlich der Kohärenz der Abstimmung untersucht.

Schlüsselwörter

Fraktionen – Abgeordnetenversammlung – Kohärenz der Abstimmung – Abstimmungsverhalten

Preface

The influence of political parties on the functioning of parliaments is regarded as fundamental. So fundamental in fact that it has given rise to a hypothesis about the marginalisation of the role of parliament as a sovereign institution in democracies [Norton 1990a]. The importance of political parties for the workings of the Czech Chamber of Deputies between 1992 and 1996 has already been explored [Kopecký, Hubáček, Plecítý 1996]. A fresh perspective on the influence of parties on the functioning of the parliament is offered by the theory of the cartel party, with an emphasis on the stratarchic nature of party organisation [Katz, Mair 1995], as well as the comparative survey of the role of parliamentary party groups (PPGs) in European democracies, which proposes a thesis on the growing autonomy of PPGs from political parties [Heidar, Koole 2000a]. The changing nature of political parties and their PPGs has impelled us to study these processes in the Czech Parliament.

The importance of parties in the parliament is contingent upon ensuring that they act in unity, which is most clearly reflected in voting unity. Voting in parliaments is a frequent topic in the media and among the general public as well as in the parties themselves. The issues of voting and party unity have become even more visible due to the political situation of the current coalition cabinet, which has a majority of one vote. This in fact applies to all cabinets since 1996. Between 1996 and 1997, Klaus's second cabinet had a majority of 100 + 1 independent MP in the two-hundred-member Chamber of Deputies. Between 1998 and 2002 the ČSSD minority cabinet (instituted with the support of the right-wing ODS) mustered 98 votes together with the PPG of KSČM, and therefore the unity of right-wing parties was required in order to prevent the passage of left-wing bills in the Chamber of Deputies; likewise, the unity of left-wing parties, ČSSD and KSČM, could in some cases prevent the implementation of right-wing legislation in the Chamber of Deputies. After the 2002 elections to the Chamber of Deputies, a coalition cabinet of ČSSD, KDU-ČSL and US-DEU was set up, with a majority of 101. Party negotiators were aware of the problems arising from the narrow margin of one vote, and therefore, before signing the coalition agreement, the executive of the future cabinet parties debated the possibility of requiring all coalition MPs to sign the agreement. Had the proposal been approved the cabinet would have secured support for all its important bills; the agreement would not have been legally relevant and would have functioned only as a moral and political plea.

By that time complex questions had already arisen. Is it proper for the executive of ruling parties to bind their MPs to automatically support governmental bills of acts by signing the coalition agreement? How far does the freedom or free will of MPs extend with respect to voting? To what extent are MPs bound by their campaign promises to voters? Do MPs in fact not also represent the electoral programmes of their parties and is the opinion of the party that nominated them not important? Who should decide on how an MP is to vote? These and related questions will be addressed in the text that follows.

The main objective of the work at hand is to answer the question of how Czech MPs and PPGs make decisions. Thus our main concerns are issues of PPG unity, the adopted mechanisms of internal control and negotiation, and, primarily, the factors that influence, structure and restrict the behaviour of individual MPs and PPGs. Our work focuses on the third electoral term of the Chamber of Deputies (1998–2002); in some cases we will provide a comparison with previous terms.

In the first chapter we will briefly outline the frameworks we use to help us conceptualise PPGs: the institutional rules and party hierarchy. Throughout the entire text we under-

stand the shape of PPGs or the unity of PPGs to be a dependent variable, while Chapters 2 and 3 present and explain the influence of independent variables. In Chapter 2 we will examine in detail the basic institutional rules and framework for the behaviour of PPGs in the Czech Republic: the relationship between the Chamber of Deputies and the cabinet, the electoral system, the nature of the mandate, the rules for establishing PPGs etc. In Chapter 3 we will place PPGs within the structure of the political party and will analyse the relationships between individual party levels - MPs constituting the PPGs, the party in the government, the party in the central office, and the party on the ground. In Chapter 4 we will examine one of the basic activities of MPs and PPGs: voting in plenary sessions. Thus the unity of PPGs, and MPs' decision making, which we will place in the semantic field of how we conceptualise voting unity, will not go unexamined. In the end, we will attempt to answer the question of what the main factors influencing the unity of Czech PPGs are.

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1. Introduction: basic theoretical frameworks

In theoretical literature, the open articulation, aggregation and intermediation of interests are recognised as important features of the democratic system *per se* [Brokl et al. 1997]. Our understanding of the process of representing interests is closely related to the emergence of cleavages, division lines, and interests within societies. The parliament is the arena where these often-conflicting interests compete; it is the focus of intermediary interest political processes [Brokl, Mansfeldová, Kroupa 1998] and the centre of a political space in which various principles and values contend with each other. Therefore, theoretical literature stresses the role of the parliament as the place where intermediary institutions (i.e. political parties, and also other entities such as interest groups, lobbyists etc.) meet in order to promote their interests. In this process, political parties are usually recognised as key actors.

The problem of how parties function in parliaments appeared spontaneously at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when Western European scholars started thinking about the role political parties play. The issue became prominent when, thanks to universal suffrage, the masses entered politics, and this led to an increase in the importance of the parliaments. Until that time, political parties were as a rule elite parties, and the focus of power was located in the parliament. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, dramatically different parties started to appear, parties that were based on mass membership and that were created outside parliament – mass parties. The elementary theoretical framework was structured along the dichotomy between the elite party/party of cadres and the mass party. Later, authors such as Moisei Ostrogorski [1964], Robert Michels [1968], Max Weber [1998] and even later Maurice Duverger [1964] introduced this dichotomy into political party theories. Each of the two sides of the dichotomy has a different stance toward parliamentary representation, or more specifically, toward the influence of extra-parliamentary party organisations (EPOs) on the behaviour and voting of MPs and on the unity of parliamentary party groups (PPGs).¹

The model of an elite party presupposes that the conduct of MPs, and especially how they vote, is not bound by the opinions of the party because MPs are supposed to act in the public interest. There are almost no extra-parliamentary party organisations, and those that exist take the form of local political clubs with which MPs establish temporary links when seeking re-election. Thus, party leadership functions in the parliament. On the other hand, the model of a mass party constructs the relationship between the PPG and the leadership of the party in a totally different manner. The power of the mass party lies in the organisation of the members – with respect to power, the party is not dominated by representatives of the party in the cabinet or in the parliament but by the EPO which represents members. MPs are seen as representing the party in the parliament. In declaring that they primarily represent the interests of one segment of society, the task of mass parties is to implement the interests of the party and its members. Therefore it is also desirable that PPGs be unified and disciplined and that they obey the will of elected representatives of party members in national executives [for the different demands on representatives according to individual party types, see for example Katz, Mair 1995].

The models and the position of political parties in society have changed since the era of mass parties. Katz and Mair caution that parties have shifted from the civil society to the

¹ Where we mention a PPG, we have in mind the equivalent of the Czech term *poslanecký klub* or *senátorský klub*, the German term *Fraktionen*, and the English terms *parliamentary parties*, *parties in parliament* etc.

state. One of the consequences of this shift is the increasing tendency toward stratarchy of the party organisation, where the individual levels – based on a silent agreement – agree not to interfere with the operation of the other: the centre does not interfere with the operation of the party in the regions, and the local levels are not interested in the politics put forth by the centre [Katz, Mair 1995]. Heidar and Koole, arguing along similar lines, claim that in Western Europe we have been seeing a gradual shift to the model of a parliamentary party complex. This complex plays a crucial role in the creation of party policy, which is related to the weakening of the role of the party on the ground, to the increasing income and resources PPGs received from the state budget, and to the fact that MPs are paid, working, full-time politicians who are able to hire employees/assistants [Heidar, Koole 2000b: 10–11, Heidar, Koole 2000c: 259]. The power centre within the party has shifted to those holding positions in state structures (the cabinet and the parliament). Is this also the path that Czech political parties or the Czech Parliament have taken? Before answering the basic question of the text concerning the decision-making mechanisms of Czech PPGs and their unity, we shall first focus on factors that influence the decisions of MPs and PPGs.

1.1 Factors that influence decision-making mechanisms in PPGs

There are three basic factors that influence decision-making mechanisms in PPGs.² The basic framework can be described in the following way. We can see explanatory variables both at the level of the system and the parliament, as well as on the level of individual parties.³ On the one hand, there are the constitutional rules (especially pertaining to the relationship of the parliament to the cabinet), electoral rules, the rules of procedure, and the financing of PPGs. These rules are the same for all PPGs in a given country. The same applies to the characteristics on the systemic level, which include the political culture, the party system, cleavage lines, and the form of political competition. What differentiates PPGs on the national level are the organisational structure of political parties and the position of PPGs in the party structure, the selection of candidates, the internal structuring of PPGs, the manner in which previous party disputes are resolved, and the collective memory of resolved conflicts [compare the selection of explanatory variables with Helms 2000]. See Figure 1.1 for a view of the contingency of the individual factors on the shape of a PPG. We shall now look in greater detail into these factors.

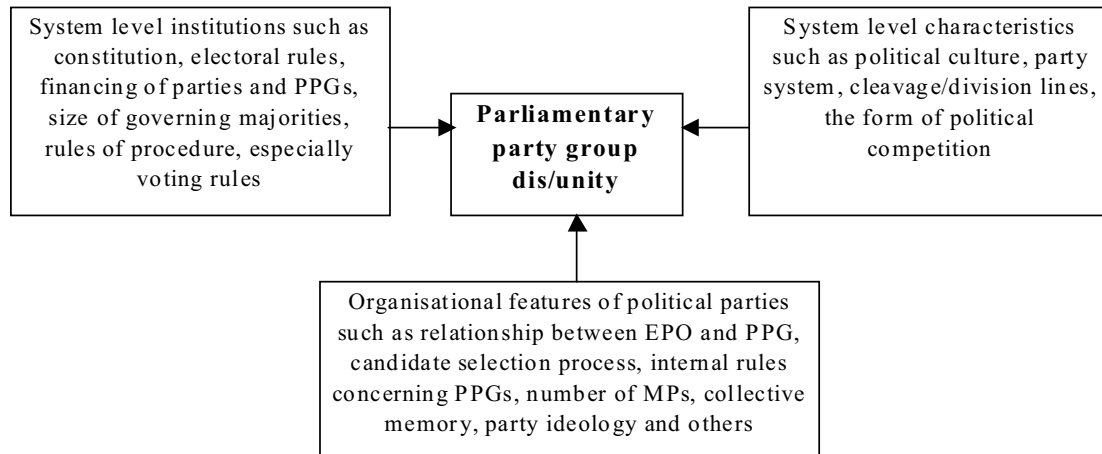
1.2 System level institutions

The nature of the political system and the rules of voting are the basic variables used to differentiate political systems. **Political systems** make a distinction between presidential and parliamentary systems. The key question then is whether the cabinet is dependent on a majority in the parliament in order to remain in office. The power of the parliament to force the

² When we talk about the decision-making mechanisms in PPGs, we especially have in mind the methods of making decisions within the group and the maintenance of unity, especially in voting. No less important, however, are other characteristics of PPGs, such as the influence on the public policies in the legislative approval process and their ability to shape the form of the political competition in the polity.

³ The article by Heidar and Koole [2000b: 16–21] and the article by Bowler, Farrell and Katz [1999] have served as the basic guide for structuring the individual variables and the explanation of their influence.

Figure 1.1. Factors influencing the unity of PPGs



cabinet to resign and, conversely, the power of the cabinet to dissolve the parliament, are important factors influencing the decisions of MPs. What reasons do MPs have for supporting governmental bills and, in general, maintaining the unity of a PPG, when those holding positions in the executive enjoy the advantages? Let us look for the influence of this variable not in the dissolution of the parliament or a vote of no confidence in the cabinet, but in the anticipated reactions of individual actors in the game. Cabinets are aware that they can be dismissed through a decision of the parliament, and, likewise, the parliament is aware that it may be dissolved by the cabinet – this means each is able to influence the opinions and attitudes of the other. In parliamentary systems the dichotomy of the ruling party and the opposition party is crucial. Thus, on the one hand the governing PPG is supposed to support the cabinet and its proposals and, on the other hand, MPs are at a disadvantage as they are less informed than the cabinet and ministers [for the importance of supporting a cabinet in order to maintain party unity, see Laver, Shepsle 1999]. Thus any vote in the parliament, in addition to the basic dimension of being a vote *with or against one's own party*, acquires another dimension, the dimension of being a vote *with or against the cabinet*.

The basic characteristics of the **electoral system** – for example the size of constituencies, the number of elected candidates per constituency, and the nature of the electoral competition (the ability to submit ballots) – also play a significant role. Individual provisions of the electoral system strengthen or weaken the influence of a party on the elected candidates. The introduction of a proportional system is usually stimulated by the effort to increase the role of political parties; conversely, majority systems are said to weaken the role of parties. The electoral system also answers the question as to who has won the election – parties or MPs? Is it that the parties receive the mandate to rule and individual MPs should obey the parties, or vice versa?

Other variables are also important, such as the rules of procedure of the parliament and the PPG financing rules. The **rules of procedure** prescribe not only the procedure for debating bills but also other processes that are perceived as the duties of the parliament. The rules of procedure also define group rights in a parliament, especially those of PPGs and committees. To varying degrees, rules of procedure also define the rights of PPGs, and thus influence the balance between MPs as free representatives of their constituencies and PPGs as representatives of parties that have an electoral mandate from the voters. In addition to

literally spelling out the rights of PPGs we must also bear in mind that if PPGs did not exist then the rules of procedure would not work (at least in the form in which we know them) because implicitly such rules anticipate the existence of PPGs.⁴ The **financing rules** concerning the activities of MPs and PPGs and the amount of such contributions (financial or material) influence how dependent they are on other resources, such as the party, but likewise may in fact also strengthen the autonomy of PPGs.

Furthermore, the **size of the governing majority** in the parliament may also influence the decision-making mechanisms in a PPG. Using the example of U.S. states, Robert Golembiewski has proven that party cohesion is a direct function of the degree of competition between parties [Golembiewski 1958: 501; quoted according to Bowler, Farrell and Katz 1999: 13]. If a party has no chance of acquiring or losing power, there is no serious reason to maintain unity. Studies also show that the size of the governing majority, or the fear of losing a vote (or the hope of victory), may support unity.⁵ As one former Czech MP put it, when „the leadership of the PPG has secured a certain number of votes for a bill among members of other PPGs, nothing much happens; if the calculation of votes is close, an emphatic recommendation may result from a discussion in a PPG“ [an interview with a former ČSSD MP].

1.3 System level characteristics

In addition to institutions, crucial systemic level factors include the shape of political competition and the cleavage/division structure in society. The **shape of political competition** points to the nature of public policies about which the parliament makes decisions. Some policies may be potential sources of conflict in a nationally active party, for example when in a political competition on the national level there is a significant regional or moral element.⁶

The **cleavage/division structure** can influence the number of competing parties and the nature of the party system. In the case where the ideological distance between parties is small, there is no principal need for a rigid organisation of the group: defections from a PPG may be viewed as acceptable by the public. For parties, a reduction in ideological competition may, on the contrary, be a reason for greater organisational unity in order to prevent the differences between parties from becoming even less distinct.

⁴ Without the awareness that PPGs will fulfill the rules of procedure, the norm could not be created in the form in which we know it. In the case of the Czech Rules of Procedure we may, for example, draw attention to the course of discussions on a bill of an act, which is not limited in any significant way with respect to the length of the speeches of MPs. It may be expected that without the existence of parties there would be far more MPs presenting their opinions on the bill. The construction of the provision presupposes the existence of parties because the criticism or support for a bill by a party is presented by one MP of the party and it is not necessary to repeat it. Consequently, there is also no restriction on the scope of the discussion. Similarly, the determination of the number of deputies' committees and the number of their members is not processually defined because it is expected that PPGs will agree on this. How would the positions in these committees be peopled if the mechanism for peopling the positions was not defined and there were no PPGs?

⁵ It must be stressed that the last two cases – the number of competing parties and the size of the governing majority – may have an influence on the use of tools for enforcing party discipline rather than on the existence of party cohesion as such (for a differentiation between terms cohesion and discipline, see Chapter 4).

⁶ In the Czech Republic, we can see a regional element in decision-making, for example, in the debate of the Act on the Capital City of Prague or the decision-making in 2000 on the Act on the bypass around the City of Pilsen. A typical example of the moral element can be seen in the decision-making on the 'registered partnership of same-sex couples', anonymous childbirth, or the abortion policy.

Another important factor is also the **normative model of a party** which persists in society, and which forces politicians to take into account the governing public opinion when they act. If a quarrelling or disjointed party is perceived negatively by the general public, the worst thing a political party can do is to behave in this manner, for example, during a vote in the parliament. Sometimes, however, the public may see defections from the PPG positively because the general opinion in society is that MPs should decide according to their conscience and not according to party secretariats, the leadership of a PPG, or its majority.

1.4 Organisational features of political parties

The **relationship of a PPG to the parent political party** and the position of a PPG within the party structure can be understood as one of the key variables determining the shape of a PPG. There are various arrangements of the relationship between the party executives and PPGs: autonomy of a PPG, dependence of a PPG, or mutual co-operation owing especially to personal ties [this arrangement of relationships was defined already by Duverger in 1964]. The relationship between a PPG and an EPO is influenced, for example, by the candidate selection process for the parliament, as well as by the relationships defined by party statutes between individual party bodies, PPGs not excepting.

The relationship between the **candidate selection process** and the decision-making by MPs and a PPG is twofold: (1) influence *ex post* on the unity of opinion of the proposed candidates, or more specifically the elected MPs (party cohesion); and (2) *preliminary* influence, when MPs anticipate future rules for selecting candidates with the goal of achieving a more advantageous position in the candidate selection process (party discipline). What is the influence of the candidate selection system on the decision-making by MPs and PPGs? Parties may define rules according to which only the party members or those who have been party members for several years may be a candidate, which ensures – among other things – a greater cohesion of opinion in a PPG. Preliminary control of candidates by the party executive or restrictions concerning those who select party candidates (selectors), allowing only party members to become selectors, function in a similarly way.⁷ Parties may also have internal rules that allow the national or regional party executives to categorise the candidates and eliminate ‘troublemakers’. If the candidate selection process is controlled by the centre, the party may ensure the unity of a PPG by eliminating the chances of troublemakers succeeding. The active role of central bodies in influencing the ballot influences the willingness of MPs to enter into a conflict with party leadership. If local nominations play a greater role in the process of selecting candidates, it means that the MP has local support and with such support s/he may enter into a conflict with the party leadership. Such local support may be a source of party dissent.

The decision-making process within a PPG (especially the willingness to clash with party leadership or the willingness to split off) may also be influenced by the age of the political parties. The more important the **brand or identity of a party** on the political market of a country or the organisational support of the party, the less willing the party members are

⁷ The influence of changes in the candidate selection rules on some large parties in Israel has been described by Rahata and Hazan. They have drawn attention to the transformation of the organisational structure of the party, the nature of party membership and the ability of EPO to influence party representatives in the Knesset, and the fragmentation of PPG in the parliament etc. [Rahat and Hazan 2001].

to split off and to start building a new party. Moreover, this fact has even greater implications: the more important the party brand and identity, and thus also the unwillingness of party members to dissent, the greater the party's ability to use the tools to discipline MPs and introduce discipline. Party history, moreover, has an influence on the organisational features of the party [Panebianco 1988; Duverger 1964].

Internal rules concerning PPGs, especially the PPG statutes, define the basic organisational structure and the internal decision-making mechanisms. They can define various rules of organisation (two or multi-level hierarchy, expert working groups) and decision-making (deciding which votes are important and which demand unity, the mechanism for binding MPs to take a unified course of action etc.). The internal statutes of PPGs may also define the influence that ministers of the party and the party executive have on the operation of a PPG. The **number of members** of a PPG has a bearing on the organisation of the operation, the frequency of meetings, and the hierarchical structure and specialisation within a PPG. Having fewer members supports but does not guarantee unity.

When thinking about the influence of individual factors that result from the form of a political party, we must take into account not only the written rules but also their **interpretation, concrete application and the collective memory** of their application (tradition and narrative stories). In particular, significant steps such as the expulsion of an MP from a party or PPG, or from both, have a great significance for future of the party. Such occurrences lead to an important defining of rules – of what is admissible and what is not. The awareness that a person may be expelled from a party for misbehaviour becomes a permanent factor, which shapes, among other factors, the behaviour of MPs (see the case of the expulsion of two ČSSD MPs in 1996 after they, as opposition MPs, supported the Act on the State Budget).

When examining the shape of a PPG and the organisational structure of a party, we must take into consideration **party ideology**. In the case of communist and socialist parties it used to be the case that the PPG was supposed to be subservient to the leadership of the central executive. In the case of Western European green parties, there is an emphasis on grassroots democracy, which is accompanied by the demand to differentiate between the function of an MP and his/her party function, and by the demand to make the parliamentary representation subservient to the party executive. The importance of a party ideology can also be seen in the case of parties created on the principle of protesting against well-established parties and party membership. These anti-party parties cannot demand absolute obedience from their MPs because this is one of the principles against which they fight. A party that includes among its major legitimisation strategies the protest against an authoritarian leadership (e.g. the Freedom Union in the Czech Republic) cannot force its MPs to show obedience to the party without being in conflict with its original principle.

Relationships with **external organisations outside the party** also play a role: new social movements (environmental, women's) are considered to be important entities with influence over the form of a PPG of green parties; the relationship with trade unions is usually important for the form of social democratic PPGs; a friendly disposition towards entrepreneurial interest groups can influence the form of right-wing PPGs.

2. Institutional context of party unity

In this chapter we will analyse the institutional framework in which PPGs in the Czech Republic function. Institutional rules, together with the position of PPGs within the parent political party, contribute to shaping decision-making mechanisms in PPGs. We shall therefore focus primarily on characterising the political system in the Czech Republic, paying special attention to the role of Parliament and the electoral system. We will also look at describing the nature of the mandate, and the different types of mandate in relation to the electoral system. We will then focus on a general definition of a PPG and the various classifications of PPGs, and the legal provisions concerning PPGs and the way PPGs function in the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic. In addition to the factors mentioned above, party unity on the system level is also influenced by the length of the mandate (possibly modified by the option of holding early elections), and by the rules and manner of voting. In the last section of this chapter we will therefore focus on the issue of voting. All the factors mentioned above apply equally to all PPGs (see Chapter 1).

2.1 The political system in the Czech Republic and the position of the Parliament within it

The Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy; one of its basic characteristics is its dual executive, i.e. the cabinet and the president. The cabinet is accountable to the Chamber of Deputies, and the Chamber of Deputies may pass a vote of no confidence in the cabinet and thus recall the cabinet from office. Based on the cabinet's initiative, the Chamber of Deputies may be dissolved; however, this is not true of the second chamber (the Senate). The powers of the president, who is elected indirectly for five years at a joint meeting of both chambers of the Parliament, are restricted (as a rule his decisions are counter-signed and may be overturned by the Parliament).

Democracy in the Czech Republic can be defined as a parliamentary democracy or responsible government; this arrangement is also supported by general institutional criteria, such as the overlap between a ministerial office and an MP's office. In practice, this results in a large portion of ministers being recruited from the Parliament – i.e. from individual PPGs. Based on Beyme's theory, Jan Kysela defines the system of government in the Czech Republic as the *government of assembly*, cautioning against the lack of rationalised elements of parliamentarism.⁸ Even more importantly, he warns that the vote of no confidence in the government is not constructive in nature and, moreover, that the cabinet cannot defend itself against this parliamentary sanction [Kysela 2002]. As a result, the leading role of the cabinet in the political system is tempered because the only defence against a vote of no confidence and the fall of the cabinet is the unity of the governing party or the coalition parties in the Parliament.

In addition to the relationship between the parliament and the cabinet, another key feature is the relationship between the two chambers and in particular the issue of their powers. The Chamber of Deputies is the dominant chamber in the legislative process. The legislative

⁸ Rationalised parliamentarism comes as a reaction to political instability and problems in the functioning of the state, especially where the position of the cabinet is too weak in relation to the parliament and the parliament takes over without bearing responsibility for its actions.

process, however, is also controlled by the cabinet, which is the proponent of more than one-half of all bills. Generally, bills proposed by the cabinet are more successful than those of other proponents. We can thus sum up by saying that the Czech parliament neither dominates nor is dominated by the cabinet, and that there is a balance between the executive and legislative powers.

Thanks to the signing of the Agreement on Creating a Stable Political Environment in the Czech Republic, concluded between the Czech Social Democratic Party and the Civic Democratic Party, the minority ČSSD cabinet has been in office the whole term (1998–2002). For ČSSD the agreement guaranteed a stable government and that ODS would not initiate a vote of ‘no confidence’ against the government, nor would they support such a vote. For ODS the agreement guaranteed coordination during the appointment of persons to important political positions, consultations with the government prior to adopting important decisions, and above all the consent of ČSSD to the change in rules for political competition leading to an increase of the majority elements in the electoral system and a limitation on the powers of the president of the Republic.

To sum up, the functioning of the political system not only supports but further enhances the powerful position of political parties. Indirectly, it also contributes to strengthening the unity of PPGs.

2.2 The electoral system and its reforms

Let us now focus on another key factor that has an influence on the unity of a PPG: the Czech electoral system. Although MPs of the third parliament were elected according to the valid Electoral Act of 1995, those thinking of re-election⁹ had to take into account – in their conduct and voting – the changes in the Electoral Act adopted in 2000 and 2002. We shall therefore now look at these changes to the electoral system.

MPs serve a four-year term. In 1998, MPs were elected using the proportional system in eight constituencies, with between 20 and 60 candidates on the party lists, depending on the size of the constituency. This proportional system was founded on the Hagenbach-Bischoff electoral formula applied in two scrutinies.

By law, candidates may only be proposed by political parties, political movements, or their coalitions. The party lists are binding, but not strictly binding. A voter may vote for only one party list, but within that party list may state their preference for as many as four candidates. In the 1998 elections, if a candidate received ten percent of these preferential votes, s/he was considered to have been granted a preferential mandate in the given district.¹⁰ The campaigning parties had to acquire at least five percent of the votes nationwide; a coalition of two parties had to secure seven percent; a coalition of three, nine percent; and a coalition of more than four, eleven percent of the votes.

After the first amendment to the Electoral Act, initiated by ČSSD and ODS and approved in 2000¹¹, the following crucial changes occurred. Non-resident citizens were allowed to vote. The number of constituencies was increased from the original eight to thir-

⁹ In the Czech Republic, more than one-half of MPs are usually re-elected.

¹⁰ Act No. 247/1995 Coll.

¹¹ Act No. 204/2000 Coll.

ty-five. In individual constituencies no less than four and a maximum of eight mandates are distributed. The proportional system has been preserved, but there was a motion to strengthen the majority elements in it. A modified D'Hondt electoral formula was proposed, on the basis of which the number of valid votes submitted was successively divided by the figures 1.42, 2, 3 etc. in the scrutiny.

Another significant change was the raising of the election threshold. While the five percent quorum for political parties or political movements has not changed, coalitions of two must secure ten percent instead of the original seven percent, while coalitions of three need fifteen instead of the original nine percent, and coalitions of four or more must secure twenty percent instead of the original eleven. The requirement of receiving ten percent of the preferential votes to receive a preferential mandate also has not been changed. Each voter, however, can only cast two preferential votes. In view of the various numbers of mandates divided within the individual constituencies, preferential voting can result in disparities and greatly strengthen the majority system. At the same time, however, decreasing the share of the preferential votes required to secure a mandate, from ten to seven percent, increases the competition between individual candidates for such votes and forces them to present themselves on a far more individuated level. This is also true of candidates in theoretically electable positions (Pecháček 2003, forthcoming). As a result, the autonomy of candidates from a political party has increased.

In a decision of the Constitutional Court, however, the amendment to Act No. 247/1995 was proclaimed unconstitutional, and the 2002 elections were held based on another amendment¹². The most important changes include decreasing the number of constituencies from 35 to 14 and increasing the maximum number of candidates on a party list to 36. The majority effect of the system was weakened since the divisor was changed to D'Hondt; thus, in the scrutiny the number of valid submitted votes is gradually divided by 1, 2, 3 etc. Furthermore, the percentage limit concerning preferential votes was reduced from ten to seven percent. However, each voter may cast only two preferential votes. The 2002 elections showed that in the future this fact may be crucial for maintaining the rank of candidates on a party list.

The electoral system is a key set of laws defining to a large degree the competition between political parties, as well as the resulting shape of the political scene. With respect to the role of political parties, it is easier for parties to change the electoral system than to change the Constitution. This is primarily due to the traditionally higher quorum required to amend the Constitution. In a favourable political situation – understood as a simple, and in the Czech Republic, also a very narrow majority – it is easier to change the Electoral Act and through a comprehensive change of this Act strengthen the majority-system elements in the proportional representation system. An example of a politically motivated change to the Electoral Act was the above-mentioned attempt by ODS and ČSSD, as part of the so-called Opposition Agreement (see above), to strengthen the role of large parties, i.e. ODS and ČSSD, and to significantly weaken the position of small parties. The approved changes to the Electoral Act, some of which the Constitutional Court later cancelled, would result in a much smaller representation of small parties in the Chamber of Deputies. Financially, it would lead to a significant blow to their financing. The proposed amendment strove to introduce a decrease in the subsidy for votes received and a significant increase in the financial subsidy for a secured mandate. When negotiating changes of this scope and with such an impact the unity of a PPG is crucial.

¹² Act No. 37/2002 Coll.

2.3 The nature of the mandate

The nature of political representation is determined through a definition of the nature of the mandate. An MP's mandate is understood as the mandate granted to an MP in the elections. In theory, two basic types have been described: the free mandate and the imperative mandate. In the framework of the imperative mandate, an MP is understood as „responsible to his citizens in the entire range of his activities ...“ [Klokočka 1996: 23]. An MP is thus an interpreter of the interests of his/her voters and acts as a representative on behalf of them. With respect to the imperative mandate, the question arises as to how voters can aggregate, acquire, analyse and process information, and based on this instruct the MP to act or vote.

The existence of the imperative mandate is generally considered to be an element that improves party cohesion. The imperative mandate, however, is not applied in contemporary Europe and exists solely as a theoretical possibility, which the free mandate can approximate. The current practice is that if an MP leaves a PPG, the PPG loses the mandate and the MP becomes a 'free MP'. Only the executive can be impeached.¹³

The free mandate resolves the problems of the imperative mandate because MPs are seen as representatives of all people as a whole, which gives MPs the space to autonomously interpret the interests they represent and to act autonomously. For the entire term of the mandate, MPs are, based on their mandate, responsible only to their conscience and cannot be recalled. MPs acquire the mandate upon election and taking the oath, and their mandate may be terminated only in the following cases: when they give up the mandate as a result of either losing their citizenship or their competence to take legal action. Pursuant to Article 25 of the Constitution of the Czech Republic, the mandate of an MP or a senator also expires if the representative refuses to take the oath or takes it with a reservation, upon the expiration of the electoral term, the emergence of their being incompatible with the office¹⁴ or upon death, and in the case of MPs also upon the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies.

Some constitutions resolve the question – frequently asked when studying parliaments – of whether and to what extent MPs identify with the idea of representing the interests of all citizens or with the idea of representing only some partial segments or groups of society by setting forth directly that MPs do not represent only the constituency, province or land in which they were elected (explicitly mentioned in the Belgian, Danish and Finnish constitutions and in the German *Grundgesetz* etc.).

In the modern system of political parties, however, there is a tension between understanding the MP as being a representative of all people and of a political party. Political parties are representatives of organised interests. They are included directly in the process of articulating and representing people's interests pursuant to the institutional framework, defined by the Constitution and the Electoral Act, which stipulates that candidates may take part in political competition only on the party list of a political party (but do not necessari-

¹³ An exception to this rule is Great Britain where it is possible to take away an MP's mandate for a 'gross crime'. However, since Great Britain does not have a written constitution it is not clearly defined what constitutes a „gross crime“.

¹⁴ Pursuant to Article 22 of the Constitution, the function of an MP or a senator is incompatible with the office of the President of the Republic, a judge and other positions defined by the law (for example, a representative cannot be a member of both chambers at the same time or a representative in one chamber and the chief representative of a higher self-administrative unit).

ly have to be members of these political parties)¹⁵. According to Klokočka, this actually leads to a transformation of the free mandate into a mandate bound by the instruction of the political party [Klokočka 1996].

As an example we can take the attempt made by the German Green Party to introduce a system of rotation involving the resignation of an MP in the middle of the electoral term and his/her replacement by the candidate who in the election results was second to the elected MP. The German Supreme Court reviewed this practice and declared it inadmissible. Nonetheless, a political party can apply other sanctions against an MP, primarily in the process of selecting and nominating candidates in the next elections. In this respect, there is an interesting case in the Irish parliament where, based on an unwritten rule, an MP, denied the opportunity to run in the next elections, votes against his party.

According to Brokl, Mansfeldová and Kroupa, party affiliation allows MPs to realise the political policy of the party, which the party represents, and provides them with a conceptual framework for their decisions [Brokl et al. 1998]. Furthermore, a party provides support for quality work and allocates additional resources for the professional performance of the duties of the position. At the same time, however, through its PPG a political party implements the party line; with the vision of advancing its interests, the party puts less or more pressure on MPs to toe the party line. Therefore, the role of an MP, just like the role of the parliament, is ambivalent. Both the individual and the institution are a part of politics and function as executive power makers. We can sum up by saying that the current practice of not using the imperative mandate protects MPs not against the pressure of voters but against the pressure of their own political parties [Klokočka 1996: 25].

Empirical surveys in Western Europe and in the United States have revealed three ways in which MPs understand their role: as a trustee, a delegate and a politico. The trustee feels bound only by his/her conscience, the delegate by the wishes of the voters, and the politico balances the two according to circumstances. There is a modification of the delegate type in Europe: the party delegate, where the representatives feel they are representatives of their party and/or their voters. In our surveys we have also asked: what is the role of an MP, to whom does an MP feel responsible, and who do MPs feel they represent in the parliament. The party? The party's voters? The constituency in which s/he was elected? All the citizens? Czech MPs in the third term of the parliament (1998-2002) felt most that they represented the voters of their party, followed by a portion of MPs who felt they represented their constituencies or all citizens. Only a small portion of MPs felt they represented members of their political party (Table 2.1). We can explain this by the generally low number of members¹⁶ of political parties in the Czech Republic.

The data from the continual survey offer an interesting comparison over time. Although the 1998 survey introduced the option of whether MPs feel they represent their constituency, no significant shifts occurred between the categories *party members* and *party voters*. The proportional division of the responses into individual groups is, with minor fluctuations, stable. A remarkable reduction was recorded only in the category 'representative of all citizens' which

¹⁵ The constantly growing number of independent candidates on the party lists of parliamentary political parties is very interesting. In the past, such course of action used to be the domain of smaller political parties but in the 2002 elections we could find independent candidates even on the party list of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. For the longest time, this party was a great opponent of this practice because an increase in the number of independent candidates leads to a decrease in the unity of the political party.

¹⁶ Approximately 3 percent of citizens in the Czech Republic are organised in political parties.

Table 2.1. Who does an MP represent – compared over time (in %)

	1993	1996	1998	2000
Party Members	3.04	2.76	4.35	2.79
Party Voters	43.73	48.97	45.96	40.22
Citizens of his/her district	*	*	25.47	29.61
All citizens	52.09	45.52	22.98	27.37

Source: Parliamentary DICE.

Note: The remainder (to 100%) are those who answered they did not know or did not respond.

* This answer was not offered.

was divided into ‘citizens of his/her district’ and ‘all citizens’. Theoretically, however, no significant shift has occurred; MPs of the Czech Parliament can be classified as *delegates*. The strongest relationship of the MPs in the third electoral term of the parliament, in keeping with the defined category of a party delegate, is to the political party and its voters.

Based on the continual survey of the opinions and attitudes of MPs in the parliament, we can close by saying that in the Czech Republic the role of political parties is central not only in the political system but also in how MPs understand and interpret their mandate.

2.4 The role of PPGs in the legislative process

With respect to the legislative process, the important bodies are those that participate in the creation and preparation of bills, i.e. the legislative and executive powers. A large portion of legislative activities is initiated in the cabinet and the cabinet participates in the legislative process at least as the proponent of bills (the cabinet proposes more than one-half of all bills). Bills of acts proposed by other bodies (an MP, a group of MPs, the Senate, a district board of representatives) are, pursuant to Article 44 of the Constitution, given to the cabinet for review (this review must be completed within 30 days). During this period the Chamber of Deputies does not debate the bill. Formally, the legislative process does not begin in the cabinet but in the Chamber of Deputies, to which, pursuant to Article 41 of the Constitution, bills of acts are introduced. The Constitution dictates that the Chamber of Deputies is the stronger chamber – its position in the legislative process is stronger.

The Constitution differentiates between three types of votes on bills:

- A. votes on general, unspecified resolutions of the Chamber in the presence of no less than one-third of the members, passed if a simple majority of all the MPs or senators approve the bill (votes on amendments to bills or regular acts as a whole).
- B. voting by the Chamber of Deputies on: acts rejected by the senate; acts returned by the senate with amendments should the Chamber of Deputies want to pass the bill in its own version; and acts returned by the president – in these cases a majority of all the MPs is required, i.e. 101, to pass the bill;
- C. votes on passing a constitutional act and on approval of an international agreement pursuant to Article 10 of the Constitution President – in these cases a majority of 3/5 of the MPs is required, i.e. 120, to pass the bill.¹⁷

¹⁷ The so-called ‘Euro-amendment’ to the Constitution, approved on 18 October 2001 by the Parliament of the Czech Republic, changes the concept of the relationship between international agreements and Czech law, i.e.

In the legislative process, PPGs play an important role from the very start. A bill of an act is promptly distributed upon its introduction. During the first reading, PPGs may raise an objection in the course of the general debate and the bill of the act can be rejected in the first reading without being discussed in the committees. Only after debating the bill in the first reading is it discussed by committees.¹⁸ The only exception to this is the legislative process in a state of a 'legislative emergency', during which the process for debating a bill is faster and the chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies submits a bill directly to the committee.

In view of the traditionally narrow margins, the role and primarily the unity of PPGs in the legislative process is important, although it is not institutionalised. The practical functioning of the preparation of the parliamentary agenda at the level of the PPGs and achieving a majority shape the result of the legislative process. The issue of voting is closely related to the legislative process and we shall look into this issue in the following sub-chapter.

2.5 Rules of voting

Voting in parliaments is the most important mechanism for aggregating preferences of individual MPs and for making collective decisions which affect all citizens. The rules and manner of voting significantly influence the functioning of the parliament and party cohesion. Voting procedures are defined as „mechanisms by which individual votes on possible outcomes are translated into collective choices“ [Rasch 1995]. There are two aspects to voting – the *manner of voting*, that is, how and in what form the vote occurs, and the *rules of voting* – how the decision is made about when and on what to vote (*agenda setting*) and what the requirements are for approving a proposal (a simple majority, a qualified majority, a two-thirds majority etc.). Although the manner of voting changes over the course of time, three basic categories have been defined – the closed or secret vote, the semi-open or anonymous vote, and open-public or recorded vote. While in the case of a secret vote it is not possible to ascertain how individual MPs vote and thus an MP has greater autonomy because the party can only monitor MPs' participation in the vote and retroactively speculate on the voting position of individual MPs, in a majority of European parliaments semi-open or anonymous voting is customary. The procedure is to raise a hand, stand up or make a verbal expression. In the case of an open-public vote, which is most frequent, the predominant procedure is electronic or combined, i.e. electronic voting and hand raising. Electronic voting speeds up the voting process and makes it more efficient. This is most obvious if compared to voting in the British Parliament, where an MP must pass through a certain room. This vote takes approximately fifteen minutes and since the number of votes per year is considerable, the amount of time lost is clear [Rasch 1995].

The basic document that sets forth the manners and rules of voting are the Rules of Procedure. The Rules of Procedure define two possible manners of voting: open-public and secret. The manner of voting is proposed by the chair of the session. The secret vote is used to elect the chairperson, deputy chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies, the chairperson

the issue of voting on international agreements on human rights. This change occurred in 2001 and given the time period that is the focus of the publication we shall not dwell on it further.

¹⁸ PPGs propose members of committees and commissions and submit proposals concerning the number of members of these committees and commissions. In addition, they also propose candidates for the positions of the chairperson, deputy chairpersons and verifying persons of the Chamber, committees and commissions.

and deputy chairpersons of committees. Other cases may also be decided by secret vote if the Chamber so decides upon a proposal of the chair of the Chamber. In the case of a secret vote, ballots are distributed to all those in attendance and the MPs then write the name of their candidate on the ballot. The quorum is calculated according to the number of voting tickets issued. In a secret vote, however, unity is often relaxed, and this occurs even during key or negotiated votes.

Open-public voting takes place by raising a hand and using voting equipment. The Chamber of Deputies may also decide on another way of voting (e.g. voting by name). When voting by raising a hand, vote-counters count the votes. When voting by name, the names of MPs are read aloud in alphabetical order, starting with the letter drawn by the chair. MPs then indicate whether they abstain, are in favour of, or against the proposal. When voting using voting equipment, MPs first register using the voting card and then vote for or against a proposal by pressing a button on the voting equipment within a time period set by the chair. In the case of a voting equipment malfunction (an MP's declaration that the voting equipment indicates a result other than that intended), the vote is repeated. The declaration of a voting equipment malfunction may thus become a part of the political game.

2.6 PPGs: a general definition and possible classifications

PPGs constitute a link between the electorate, the political party and the parliament. Thanks to their relationship with the voters, PPGs contribute to the general legitimacy of the system. Given their coherent support for the cabinet, PPGs of the ruling party or coalition contribute to the stability of the cabinet. At the same time, PPGs are places where MPs associate according to party affiliations or leanings, and where they decide on the position of the party on individual proposals, on strategy, and on potential voting coalitions and exchanges with other PPGs (for example, when selecting chairpersons and deputy chairpersons of committees or parliamentary delegations). It is also necessary to mention that PPGs function as internal policy co-ordination bodies. In general, PPGs largely structure the procedure in the Chamber of Deputies. Critically speaking, we can also say that PPGs also fulfil the concept of *illiberal parties*, against which Ostrogorski cautioned in his struggle against political parties – they are exclusive arenas closed off to a thorough review from the outside.

Heidar and Koole have proposed the following working definition of a PPG: „*an organised group of members of a representative body who belong to the same political party*“ [Heidar, Koole 2000: 8]. For the Czech Parliament, however, we recommend modifying the definition as follows: „*PPG is an organised group of members of a representative body who belong to the same political party or who entered the representative body on the same party list*“. We consider it more precise to use the definition that is based on membership in a PPG. Arguments for this opinion cannot be found in the Czech Chamber of Deputies¹⁹ in the analysed period of 1998 to 2002²⁰. Nevertheless, both before 1998 and in the new electoral term, which started in mid-2002, we have recorded moments that challenge the working definition pro-

¹⁹ When analysing the senate PPGs, this definition could be faulted far more easily. Each term, approximately 10% of senators are not members of any party and the number is increasing.

²⁰ The only possible case could be the expulsion of MP Vladimír Paulík from US. He was first expelled from the party for manipulating the party on the ground and shortly afterwards he was also expelled from the PPG. However, the two steps occurred almost concurrently.

posed by Heidar and Koole. After the 2002 elections, an MP who is not a member of any party is a member of the PPG according to the party list on which they were elected. In 1998 a new PPG of the Freedom Union was established, which at the time it was established formally did not exist (and thus MPs could not have been its members).²¹ Between 1990 and 1996 the fragmentation of PPGs was a typical feature of the Chamber of Deputies. There were also PPGs which from the start did not have their counterpart in a party organisation. Heidar and Koole have modified their working definition based on the findings of the comparative survey: a PPG is „*an organised group of members of a representative body who were elected either under the same party label or under the label of different parties that do not compete against each other in elections, and who do not explicitly create a group for technical reasons only*“ [2000: 249].

In addition to simply defining a PPG, it is also possible to classify PPGs according to a number of criteria. We can differentiate PPGs according to size, their position in the parliament, and their position outside the parliament. It is clear from our surveys that in large PPGs (those with more than 60 members) there are other internal mechanisms at work that are not present in small PPGs (those with approximately 20 members). While large PPGs replicate, to a certain extent, the internal structure of the committees, in small PPGs the size increases but does not necessarily guarantee achieving unity. In this respect, the internal structuring of medium-sized PPGs is an issue worth study, but in the Czech Republic it has not yet been examined in any detail.

Another criterion for classifying PPGs is their position in the parliament, i.e. whether it is a ruling or opposition PPG. In the Czech Republic, the role of the PPG KSČM is quite unique; for a long time this PPG was, together with SPR-RSČ, perceived as non-systemic. This made negotiations more difficult for ‘systemic’ political parties, for which forming *ad hoc* coalitions for certain votes was very difficult (also in view of the tight division of mandates). In the 1998 elections, however, SPR-RSČ failed to acquire the necessary number of votes to enter the Chamber of Deputies and the position of KSČM gradually changed.

It is also possible to classify PPGs according to their position outside the parliament, that is, according to the relationship between the PPG and the EPO in the case of a coalition, or the more complicated relationship between the EPO and the party in the government (PiG) in the case of coalition parties. In this respect, PPGs differ in structure and functioning. The main explanatory variables are the position of the PPG in the parliament and in the parent party. In this classification, PPGs can be *dominant* in relation to the other actors (as is primarily the case with small parties that are often created by a group of MPs splitting from the parent party, subsequently joined by a portion of the members), or they can be *inferior*, in which case they are less autonomous in relation to the EPO. This brings us back to Duverger’s distinction between internally and externally generated political parties.

2.7 PPGs in the CR: legal provisions and practice

Legally, PPGs cannot be considered to be bodies of the Chamber of Deputies, at least since the new Act on the Rules of Procedure came into effect. The Act on the Rules of Procedure valid in the Chamber of Deputies until August 1995 viewed PPGs formally as parliamentary

²¹ The PPG of the Freedom Union was created on 20 January 1998. The party was registered by the Ministry of Interior on 22 January 1998. The founding congress was held on 22 February 1998.

bodies, i.e. on the level of committees or officials of the Chamber of Deputies (Section 29 of Act No. 35/1989 Coll.). The new Act on the Rules of Procedure (Act No. 90/1995 Coll.) no longer sees PPGs as bodies of the Chamber of Deputies (bodies of the Chamber of Deputies and PPGs are addressed in different sections of the Act on Rules of Procedure). Differentiating between PPGs and other bodies of the Chamber of Deputies complies with the spirit of the Constitution, which mentions only committees and commissions as bodies.

Filip cautions that the old concept, according to which PPGs were bodies of the Chamber of Deputies, was wrong because PPGs cannot act in the name of the Chamber of Deputies, and, conversely, the Chamber of Deputies cannot establish them through a legal act [Filip 1996: 92]. Formally, PPGs have not been bodies of the Chamber of Deputies since 1995, but functionally they have been (during sessions of the Chamber of Deputies the chairperson of a PPG is particularly important). This thesis is also supported by Section 77, Paragraph 6 of the new Act on the Rules of Procedure, which mentions the obligation of the PPGs to notify the chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies. Pursuant to this paragraph, PPGs are obligated to notify the chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies in writing about the establishment of a PPG and the first names and last names of the chairperson and deputy chairpersons of the PPG. Furthermore, the PPG must submit to the chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies a nominal list of members of the PPG and advise the chairperson about any changes in membership in the PPG.

Let us now look briefly at the position of PPGs and their legal status before the effect of the new Rules of Procedure and primarily at the reasons for their weaker role compared to the present period. In our opinion, the reasons must be sought in the time when the previous Act on the Rules of Procedure (1989) was being prepared. In the communist parliament the institution of PPGs was irrelevant and therefore the concept of the act did not anticipate the existence of PPGs. It was not possible to change the concept of the Act, even with the four amendments that followed after 1989. Therefore, the old Rules of Procedure contained only two paragraphs on PPGs, and the terms 'PPG' or 'a chairperson of a PPG' were mentioned in three other places.²²

PPGs could arise as places of association for MPs of a similar political mind. From this provision we can glean that it was defined at a time when political parties had very little power and their structuring was not completed.²³ At least five MPs were necessary to establish a PPG. PPGs had the obligation to notify the chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies. PPGs could use the premises of the Chamber of Deputies for their activities and acquire funds from the budget of the Chamber of Deputies to pay their costs.²⁴

During the preparation of the Act on the Rules of Procedure in 1995, MPs were far more aware than their predecessors of the importance of PPGs, and this awareness is clear from the provisions (and the pervasion of PPGs throughout the entire act). In the 1995 Rules

²² The power of the chairperson to enter into the discussion at any time, the appointment of the bodies of the Chamber, and the composition of the Organisational Committee based on membership in PPGs.

²³ The new Rules of Procedure go beyond the concept of association according to a political focus by introducing a concept of association according to an affiliation to a political party for which an MP ran.

²⁴ In addition to PPGs, the old Act on the Rules of Procedure also contained a provision on the 'political narrow executive', members of which, in addition to the chairperson and deputy chairpersons of the Chamber of Deputies, were the chairpersons of the PPGs. The political narrow executive resolved issues of a political nature and in principle formed an informal balance to the Organisations Committee. There is no mention of the political narrow executive in the new Act on the Rules of Procedure. Nevertheless, it is informally summoned every Tuesday before the session of the Chamber of Deputies.

Table 2.2. Inter-PPG mobility²⁵ in the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech parliament between 1992 and 2002 (in %)

Party	1992	1996	1998
ODS	21.2	50.0	0.0
LB/KSČM*	40.0	0.0	0.0
ČSSD	106.3	4.9	0.0
KDU-ČSL	60.0	5.6	0.0
LSU	112.5	*	*
ODA	28.6	7.7	*
SPR-RSČ	64.3	0.0	*
HSD-SMS	192.9	*	*
KDS	110.0	*	*
US	*	*	10.5

Note: *In 1992 KSČM ran in coalition with Levý blok together with the party Demokratické levice.
Source: *Parliamentary DICE*.

of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies, two paragraphs are crucial for defining the position of PPGs: Paragraph 77 and 78 [the legal provisions concerning the PPGs were evaluated, for example, by Šimíček 1996]. Pursuant to these provisions, MPs may associate in PPGs according to their affiliation to the political parties and political movements on whose party list they ran in the elections. The provision is far stricter than the previous act, according to which MPs associated in PPGs according to their political ideas (Section 55b, Paragraph 1). The new Rules of Procedure admit the possibility of establishing a new PPG consisting of MPs affiliated to a political party other than that for which they were elected or consisting of independent MPs. These new clubs are at a disadvantage because they are not entitled to a subsidy from the budget of the Chamber of Deputies to pay their costs.²⁵ They can, however, use the premises of the Chamber of Deputies and its technical equipment. A far greater disadvantage for these new clubs, however, is that they are not entitled to a proportional representation in the bodies of the Chamber of Deputies, i.e. in committees and commissions, unless the Chamber of Deputies decides otherwise.

The new Act on the Rules of Procedure, in effect as of 1995, has increased the role of PPGs in the procedure of the Chamber of Deputies. In this context Kopecký points to the provisions concerning approval of a bill (the introduction of three readings) and election of the chairperson and deputy chairpersons of the Chamber of Deputies, which today occurs based only upon proposals from PPGs (1995: 180). The new Rules of Procedure further strengthened the position of political parties, which it not only shifted to the centre of the political process but made it the centre. The new Rules of Procedure also attempted to resolve the issue of the fragmentation of PPGs by increasing the minimum number of members of a PPG from five to ten and by eliminating the possibility of newly established PPGs

²⁵ The calculation is based on percentage of MPs defecting and joining a political party or movement during one legislative period. Co-opted MPs are excluded from the calculation.

²⁶ The rules of management of a PPG are approved annually by the Chamber of Deputies upon a proposal of the Organisational Committee. The rules of management specify the amount of the subsidy, and rules for obtaining, withdrawing, recording, balancing and controlling this subsidy. Opposition PPGs are entitled to a multiple of 1.3 of the regular subsidy.

Table 2.3. Number of PPGs' members in the third electoral term

Party	Number of members
Civic Democratic Party (ODS)	63
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM)	24
Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD)	74
Christian Democratic Party - Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL)	20
Freedom Union (US)	19

Source: Chamber of Deputies P CR.

acquiring funds for their operations. As can be seen, between the first and second term the inter-party mobility dropped significantly (Table 2.2.). Between the second and third term, there was a further decrease and the only party in which mobility was recorded was US. In view of the formula used for the calculation of inter-party mobility, the table also indicates that while in the first and partially also in the second term of the Chamber of Deputies mobility involved a transfer to another PPG, in the third term mobility entails a departure from a PPG and thus MPs become 'free MPs'.

In this respect, Kopecký notes with caution the relationship between the threshold and being able to establish a PPG. The new Rules of Procedure make it difficult for individual members of potential electoral coalitions to establish their own PPG and for smaller PPGs to exist at all [1995: 181]. This is a reaction to the problems of interpretation following the dissolution of the PPG HSDMS; after the departure of ten MPs from the PPG, the remaining four MPs defended the existence of the club even after the number fell below the required threshold of five [according to Šimíček 1996: 107]. It was specified that throughout the entire term the number of members of a PPG must remain at or above the number required to establish a PPG.

Furthermore, the Rules of Procedure stipulate that MPs affiliated with one political party can create only one PPG. This is one of the restrictions concerning the establishment of a new PPG. It came as a reaction to the dissolution of the ten-member PPG KDS into the PPGs KDS and KDS I at the time when the merger with ODS was being negotiated. At the same time, however, it is a defence against splinter factions which could receive a subsidy from the Chamber of Deputies for their activities and could pretend, under the same party name as the original PPG, to be the successor of party policy. The Rules of Procedure also allow PPGs to merge.

The internal workings of PPGs are not regulated in any way. PPGs have considerable constitutive power when establishing bodies of the Chamber of Deputies, such as committees and commissions (PPGs submit proposals according to the number of positions allocated), during the vote of the chairperson and deputy chairpersons of the Chamber of Deputies (only the PPGs are authorised to propose candidates), or in ensuring the organisation of the sessions of the Chamber of Deputies through the Organisational Committee.

From the overview of the legal arrangement concerning PPGs it is clear that the ability of those who are not members of a PPG to have any impact on the workings of the Chamber of Deputies is very limited. Unless the Chamber decides otherwise, only PPGs established at the beginning of the electoral term and affiliated to a party elected into the Chamber of Deputies are entitled to a proportional representation in the bodies of the Chamber of Deputies. It can happen that an MP does not become a member of any com-

mittee if no PPG proposes this MP for a committee or if a PPG makes the decision that this MP will not be a member of any committee.

Just as the Electoral Act increased the role of political parties in the political system of the Czech Republic, the new Rules of Procedure resulted in a significant increase in the power of PPGs in the Parliament. Thus the growing role of political parties was institutionalised. Using the example of inter-party mobility we documented the effect of the new Rules of Procedure on party unity. Using the theory of loyalty introduced by Alfred O. Hirschmann, the EXIT strategy was greatly circumscribed, and thus the relationship between financial and other resources and PPGs was strengthened [Hirschman 1979]. At the same time, the fragmentation of the existing PPGs was made more difficult by increasing the required number of PPG members. The near absolute cessation of inter-party mobility in most political parties has also meant a strengthening of the position of PPGs in relation to individual MPs.

3. Parliamentary party groups at the intersection

In the first chapter we established that the organisational features of political parties are among the basic factors that influence the decisions of MPs and PPGs. In this chapter, we shall examine the influence that these organisational features of political parties have. First of all, we shall focus on breaking down the term ‘political party’ into individual analytical categories, which will help us to better deal with the issue of how individual levels of the party influence and control each other. In the subsequent sections of the chapter we shall deal with the individual levels in greater detail.

The concept of a political party as a unified actor has been rejected by Richard Katz and Peter Mair, who have disaggregated party organisations into three different segments (in their case *faces*) which interact with one another [Katz, Mair 1993, 1994]:

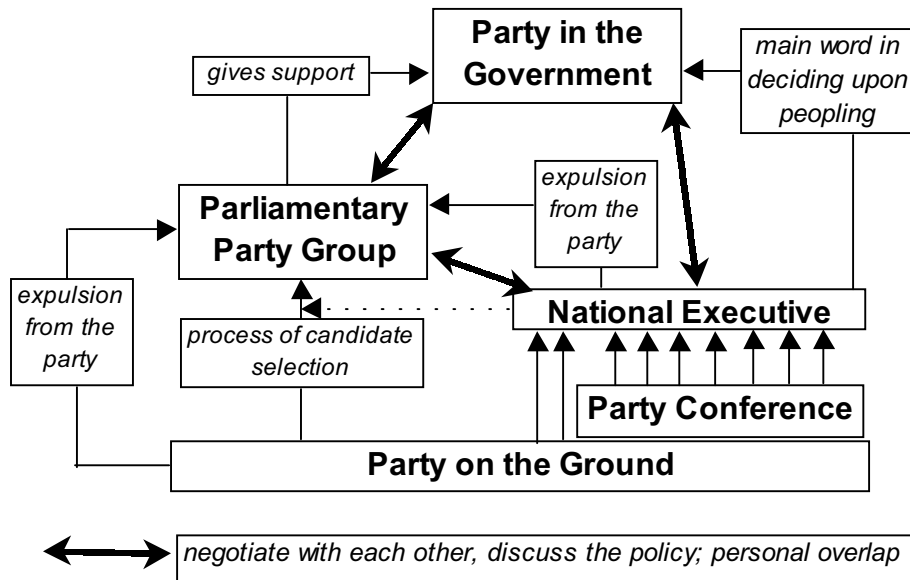
- the party in the public office – party representatives in the cabinet and the parliament
- the party on the ground – party membership organisation and potentially loyal voters²⁷
- the party in the central office – the leadership and the representative of the party on the ground; in the model of a mass party this is different from the party in the public office.

The reason why Katz and Mair introduce this disaggregated model and, on strong theoretical grounds, dismantle the concept of a political party as a unified actor lies in their effort to address the hypothesis relating to the decline of political parties. According to the two authors, the decline of political parties may at times only involve one of the party levels, while the power of others may increase. They propose that the party on the ground is the segment of the party that has been losing importance, while the party in the central office, and especially the party in the public office, have been gaining in strength.

PPGs are part of political parties, and in the classification proposed by Katz and Mair they are part of the party in the public office. In view of the fact that a principal interest of parties is amassing public offices and influencing public policies, it is logical that PPGs are located at the intersection and interact with the extra-parliamentary party. Specialised literature has proposed a number of theories about this; there are two basic poles, one of which is elucidated by Maurice Duverger [1964], and the other is found in a number of studies in the collection by Knut Heidar and Ruud Koole [2000a]. Duverger claimed that in left-wing

²⁷ Sam DePauw has even proposed a party in the electorate [DePauw 2002].

Figure 3. 1. The basic relationships among the party actors



parties in particular PPGs are subjected to extra-parliamentary party leadership. In the summary paper in the collection, Heidar and Koole claim that the PPG's dominance over and autonomy from extra-parliamentary party organisations has been growing. What an extra-parliamentary organisation is, however, is not sufficiently defined, and this leads to very general claims [see Heidar, Koole 2000c; Helms 2000].²⁸

In line with the above-mentioned authors, we shall attempt to group the extra-parliamentary party into three levels – the party in the public office, the party in the central office, and the party on the ground. Therefore, in this chapter we shall pay attention to the relationship of the PPG to these individual – analytically different and important – levels of party organisation: 1) the relationship between the PPG and members of the parliamentary party group; 2) the relationship between the PPG and the party in the government; 3) the relationship between the PPG and the party on the ground; and 4) the relationship between the PPG and the party in the central office.²⁹

Political parties are multi-level hierarchical organisations; their powers are defined by party statutes, and these powers are continually re-negotiated by individual actors. Therefore, it is possible to view the position of PPGs in the party and their interaction with other actors

²⁸ Ludger Helms has put forth a typology of relationships between the PPG and the party organisation. He has identified five types: parliamentary party dominance (Great Britain), party organisation dominance (France), integrative party leadership (Germany), functional autonomy (USA) and factiocracy (Japan). Only the first three types are suitable for describing European countries; the parliamentary party dominance type is based almost exclusively on the British model. There remain only two basic types of relationships that could be said to suit European countries. These three European models of the relationship between a PPG and party organisation are almost identical to Duverger's three types of relationships: domination of the party by the parliamentarians; equilibrium between the two power centres; domination of the party by the politicians outside parliament.

²⁹ Petr Kopecký, Pavel Hubáček and Petr Plecítý used a similar classification in their analysis of parliamentary party group behaviour in the Czech Republic between 1992 and 1996. The authors did not consider it necessary to analyse the structure of the PPG as such [Kopecký, Hubáček, Plecítý 1996].

within the political party from the perspective of the **theory of agency** [Alchian, Desmetz 1970]. The basic relationships between the individual levels of the party, or actors, are shown in Figure 3.1. It is necessary to keep in mind, however, that the highest level represents the lower level, and that highest level is established by and derives its legitimacy from the lower level. At the same time, however, the higher level has the option, under certain circumstances, to act autonomously without consulting the lower level. In the sections that follow, we shall first characterise these relationships in general and then we shall analyse them with respect to the Czech parliamentary parties.³⁰

3.1 The relationship between PPGs and members of parliamentary party groups

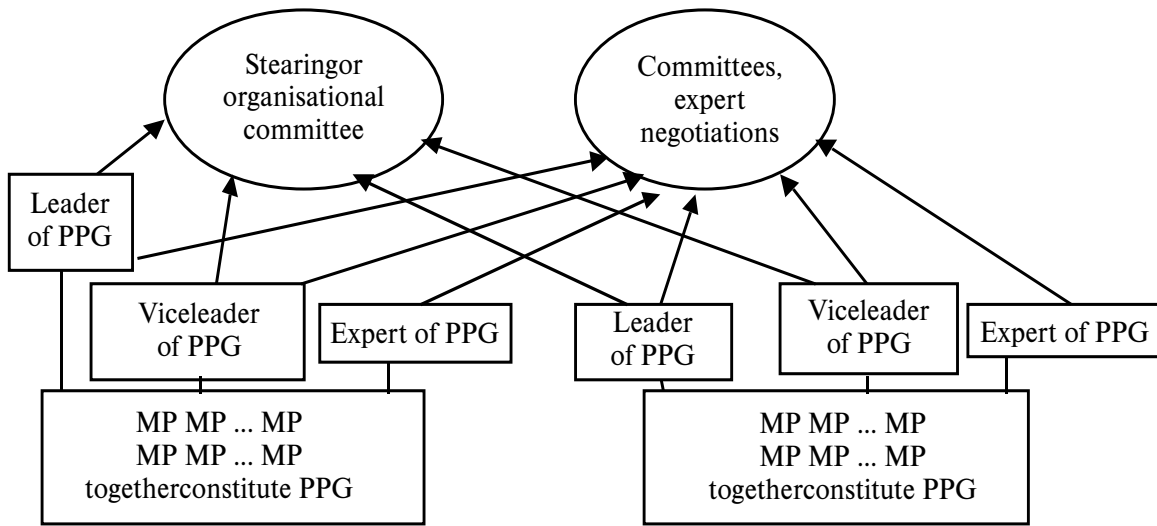
Using the definition put forth by Kaare Strom, a parliamentary organisation is defined by a set of *privileged groups*, sub-groups of MPs with specific powers, and a set of *procedures* that specify the powers of these groups with respect to the functions of the parliament [Strom 1997: 52]. In legislative studies, the classification into a vertical and horizontal differentiation is generally used when defining these privileged sub-groups: parliamentary committees represent the vertical differentiation-specialisation, and PPGs represent the horizontal differentiation-hierarchy [e.g., Strom 1997: 52–3].³¹ PPGs as such deny the elementary liberal democratic thesis that deputies are elected as equals (constitutionally, they are a non-hierarchical group of MPs because each should have the same voice, which is ensured through formal voting) and that in the parliament they act on the principle of a free mandate. Any definition that results in inequality also defines the above-mentioned privileged groups. These definitions of the privileged sub-groups are usually contained in the rules of procedure of the chamber as well as in the rules, institutions and routines which are used but often not codified (on the definitions and rules of conduct in the Czech Republic, see Chapter 2).

PPGs represent one of the privileged groups that introduce a hierarchy into the sessions of the parliament/the parliamentary procedure. On the one hand, the internal mechanisms within a PPG create a hierarchy between MPs-members of a PPG: individual MPs agree to elect persons who will represent them at some negotiations. These involve, in particular, persons such as the chairperson, deputy chairperson, or experts. On the other hand, thanks to the procedures of MP selection and appointment, as well as the procedures used for debating bills and the organisation of the parliament operation, PPGs hierarchise the entire parliament – agents of individual PPGs (and only they) are authorised to negotiate

³⁰ When describing and analysing the Czech situation in this and the following chapters, we start from the ‘recommendations’ of Klaus von Beyme, who identified four major sources of a systematic study of relationships between parties and PPGs: 1) norms of behaviour pertaining to MPs set forth in the party statutes; 2) verbal internalisation of these norms and the use of questionnaire surveys among MPs; 3) vote analysis; and 4) the behaviour of parties when forming cabinets and upon their dissolution [1983: 345].

³¹ We cannot agree with differentiating parliamentary organisation in terms of specialisation and hierarchy because parliamentary vertical specialisation is also a hierarchy. The identification of organisations representing the consequence of specialisations (committees) with the privileged groups suggests that there is a certain hierarchy. Committees may be viewed through the prism of the theory of agency, which sees MPs and PPGs as *principals* and the elected representatives of PPGs in committees and the committees themselves as their *agents*. The constitutive feature of a hierarchy is the institute of delegation or representation (the provision of the exclusive right to make decisions and act), and membership in parliamentary committees meets this prerequisite.

Figure 3.2. How PPGs hierarchies the parliament



with the agents of other parties; the privileged committee thus constituted creates yet another hierarchy in the parliamentary procedure (see Figure 3.2.).

Coming back to the various definitions of the PPG presented in the previous chapter, we find that it is an organised group of members of the parliament who are members of one party or have been elected on the ballot of the same party or have created a common PPG. If we compare this definition with others [especially Heidar, Koole 2000b: 6–8; Heidar, Koole 2000c: 249; the Act on the Rules of the Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies], we discover that these definitions agree that PPGs are an organised group of MPs. The basic and undeniable feature of PPGs is their organisation and structure. The most important organisational features of PPGs include: (1) the resources the group has at its disposal, and (2) the decision-making mechanism within the PPG.

In recent decades, PPGs in Western Europe have been receiving increasingly larger state subsidies to ensure the operation of the group and the necessary expertise; furthermore, individual MPs have been receiving increasingly higher salaries. Knut Heidar and Ruud Koole caution that these **financial and other resources** influence the division of power between individual MPs and PPGs, and between PPGs and EPOs. The subsidies provided to individual MPs improve their position in relation to the PPG and the EPO, while contributions provided to (or passing through) a PPG result in an improvement in its position. This growing income from public funds may result in the establishment of a group of people living for and off of politics, who cluster around PPGs or individual MPs [Heidar, Koole 2000b: 10].³²

The financing of PPGs in the Czech Republic is addressed in the Rules of Procedure and the related regulations. PPGs may use the premises of the Chamber of Deputies to conduct their activities. To pay for the costs, PPGs receive a contribution from the Chamber of Deputies' budget, calculated according to the number of deputies who are members of the individual PPGs. Every year, the Organisational Committee proposes the rules of management and the amount of contributions (in effect, however, they are proposed by the Budget

³² The line of argument may also be reversed: the power structure influences the distribution of resources. To put it briefly, a nascent power centre in the parliament will increase its income compared to political parties.

Committee) and these are approved by the Chamber of Deputies. Opposition PPGs receive a 1.3 multiple of the regular contributions. The contribution consists of two parts: (1) a fixed amount per PPG; and (2) a floating amount according to the number of members in a PPG. In 2001 the fixed monthly amount equalled CZK 23,100 (approximately EUR 770) and the floating amount was CZK 3,230 (approximately EUR 110) [for more, see Kunc 2001: 15–18]. These contributions are mostly used to cover the salaried employees of PPGs (secretary, manager) and for expert studies.

In addition to the contributions for activities of PPGs, MPs receive the regular salary of an MP, which is defined in Act No. 236/1995 Coll., on the Salary and Other Perquisites Related to the Performance of the Position of Representatives of State Power. The basis for the calculation of the salary is the ‘assessment basis’, which depends on the salary of employees in organisations budgeted for or receiving contributions from the state budget. It equals the total of the highest salary bracket and the maximum amount employees of ministries may receive as a personal bonus. In 2001 the salary assessment basis equalled CZK 41,800 (approximately EUR 1,393). It is also necessary to add to this other amounts that depend on the position assumed in the Chamber of Deputies, and also amounts which constitute compensations and reimbursements for various expenses, and compensations in kind (compensation for leasing a deputy’s office in the region, the cost of furnishing them, transport expenses and representation expenses, accommodation costs in the city in which the Chamber of Deputies is located etc.). The amounts paid out can be as much as double that received according to the ‘salary assessment basis’. MPs are also entitled to one assistant and to specialised and administrative work provided by the Chamber of Deputies [for detailed information, see Kolář, Pecháček, Syllová 2002].

Decision-making mechanisms in individual PPGs differ. They are largely influenced by the internal statutes, the frequency of parliamentary meetings, the size of the group, and the unity of opinion. In most cases, PPGs have their own statutes that define the internal decision-making mechanisms. PPGs prefer a majority vote on internal matters but they do not vote very often [Döring 1995].³³ In the Czech Republic, all the PPGs have their own (non-public) statutes. These statutes generally define bodies, their powers, and decision-making mechanisms. The statutory bodies of all PPGs include the chairperson, deputy chairpersons, the secretary and the manager. The formal structure of parties elected between 1998 and 2002 to the Chamber of Deputies is shown in Table 3.1. On first glance, we notice the large number of deputy chairperson positions in ČSSD, and the large turnover of MPs in these posts; no MP was able to secure this position for the entire four-year term.³⁴

In addition to the leadership of a PPG, represented publicly by the chairperson and deputy chairpersons, PPGs create other structures. For the most part these involve larger groups of MPs forming the ‘presidium’ or leadership of PPGs. In larger PPGs, chairpersons of specialised working groups established by PPGs (PPGs which largely copy the structure of the committees) are also members of the presidium (this refers to ČSSD and ODS). The chairpersons of the specialised groups (in parliamentary parlance *experts*) are representatives of PPGs and present the PPG opinion on a debated bill of an act, or negotiate com-

³³ For example, in Norway PPGs employ a majority vote only on matters on which they cannot reach an internal agreement. Only the Progress Party requires the qualified majority of two-thirds of votes to bind other members of the PPG to maintain the party line [Rasch 1999].

³⁴ The only exception is MP Bohuslav Sobotka, who was the deputy chairman of a PPG for a period of two and a half years and then chairman of the PPG for one year. Sobotka assumed the post of the deputy chairman only after the first great change of the PPG leadership.

Table 3.1. Number of members of PPGs, their chairpersons and deputy chairpersons between 1998 and 2002

PPG	Number of members	Chairperson	Deputy chairperson
ČSSD	74	1 (3)	2, 3, 5, 6, 7 (14)
KDU-ČSL	20	1 (2)	2, 3 (3)
KSČM	24	1 (1)	2 (2)
ODS	63	1 (1)	4 (7)
US	19, 18, 17	1 (2)	1 (1)

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*

Note: the figure in brackets gives the number of individuals who performed the position in question in the monitored time period.

promises with other parties' agents. Chairpersons of the expert groups may delegate their powers to other members of the working group. Individuals responsible for the preparation of a party's opinion on a bill are called *guarantors*, or sometimes also *rapporteurs*. Larger PPGs build a structure that is different from that of the smaller ones. In general, the size of the PPG influences its structure in a crucial way – the smaller the number of MPs, the clearer the structure (in the Czech Republic, usually one chairperson and one deputy chairperson, without expert groups); a larger number of MPs leads to a multi-level organisation.

The unity in opinion and the non-existence of fractions (or their low number) leads to the fact that PPGs need only a simple mechanism for interest representation and intermediation. Based on the findings in Western literature we propose that a multi-level structure of a PPG reflects a lack of unity in interests and opinion and the effort to mediate and ensure unity [Heidar, Koole 2000b: 9]. We may only guess at the unity of opinion in Czech PPGs between 1998 and 2002 (in fact, not only in this period) because the results of the survey of the opinions of MPs concerning issues of public policy are not known to us.

The frequency of meetings of PPGs makes it possible for PPGs to secure timely support for individual opinions and prevents autonomous conduct or the delegation of too many powers to PPG agents for negotiation. Czech PPGs meet regularly once a week on Tuesdays.³⁵ Mondays are always reserved as 'MP-days', when citizens may contact their representatives in the regions. Starting Tuesday, either the committees or the session convene, and PPGs meet before the session of the bodies of the Chamber of Deputies. Informally, PPGs meet especially during the course of the session to agree on the current strategy. In these cases, they are *ad hoc* meetings. Sometimes there may also be meetings every morning before the session of the Chamber of Deputies convenes.

For their internal needs, PPGs classify individual votes in the session of the Chamber of Deputies according to their importance. The degree of importance in individual PPGs varies on a scale from 3 to 5, where at one end there is a demand for absolute unity and participation in the vote (votes of confidence, on the state budget, on constitutional acts or on the electoral act), and at the other there is freedom to vote as the MPs see fit. Because there is a 'free mandate' (see Chapter 2), it is not possible to force MPs to vote according to a given party position; nevertheless, parties have devised mechanisms to ensure the obedience of

³⁵ The Chamber of Deputies uses a five-week session cycle – two weeks for the session of the Chamber of Deputies, one week for working in the region, and two weeks for committees. At the beginning of the 1998-2002 electoral term the Chamber of Deputies was using a seven-week cycle, but it was modified owing to the number of bills debated related to the accession process to the EU.

Table 3.2. MPs' Evaluation of Party Discipline (in %)

Party	should be stronger	should remain the same	should be weaker
ČSSD	50.0	39.1	9.4
KDU-ČSL	23.5	70.6	5.9
KSČM	18.2	81.8	0
ODS	12.5	80.4	7.1
US	25.0	75.0	0

Source: *Parliamentary DiCe*.

MPs. One of these mechanisms is the internal decision-making by PPGs about the opinions to be held. Some PPGs (for example, ČSSD and KSČM) have introduced the obligation to have a vote on each item of debate – this makes it possible for the leadership to bind MPs to unified voting because ‘the vote of the PPG confirmed the opinion held’; a breach of this provision would involve, for example, a breach of the statutes in the sense that the opposing MP would be considered to have acted against the resolution of a party body. Internal statutes also make it possible to assign various degrees of obedience to individual bills of acts, by which the PPG may bind the MPs to taking a unified course of action because the vote in the session was marked as binding and the PPG agreed on such a course of action. The estimated number of bills for which PPGs demand absolute support is 10%.³⁶

Another mechanism used to bind MPs to take a unified stance is the requirement that an MP notify the leadership in advance of defecting from a party position. KSČM MPs must explain their adversarial opinion to PPG members in advance. These measures are in place because having that preliminary information makes a defecting vote transparent and also psychologically difficult, and at the same time it allows the party leadership to prepare and negotiate the required support. When defecting from a party position, KSČM MPs must give some thought as to whether they are not about to vote against the electoral programme of the party, in which case they must explain their stance to the KSČM national executive.

Table 3.2. provides information about answers to the question of how MPs assess the party discipline in their PPG. With respect to a positive evaluation of party discipline (the party discipline should remain as it is), KSČM ranked first, followed by ODS, US, KDU-ČSL and ČSSD. The high degree to which MPs of ČSSD demanded greater party discipline is surprising, especially if we compare this demand with the relatively high value of Rice’s Index of Party Cohesion (see Chapter 4). Only MPs of KSČM and US do not demand less party discipline in voting.

With regard to the question of whether in the case of disagreement with the PPG MPs usually vote according to the resolution of the PPG or according to their own opinion, the response could help us answer the question of whether PPGs are able to bind their MPs to vote in unity with the party. MPs of ČSSD, followed by those of ODS, most frequently vote according to the resolution of the PPG (see Table 3.3.). The traditionally well-disciplined MPs of KSČM ranked third. We must be careful, however, when interpreting the answers of

³⁶ The only act we know of where PPGs demanded a unified vote and it was not secured was the debate on the governmental Act on a loan to buy supersonics Jas 39 – Gripen (proposal number 1229, third electoral term) when several deputies of various parties defected from their own PPG.

Table 3.3. Usual vote by an MP in the case of disagreement with PPG (in %)

	ODS	US	KDU-ČSL	ČSSD	KSČM
General					
According to PPG	42.59	18.75	12.50	69.84	27.27
According to one's opinion	57.41	81.25	87.50	30.16	72.73
Constitutional bill					
According to PPG	64.81	52.94	56.25	90.77	90.48
According to one's opinion	35.19	47.06	43.75	9.23	9.52
Budget					
According to PPG	68.52	82.35	56.25	92.19	85.71
According to one's opinion	31.48	17.65	43.75	7.81	14.29
Other economic issues					
According to PPG	44.44	47.06	40.00	59.38	36.36
According to one's opinion	55.56	52.94	60.00	40.63	63.64
Social policy					
According to PPG	48.15	43.75	21.43	63.49	59.09
According to one's opinion	51.85	56.25	78.57	36.51	40.91
Foreign policy					
According to PPG	62.96	58.82	75.00	73.02	63.64
According to one's opinion	37.04	41.18	25.00	26.98	36.36
EU Accession					
According to PPG	54.55	35.29	53.33	82.54	54.55
According to one's opinion	45.45	64.71	46.67	17.46	45.45

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*.

KSČM MPs to the general question about voting in the case of disagreement with the PPG. In the responses concerning individual public policies, Communist MPs more often responded that they voted in unity with the PPG, for example, than did MPs of ODS, though the latter declared far more often that they voted in unity with the PPG when asked about general voting. MPs of the opposition KDU-ČSL and US tended to vote autonomously – according to their own opinion. This data will be confirmed in Chapter 4 when data on the unity of voting are analysed.

Upon closer examination of answers concerning voting on various issues, it becomes clear that in the third term MPs of the ruling ČSSD conformed most to the opinions of the PPG and were the least autonomous in their decisions. MPs across the political spectrum tended to vote more in unity with the resolution of the PPG on constitutional acts, the budget, accession to the EU, and, to a lesser extent, foreign policy. Issues of social policy and economic issues other than the budget provide space for greater autonomy.

It is clear from what has been stated above that the resources provided allow PPGs to act on par with the extra-parliamentary party because these resources allow them some independence from their parent parties. The resources granted also allow MPs to be independent from membership in a PPG or the party.³⁷ Internal decision-making mechanisms in PPGs

³⁷ This fact is proven by the example of MP Marie Machatá, who in 1999 defected from the US PPG, and for the rest of the electoral term was an unaffiliated chairperson.

suggest that PPG leadership (and in some cases also the party leadership) have the tools to affect the opinions held and to bind other PPG members to support their stance. In most cases, however, the preferred stance is presented as a moral appeal to the MPs.

3.2 The relationship between the PPG and the party in the government

Once a political party is represented in the cabinet, the ministers from such a party or appointed by such a party become a major factor of political parties. In the interaction between the executive and legislative power in parliaments, PPGs play a specific role which derives from three basic facts: (1) PPGs play an important role in creating and maintaining cabinets, and in terminating their existence; (2) the ruling PPG must learn to live with the fact that it is expected to support legislation submitted by the cabinet; and (3) control of the cabinet's activities [on the basic role of the parliament in relation to the cabinet, see Gallagher, Laver and Mair 1995: 42].

With respect to the issue at hand, namely the decision-making by MPs and PPGs, the first two roles are most important. They are related to the fact that the party in the parliament supports its own cabinet. Gallagher, Laver and Mair caution that in most Western European countries the support for the government by the ruling party or the parties of the ruling coalition is not automatic. Parliaments do not want to let the cabinets have the main say in the preparation of bills; nor do they want to use the sanction of a vote of no confidence and terminate the cabinet's existence when the cabinet fails to meet the parliament's demands. Parliaments, or rather the ruling PPGs, prefer being able to participate in the preparation of bills with the cabinet. For the purpose of securing the support of PPGs, cabinets consult and discuss bills with MPs long before the bills are submitted to the parliament [1995: 43–52].

When describing the relationship between a PPG and the ruling party in the Czech Republic³⁸, we will focus on three aspects of this relationship: (1) the mechanism for pre-debating bills of acts; (2) a personal overlap between the cabinet and a PPG; and (3) meetings of the cabinet and the PPG. The cabinet as a whole has little control over the **preparation of bills of acts** at ministries; it is controlled far more efficiently by a certain minister, his/her deputies, and the bureaucracy [Čada, Kabele, Linek 2002]. During the preparation of a bill of an act, most ministers establish 'working groups', which bring together MPs representing each PPG, as well as experts and entrepreneurs dealing with the area under debate.³⁹ MP-experts from their parties on a given issue are present during the preparation of the bill and thus can present their opinions about the bill. When analysing the legislative activities and the legislative planning of the Czech cabinets between 1998 and 2002, it was discovered that the two basic characteristics of these processes are, first, the effort of the leadership of the ministry to ensure political support for a bill, and second, greater access to

³⁸ During the surveyed period of 1998 to 2002 it is appropriate to monitor this relationship only in the case of ČSSD because it was the only ruling party.

³⁹ „Primarily, it is an issue of co-operation because a smart ministry...and as far as I know, all ministries do it, each perhaps has a different technique but the principle is the same. As I said, a smart ministry does not send a bill to the Chamber of Deputies without having, in some way, pre-prepared it in advance. For this reason, ministries usually appoint *ad hoc* working groups for this one purpose. And usually they do it in such a way that they invite deputies of all political parties through the guarantee committee, and each political party appoints its own deputy for this preparatory working group... The Minister appointed a working group, the working group consisted of experts in various fields, of course mostly from the business sphere... and thus experts from various fields and also MPs“ [An interview with a former MP of ČSSD].

information available to officials during the preparation of the bills [Čáda, Kabele, Linek 2002]. In this sense, the relationships of the ruling PPG and the party in the government can be described thus: thanks to the mechanism in which bills are prepared, the comments of the MPs of the ruling party/parties may be incorporated into the bill; in exchange for this option of being able to participate in the preparation of a bill at the time the bill is being put together, MPs are required to support cabinet bills.

The situation between 1998 and 2002 in the Czech Republic was influenced by the fact that the cabinet was a minority cabinet. Thus, the pre-debate of bills took the form of finding support for the bills among other parties, opposition parties, and often among various combinations of these parties. The cabinet was quite successful in securing various forms of support for its bills [for the frequencies of individual coalitions and their success rate, see Linek 2000]. Furthermore, the existence of a minority cabinet also influenced the decisions of MPs of the ruling party. MPs of the ruling party perceived it almost as their obligation to support their cabinet.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the preparation of bills in the manner mentioned above was not always quite so harmonious. As an example, we can present the case of the Media Act, which addresses the rules of enterprising in the field of television and radio broadcasting. The working group, headed by the minister, prepared a bill of the act. The text of the bill, however, changed during the debate in the cabinet and thus the bill the Chamber of Deputies received was different than the one on which the working group had agreed. Even members of the ruling PPG opposed their own Minister of Culture, and the chairman of the expert commission of the ruling PPG for Education, Culture and the Media publicly voiced strong criticism of the Minister of Culture. This resulted in the approval of the private member bill.

A **personal overlap** is another way of defining the relationships between a PPG and the cabinet. When evaluating an overlap it is necessary to distinguish three levels: (1) an overlap between the position of a minister and an MP; (2) an overlap between the position of a prominent PPG functionary (chairperson, deputy chairperson) and the minister; and (3) other types of overlaps. Let us begin with the overlap between the position of the minister and an MP. When considering this overlap, it is necessary to take into account that it is more difficult for a minister who is not an MP to negotiate support and compromises with members of his/her own and other PPGs. His/her presence in the Chamber of Deputies is not permanent, unlike minister-MPs whose participation in the sessions is largely permanent. A second disadvantage is that the minister is not present at meetings of the PPG and thus cannot argue in favour of modifications of the bill s/he proposes, but instead must rely on the MP-guarantor to formulate the minister's opinions exactly and to not try to modify the bill or the position of the PPG on the bill. The situation in the Czech Republic is documented in Table 3.4.; it shows the percentage of MPs in the cabinet in each individual year. In the Czech Republic ministers are not obligated by law to give up their seat as an MP or Senator.

As for the overlap between an important position in a ČSSD PPG (chairperson and deputy chairperson) and a membership in the cabinet, this situation was not recorded.⁴¹ This

⁴⁰ „Between 1998 and 2002 it was, of course, something altogether different (relationship to the cabinet – author's note) because the most important matter was the obligation of the PPG to support the cabinet, preserve the cabinet, ensure that things work for the cabinet they way they should. I believe that the PPG honoured this agreement although it may have differed in internal discussions but never on the outside.“ [Interview with the former MP of ČSSD].

⁴¹ Only Václav Grulich was PPG deputy chairman and Minister of the Interior for several weeks (until 18 August 1998). He was elected the deputy chairman of the PPG right at the opening meeting of the PPG and

Table 3.4. Percentage of MPs and senators in cabinets in the Czech Republic (1992–2002)

Cabinet	Number of ministers	MPs (number / %)	Senators (number / %)
V. Klaus's cabinet 1992–1996 (as of 1 January 1993)	19	5 / 26.3 %	0 / 0 %
V. Klaus's cabinet 1992–1996 (as of 1 January 1996)	19	6 / 31.6 %	0 / 0 %
V. Klaus's cabinet 1996–1998 (as of 1 January 1997)	16	14 / 87.5 %	0 / 0 %
J. Tošovský's cabinet 1998 (as of 1 February 1998)	17	8 / 47.1 %	0 / 0 %
M. Zeman's cabinet 1998–2002 (as of 1 January 1999)	19	8 / 42.1 %	4 / 21.1 %
M. Zeman's cabinet 1998–2002 (as of 1 January 2001)	16	7 / 43.8 %	3 / 18.8 %

Source: *Parliamentary DiCe*

Note: In 1992 the leadership of a majority of parties ran for what was then Federal Assembly. The Czech National Council, which was transformed into the Chamber of Deputies, was considered to be a second-rank chamber.

is due to the fact that the role of the PPG chairpersons and deputy chairpersons is extremely time-consuming and demands expertise in various fields (meaning that these MPs should have a good grasp of all the debated bills, of potential coalitions to support the debated bills, and of the participation of the party's MPs in the session etc.).

The overlap between the PPG and the cabinet may also take other forms, such as the overlap between the position of an MP and a minister's advisor. Between 1998 and 2002 this happened on several occasions in the case of the chairperson of the expert commissions of the ČSSD PPG. This MP could thus participate in the meetings of the ministry's narrow executive as well as in the advisory meetings of the minister. Such close co-ordination made it possible for the ministers who introduced this co-operation to find support for their bills within their PPG more easily.

The last significant factor that has an influence on the relationship between the PPG and the party in the government is **joint meetings and negotiations**. Meetings of the entire PPG and the cabinet were not frequent between 1998 and 2002 – in fact there were only a few such meetings and those who were present in these meetings remarked that they were quite formal. Far more important were the meetings of the PPG leadership⁴² and the cabinet, which occurred when pre-debating support for key bills.

To sum up the co-operation of the ČSSD PPG and the cabinet between 1998 and 2002, we have seen that this relationship was close, especially with respect to pre-debating bills of acts. Overlaps between the cabinet and the PPG in the monitored period were quite numerous (the percentage of MPs and senators in the cabinet exceeded 60%, and about 16% of MPs-ministers were in the ČSSD PPG). In this respect we also have to mention that some MPs became ministerial advisors. All these processes and facts contributed to the fact that the co-operation with the cabinet was very close and that the activities of the PPG were led by the effort to ensure support for cabinet bills.

ceased to be the deputy chairman after the summer vacation, by which time he had already been appointed the Minister of the Interior.

⁴² The leadership of ČSSD PPG was composed of the chairperson, the deputy chairpersons and chairpersons of individual working groups of the PPG.

3.3 The relationship between the PPG and the party on the ground

In order to analyse decision-making mechanisms, we have divided the relationship between PPGs and their own parties into two parts: the relationship to the party on the ground, and the relationship to the party in the central office. In addition to voters, the party on the ground is the elementary source of legitimacy of a political party. The relationship of party members to their own party, its leadership and the party's representatives in public offices can be regarded as *contractual*. Upon entering a party, members sign an application form with the symbolic promise to support the goals, programme and statutes of the party and they undertake to support the party, for example by paying membership contributions. In exchange, the party offers them the opportunity to run for internal as well as public offices, the ability to influence the party programme and orientation, and the ability to control and criticise party bodies and party representatives in public offices for poor implementation of party policies. What tools, then, does the party on the ground have to control and influence the activities of the PPG? The first tool is the party conference, which is where a major accounting for and presentation of activities takes place. The second is the ability of the party organisation to expel a deputy from a party and the influence of the party on the ground on the candidate selection process, depending on whether these processes are decentralised.⁴³

Party conferences are where delegates of individual local branches elect the party leadership and the national executives and where decisions are made about the political strategy or programme. In the case of Western European political parties, there are discussions at party conferences about the programme, and not infrequently there are also disputes between deputies and regular members [Gallagher, Laver, Mair 1995: 251]. Additionally, however, the party conference is also where the major accounting for activities occurs and where an inventory of activity is taken. Individual party bodies present the 'annual reports on their activities'. In the case of Czech parties, regular agenda items at party conferences include the *Report on the Activities of the Parliamentary Party Group*. This obligation is defined only in the statutes of KDU-ČSL, KSČM and US-DEU; however, the party conferences of ODS and ČSSD also debate these reports. The reports are very detailed and take the form of a true inventory-taking. The debates on the reports are quite formal and no conclusions may be deduced from them. An important factor is also the frequency of the party conferences. If a party conference is held once every four years, as in the case of KSČM, or once every two years, as in the case of ČSSD, KDU-ČSL and ODS (since 2001; until that time once a year), there can be no talk about the control of MP activities by the party on the ground. The ability to control MP activities by the party on the ground is thus diminished to almost zero.

The candidate selection process and the ability to exclude an MP from the party may be a tool for the party on the ground to control MP activities. It is contingent upon the fact that these processes are decentralised. Let us focus on the **candidate selection process** first. In Western Europe, the system allowing all party members to make a decision on candidates

⁴³ The ability of the party on the ground to control and influence the conduct of MPs may also be seen in the activities of the national executive; national executive members are elected by party members and their representatives at party conferences. We will dedicate the last sub-chapter to the relationship between the national executive and PPGs because we consider the relationship of the party on the ground to the national executive to be so intermediated that it makes no sense to analyse the national executive as a body of the party on the ground.

Table 3.5. Candidate selection process in individual parties for the 2002 elections

Party	Proposing body	Decision-making body	Ability of the party executive to modify the ballot
ČSSD	Local branch, county executive committee and interest organisations of youth, women and seniors	County and district conference	The national broad executive (<i>central executive committee</i>) may exclude a candidate based on a proposal of the presidium
KDU-ČSL	A party member in a district, a local branch, the county, district and national committee, the county, district and national conference, the presidium	District nomination conference	The national executive (<i>national committee</i>), after a consultation with the district committee, may change the rank of candidates
KSČM	The county conference, based on a recommendation of existing members of the PPG or an executive committee	District conference	The national broad executive (<i>central committee</i>) can change the rank of candidates
ODS	Local branch	Area and regional conference	The national executive (<i>executive committee</i>) may initiate negotiation proceedings; the regional conference consults the ballot leader with the national executive
US	Party member; the county conference conducts pre-selection	District conference	The national executive (<i>national committee</i>) may exclude a candidate

Source: *party statutes*

Note: In KSČM the candidate selection process starts in the PPG, which informs the party leadership about its recommendations concerning the position of existing MPs on the future ballot.

is used in a minimum number of cases. In most countries, the *convention system/selection conference system* is used. In some parties, selection is done by the local party committee the decision of which the party conference only confirms. In some parties which use this candidate selection process, the *national executive* in the centre can change the rank of candidates. In the remaining parties, the selection occurs in national executives, numbering between 20 to 100 members (this concerns, especially, parties in France, Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain) [Gallagher, Laver, Mair 1995: 253–259]. Leon Epstein claims that the effect of candidate selection by national executives and local organisations is similar – local activists, just like party leadership, want MPs who will be loyal to the party policy defined nationally, and thus the type of people selected locally is also acceptable to the leadership [quoted according to Gallagher, Laver, Mair 1995: 258].

In the Czech Republic, each of the five parliamentary parties define different and rather complicated candidate selection processes. We shall examine the candidate selection process only with respect to the aspects concerning the ability of the party on the ground to control MPs [for greater detail and more complexity, see Outlý 2003, forthcoming]. The important variables of the candidate selection process in the surveyed parties are shown in Table 3.5. As can be seen from the table, the party on the ground in the local area, county and district has a significant role in the candidate selection process. Especially in the case of ODS, the importance of the local branches has been growing because in ODS candidates

Table 3.6. Provisions concerning the expulsion of a party member in the party statutes in 2000

party	Initiator of the motion	Decision-maker	Possibility of appeal
ČSSD	Not defined	Member meeting of the local branch (to be confirmed by the county executive committee); the county conference; the central executive committee (3/5 majority required)	Yes - county conference, central executive committee and the conference
KDU-ČSL	Not defined	District or national committee	Yes - the national arbitration committee
KSČM	Member meeting of the local branch, in the case of inactivity it is the county committee or the central committee	Member meeting of the local branch, in the case of inactivity it is the county committee or the central committee	Yes - county arbitration commission, the Central Arbitration Commission and the party conference
ODS	Not defined	Meeting of all members of the local branch	Yes - local settlement committee
US-DEU	Any body of the party	National arbitration committee	Yes - the national committee

Source: *party statutes*

may only be proposed by local branches. If a current MP does not have the support of a local branch, it can be expected that s/he will not be re-elected, because no one else will propose him/her. The candidate selection usually takes place at the county and district nomination conferences.

Czech parties have various provisions concerning the **expulsion of members or MPs from the party**. The basic differentiating feature lies in the level of the party where such a decision on expulsion is made. The possibilities vary, from an expulsion of a member by the local branch of which s/he is a member, to an expulsion by the national executive (see Table 3.4.). The reasons for expulsion are generally identical: serious breach of the statutes, failure to observe the programme or a resolution of party bodies, or damaging the good name of the party.⁴⁴ As can be seen from the table 3.6, the decision-making process is decentralised only in ODS, ČSSD and KSČM. Nevertheless, we should not forget to add that only in ODS do we see an absolute decentralisation: decentralisation where an MP is usually the chairperson of the local branch or a high party functionary in the region. In the case of ČSSD and KSČM, the decentralisation involves sharing decision-making on the expulsion with the lower ranks (in both these parties the party leadership has maintained a strong say in the decision-making process). Only in US-DEU is the decision on the expulsion made by the party arbitration body.

The only party that expelled a deputy during the period surveyed was US-DEU. The expulsion was due to machinations with the party on the ground in the region and involved MP Vladimír Paulík, the chairperson of the local association, who engaged in these machinations. In 1996, ČSSD, then in opposition, took advantage of the opportunity to expel its

⁴⁴ We do not consider it necessary to analyse the reasons for expulsion because they are defined in very general terms and thus are difficult to measure; the parties use them as they see fit, according to the particular case.

MP from the party after three of its MPs voted in favour of the government bill of the Act on the State Budget. The expulsion was initiated by the central executive committee of the party.

The ability of the party on the ground to control MP activities using the institute of expulsion does not apply to US-DEU and ODS. In the case of ČSSD and KSČM, the parties on the ground may enter the game but have to take into consideration that the institute of expulsion in these parties is also applicable on the level of the national executives whose decision may 'precede' that of the local organisations. In the case of KDU-ČSL, the institute of expulsion is delegated only to the national executive.

It is clear from the analysis above that the possibility of the party on the ground to influence the opinions of MPs is limited only to the candidate selection process, during which the local organisations as well as the county and district conferences may prevent a re-election of a current MP. Such control is then mostly *ex post*. As for the sources of party dissent we can say that the regional nature of the candidate selection process provides a sufficient basis to support the thesis that regions may function as sources of party dissent.

3.4 The relationship between the PPG and the party in the central office

In addition to the relationship described in the preceding section, concerning the party on the ground, the relationship of a PPG to its own party also involves the relationship between the PPG and the party's executive bodies. Before we proceed with the analysis of the two party levels, we must define which bodies we are referring to. Party executive bodies have various positions in the party hierarchy, and they vary in power, composition and, last but not least, frequency of meetings. These characteristics also define the extent of their power. All the parties surveyed have at least a two-level structure of party executive bodies; the structure of the bodies is shown in Table 3.7.

To analyse the relationship between PPGs and executive party bodies we shall first employ two procedures regularly used for party surveys: (1) the definition of the relationship between the two levels in the statutes; and (2) the personal overlap [van Biezen 2000].⁴⁵ When we compare the definition of the **relationship of the PPG and the party executive** in the statutes of Czech parties and foreign parties, we see that the provisions in Czech statutes are very general [van Biezen 2000]. Moreover, this relationship in the surveyed period of 1998 to 2002 is defined very freely - PPGs are not bound at all by party decisions and they are only to implement party opinions and attitudes. Though the statutes describe the relationship between the PPG and the party executive in abstract terms and as if they were not binding, this does not mean that the relationship between the two actors is not close.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Unlike Ingrid van Biezen [2000] we shall not use the amount of funds provided to the two actors as a measure of the relationship. The use of the variable 'provision of financial funds' entails several unresolved questions, such as whether to include the salaries of MPs in PPG income, whether to differentiate in the party's income the mechanism for allocating funds within the party, or whether to use only aggregated data etc. Therefore, since there has not yet been a theoretical discussion concerning this issue we consider this variable to be inexact.

⁴⁶ There is definitely a closer relationship in the case of KSČM, where the executive committee of the central committee, beyond the scope defined in the statutes, debates proposals of candidates for the position of PPG chairperson and proposes the nomination for a debate in the PPG. A debate on the appointment of the PPG chairperson also occurs in ČSSD and the same can be expected in the other parties as well.

Table 3.7. The structure of party executive bodies on the central level

Party	1 st level (narrow executive)*	2 nd level (executive)*	3 rd level (broad executive)*
ČSSD	Political executive (politické grémium)**	Presidium	Central executive committee
KDU-ČSL	Presidium	National committee	National conference
KSČM	Narrow executive (kolegium vedoucích funkcionářů)***	Executive committee of the central committee	Central committee
ODS	Narrow executive (grémium)****	Executive committee	-
US	Republic committee presidium	Republic committee	-
Prevailing mechanism of delegation	ex officio	ex officio and elections at the party conference	elections at the party conference

Source: *party statutes*

Note:

* 1st level denotes the supreme body of the party (the supreme statutory representatives of the party and representatives of the PPG) with a high frequency of meetings (approximately once a week); the 2nd and 3rd levels take the form of a regional representation with less frequent meetings (approximately twice a month to once every three months).

** In addition to the political executive (politické grémium), ČSSD also declares the existence of ČSSD leadership, which consists of the chairperson and deputy chairpersons of the party, the chairperson of the senate caucus and the highest ranking member of the cabinet after those who are not members of the leadership given their position in the party (since the 2002 elections, this person has been Minister of Finance, Bohuslav Sobotka).

*** In its statutes, KSČM does not address the establishment of the narrow executive (kolegium vedoucích funkcionářů). Nevertheless, this is an advisory body of the party's chairperson.

**** ODS incorporated into its statutes the establishment of the narrow executive (grémium) as the supreme body as late as 2001 (nevertheless, until then the narrow executive functioned without being formally established).

The most detailed statutes are those of KSČM, which state that 'in his/her activities an MP shall act upon the political documents of KSČM and the political strategy of KSČM formulated by the relevant party bodies'. KSČM statutes bind MPs to pay not only membership fees to the party but also provide other tangible support from their resources. The statutes of US state that MPs should take into consideration the expert ideas and proposals coming from the party and to implement opinions and attitudes of the party. In the case of KDU-ČSL the statutes only mention that members of the national conference are the only ones who have the right to participate in PPG meetings. The statutes of ČSSD demand that MPs implement the party's programme and strategy.

The fact that the statutes of Czech parties only loosely define the relationship between the party and the PPG has not always been the case. The statutes of both KDU-ČSL and ČSSD have undergone significant changes in this respect, involving the relaxation of this relationship and the provision of greater autonomy to the PPG. In the case of KSČM the shift increased the influence of the party executive. ODS and US have not changed the provisions concerning their PPGs in the statutes since their inception. In 1995 KDU-ČSL overhauled its statutes completely. Until then, the statutes stated that at meetings of the boards of representatives, party MPs express the opinions adopted by the PPG, that the chairperson

Table 3.8. The composition of a party executive body at the central level (2nd degree) and the percentage of MPs in 2000

Party	Composition	% MPs
ČSSD	Members of the political executive, 1 representative per district, 10 members elected by the central executive committee, the highest standing member of the cabinet	N/A/33*
KDU-ČSL	Presidium of the party, 8 members elected by the party conference, members of the government, 5 MPs and senators	16/23; 64 %
KSČM	Members are elected by the central executive committee	5/23; 21.7 %
ODS	Chairperson, deputy chairpersons and representatives of regions (one representative for each 1,000 members)	9/23; 39.1 %
US	Members of the presidium of the national committee, members of the government, the chairperson and deputy chairpersons of the Chambers of the Parliament, chairpersons of district committees and 1 other representative per district	4/24; 16.6 %

Source: *party statutes*

Note: ČSSD does not provide information about the composition of the presidium.

of the party is a member of the PPG with a decisive vote, and that KDU-ČSL implements its programme and political will through its PPG. The change in ČSSD was also radical. Until 1997, MPs were obligated to submit to the supervisory commission information about the sources of their income and after the end of the term to provide information about the status of their property. Furthermore, MPs were not allowed to enter into any contracts or commitments giving rise to any personal advantages while, at the same time, imposing obligations concerning their political conduct and behaviour. KSČM amended its statutes in 1995 and incorporated a provision stating that in their activities MPs and senators of the party shall act upon political documents and the political strategy of the party formulated by relevant party bodies. It is not a coincidence that changes in the statutes concerning the relationship of the party and PPG occurred after major changes in the parties: between 1993 and 1994 several groups split off from KSČM (especially the splitting off of two-thirds of the MPs who formed the party *Levý blok*). In 1996, ČSSD experienced a huge success in the elections – its PPG grew fourfold and the party executive entered the Chamber of Deputies and thus it did not have to control the MPs from outside.

The second aspect of the relationship under study is **overlap**. In Table 3.7., the most operative, least numerous bodies that meet with the greatest frequency are defined as the narrow executive (1st level). The composition of these bodies is similar in all parties: the chairperson, deputy chairpersons, chairpersons of the *party group in the Chamber of Deputies* and of the *party group in the Senate* (and in some parties also the general secretary of the party). The share of MPs in these bodies is high, and in some parties the only non-MP is, due to his/her position, the chairperson of the party group in the Senate (as is the case of ODS, and during most of the term also US and KDU-ČSL). Between 1998 and 2002 the share of MPs in the political executive of ČSSD changed according to the results of the party conferences and other partial changes (the share ranged from 62.5 to 75%). In KSČM the share of MPs in the ‘narrow executive’ of party functionaries was only 37.5% (it must be taken into account that this body takes the form of an advisory body to the party chairperson). It is also worth

Table 3. 9. Does the party executive often interfere with the decision of the PPG? (2000)

	ČSSD	KDU-ČSL	KSČM	ODS	US	Total*
Yes	64.6%	55.6%	42.9%	57.1%	47.1%	57.1%
No	30.8%	44.4%	57.1%	39.3%	52.9%	40.1%
Number of respondents	65	18	21	56	17	177

Source: *Parliamentary DICe*.

Note: This is the response to the question Do you think that the party executive influences the decision-making of your PPG often?

* Remaining percentages up to 100% answers 'don't know'.

noting that in KDU-ČSL and US the chairpersons of the party held the position of chairpersons of the PPG concurrently (Josef Lux for KDU-ČSL and Karel Kühnl for US). We believe that this is due to the fact that both the parties were in opposition and their leaders were not burdened with cabinet duties.

The composition of the medium level (approximately 20–40 members; meetings approximately once per month) is far more varied. The share of MPs is quite low. The reason is that individual regional organisations elect representatives for these bodies and in a great majority of cases they do not select MPs as their representatives. The overlap between the national executive and the broad national executive is even smaller.

The above-mentioned analytical tools, serving the analysis of the relationship between the PPG and the national executive, are insufficient; it would be necessary to use other tools such as the type of materials debated by individual bodies and the frequency of meetings. Bodies may be divided into active and supervisory bodies. Active bodies are those that formulate a 'preferred' opinion to be supported by MPs even before the debate of the bill in the Chamber of Deputies. Supervisory bodies are those that retroactively give their opinion on the political situation and the opinions held by party representatives in the Chamber of Deputies. These bodies meet approximately once every one to three months and thus their ability to influence political decisions in the Chamber of Deputies is minimal. They may influence only key issues such as membership in the cabinet, support for remaining in the cabinet/leaving the cabinet, and support for key bills of acts. Their position in the hierarchy affects their role, as either active or supervisory bodies. The higher they are in the party hierarchy, the more frequently the body meets and thus the more active it is in defining party policy.⁴⁷

To supplement our analysis of the relationship between PPGs and the party executive we will present the results of a questionnaire survey among MPs.⁴⁸ The responses suggest that party executives often include PPGs in the decision-making process (a total of 56.4% responses). A breakdown according to the individual parties is given in Table 3.9. If we compare this data with the data from the previous term [for the year 1993, see Kopecký 2000], the responses suggest that the role of the party executive in MP decisions is greater now than before. This fact can be attributed to the growing stabilisation of the parties and the establishment of basic organisational structures and decision-making and financing mechanisms between 1992 and 1996. Interference by the cabinet in the decisions of the PPG is most fre-

⁴⁷ It would be appropriate to study this fact more systematically than is currently the case.

⁴⁸ For information about the questionnaire surveys, see Appendix 1.

Table 3.10. Who had the final say in the case of a difference in opinion between a PPG and the party executive?

	ČSSD	KDU-ČSL	KSČM	ODS	US	Total*
PPG (2000)	58.9 %	69.2 %	55.6 %	78.8 %	78.6 %	67.5%
National executive (2000)	41.1 %	30.8 %	44.4 %	21.2 %	21.4 %	32.5%
Number of respondents (2000)	56	12	19	52	14	154
PPG (1998)	54.9 %	55.6 %	41.2 %	44.1 %	71.4 %	55.1%
National executive (1998)	35.3 %	33.3 %	47.1 %	44.1 %	14.3 %	34.1%
Number of respondents (1998)	51	9	17	34	22	138
PPG (1996)	76.5 %	78.6 %	83.3 %	79.0%	-	81.2%
National executive (1996)	23.5 %	21.4 %	16.7 %	21.0%	-	18.8%
Number of respondents (1996)	17	14	6	38	-	75

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*.

Note: This is a response to the question If, during this term, there was a difference in opinion between your PPG and the party executive, who usually had the final say?

* Remaining percentages up to 100% are the answers 'don't know'.

quently stated by MPs of ČSSD, a party that was in office at the time of the survey. The high results obtained with respect to ODS, the opposition party, are striking, especially in comparison with the data from previous terms. The high results can be attributed to the existence of the Opposition Agreement, which was signed despite the disagreement (and permanent opposition) of a segment of the PPG ODS. The ODS executive had therefore to interfere in the decisions of the PPG in order to maintain the arrangement based on the Opposition Agreement.

Another aspect of the relationship between the PPG and the party executive is revealed by the responses to the question of who had the final say in the case of a conflict between the two levels. Although MPs declare that the party executive tries to interfere with decisions of the PPG relatively often, the resulting decision is, according to MPs, mostly up to the PPG, which is especially clear among non-left-wing parties (see Table 3.10.). Compared to 1996, however, the autonomy of PPGs dropped among the surveyed parties. The possibility of a comparison with the 1998 data is limited owing to the fact that some data are distorted, as they were collected during a very dramatic period (after the split in ODS when Tošovský's cabinet was in office). During this period, party bodies had a significantly greater influence on the decisions of the PPG.

3.5 How do Czech political parties influence their PPGs?

The basic question we have tried to answer in this chapter was: what are the relationships between individual party levels and is there space for some party levels to discipline MPs? The analysis above suggests that there is space for disciplining MPs. Individual levels – PPGs, representatives of the party in the public office, the party on the ground, and the party in the central office – each have, to differing degrees, tools for disciplining MPs. Although the rank and file and the local extra-parliamentary party grew in power compared to the first electoral term of the Chamber of Deputies (1993 – 1996) [on its weakness, see Kopecký 2000], it is nevertheless the weakest segment of political parties and has the least power to influence decision-making in PPGs.

Parties in the Czech Republic use the following tools:

- the mechanism of a binding vote,
- the appointment to influential positions in the Chamber of Deputies or other bodies,
- the possibility of participating in the preparation of bills at ministries,
- consulting for governmental MPs at the ministry,
- expulsion from a party,
- the candidate selection process,
- binding opinions of party bodies.

Some parties place more emphasis on the candidate selection process, while others emphasise expulsion from the party, advantages in appointments to parliamentary or cabinet positions, or the moral appeal of the binding vote in accordance with the party leadership.

4. How and why are Czech PPGs unitary?

Having presented in previous chapters the factors influencing decisions of Czech MPs and, ultimately, the unity of PPGs, we can now proceed to an analysis of decision-making as such.⁴⁹ We shall restrict decision-making in this chapter to the most easily measured variable – Rice Index of Party Cohesion.⁵⁰ We will supplement this information with some other findings from questionnaire surveys conducted among MPs.⁵¹ Before the analysis itself, we will present the semantics used in Western theory to talk about the unity of PPGs and MP voting.

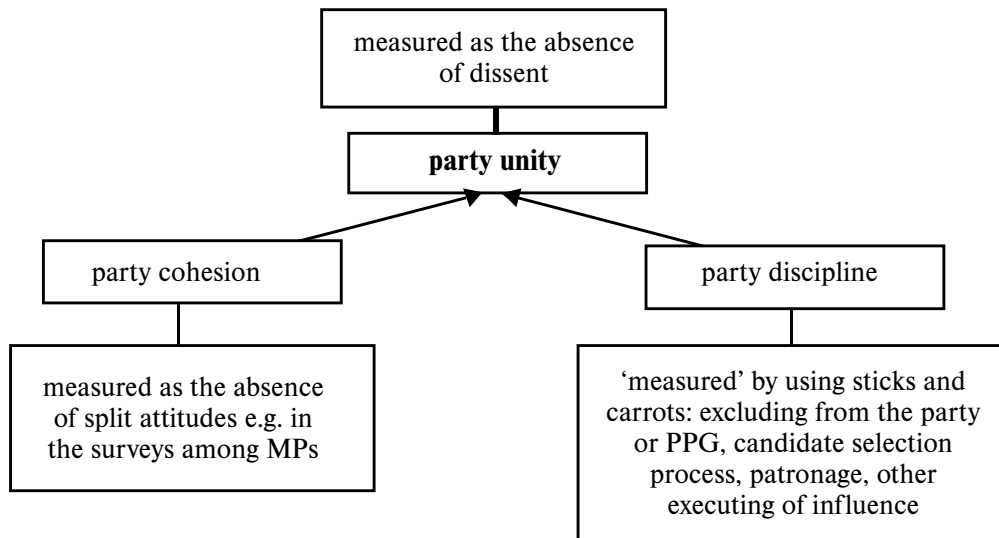
4.1 Semantics used to think about the unity of PPGs

Unitary behaviour of a group of MPs can be described using several terms: party unity (as opposed to party dissent), party discipline and party cohesion. Party unity means the unity of party members' actions, or the unity of PPG action. Party unity may be the result of both party cohesion and party discipline [differentiation of the terms according to Ozbundun 1970]. We consider it necessary and proper to differentiate the terms *cohesion* and *discipline*, but we do not agree with Ozbundun's proposition that discipline is a special type of cohesion, a sub-group of cohesion. Ozbundun defines **party cohesion** as „*the extent to which, in a given situation, groups members can be observed to work together for the group's goals in one and the same way*“ [Ozbundun 1970: 305]. **Party discipline**, in his opinion, lies in that „*followers regularly accept and act upon the commands of the leader or leaders*“. Party discipline also means „*ways and means of inducing recalcitrant members to accept and act upon (leader's) commands*“ [Ozbundun 1970: 305].

⁴⁹ The two preceding chapters can also be read in such a way that they cluster basic explanatory variables influencing the unity of PPGs. These variables can be grouped differently, for example according to whether they contribute to MPs unity or the enforcing of discipline. For greater comprehensibility, we followed a classification according to the areas which are the sources of these factors.

⁵⁰ Melissa Collie distinguishes between two schools of legislative behaviour studies. The first concentrates on collective behaviour, with a special focus on *disalignment and alignment patterns*. The second concentrates on the individual behaviour of MPs, with the goal of describing patterns of individual decision-making [Collie 1984]. It is obvious that we are concerned with the second case.

⁵¹ Contemporary works dealing with analyses of MPs and PPGs decisions survey both behavioural data (*roll-call votes*) and attitudinal data (*survey among MPs*) [see Norton 1990b; Heppel 2002].

Figure 4.1. Conceptualisation of the terms *unity*, *cohesion* and *discipline*

Unlike Ozbundun, we consider the terms *cohesion* and *discipline* to be analytically different because they see party unity from two complementary aspects. If party unity is the result of party cohesion, it is a consequence of unforced decisions of PPG members resulting from the fact that they holding similar opinions; it does not have to be coerced. If party unity is the result of party discipline, however, then it is a consequence of (1) the use of coercive means which either the party executive or the PPG leadership have at their disposal to enforce unity/discipline⁵²; or (2) institutional arrangements which lead MPs to maintain party unity.⁵³

If we see a PPG act unitarily, it may be because its members agree on a party position (*party cohesion*), or because they were made to act in such a way although their preferences differed (*party discipline*). There are many ways to persuade MPs to vote differently than how they originally intended: from party or PPG leadership recommendation, motivating MPs with rewards in the form of an appointment or election to a position, to motivating MPs with rewards from interest groups etc.

The conceptualisation presented above has the advantage of differentiating between the terms *cohesion*, *unity* and *discipline*, and all of these may be examined and measured with different tools. For example, cohesion may be studied using questionnaire surveys of MPs, with the objective of discovering MPs' attitudes to individual public policies; by classifying the responses obtained according to membership in a PPG, we will get a map of party cohesion. Unity can be measured using Rice's Index of Party Cohesion or using other indexes mentioned in Appendix 2. Discipline can be analysed by examining the usage of tools serving to maintain the unity of MPs, which were largely presented in Chapter 3 (for a conceptualisation of terms, see Figure 4.1.).

⁵² Within the framework of the theory of heuristic choice and methodological individualism which we purport, any decision is a choice; the power aspect of a decision restricts the freedom of decision-making only strategically [Kabele 2001]. It is obvious that in some cases decision-making may be restricted to the extent that free choice is ruled out.

⁵³ Our conceptualisation has the advantage of differentiating between the terms *cohesion*, *unity* and *discipline*, which can be discovered and measured with different instruments.

Table 4.1. Party unity in the Chamber of Deputies (1998–2002) – Rice’s Index

number of votes/ party	1998 (582 votes)	1999 (3151 votes)	2000 (5493 votes)	2001 (3430 votes)	2002 (1838 votes)	selected votes (226 votes)**	1998–2002 (13 594 votes)
ČSSD	82.1	84.5	82.0	81.9	81.4	89.2	82.5
KDU-ČSL	80.6	79.5	78.7	76.9	77.6	87.2	78.4
KSČM	86.0	85.2	81.7	82.9	83.7	86.3	83.3
ODS	86.0	81.4	77.7	78.1	80.2	84.2	79.4
US-DEU	84.5	82.7	80.5	78.0	76.4	88.2	80.0
average*	83.8	82.7	80.1	79.6	79.8	87.0	80.7

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*

Note: * non-weighted average;

** selected votes of the 7th, 8th, and 9th sessions.

Table 4.2. Comparison of Party Unity in the Chamber of Deputies (1994–2002) – Rice’s Index

year, number of votes/ party	1994–1996	1996–1998	1998–2002 (13 594 votes)
ČSSD	71.6	80.4	82.5
KDU-ČSL	82.4	87.4	78.4
KSČM	82.6	86.4	83.3
ODS	85.0	85.8	79.4
US-DEU	-	82.0	80.0
ODA	81.4	85.8	-
SPR-RSČ	93.4	97.4	-
average*	-	86.5	80.7

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*, for the period 1994–1996 *Kopecký, Hubáček, Plecítý* [1996], for the period 1996–1998 *Linek* [2002].

Note: * non-weighted average, the ruling party is given in **bold**.

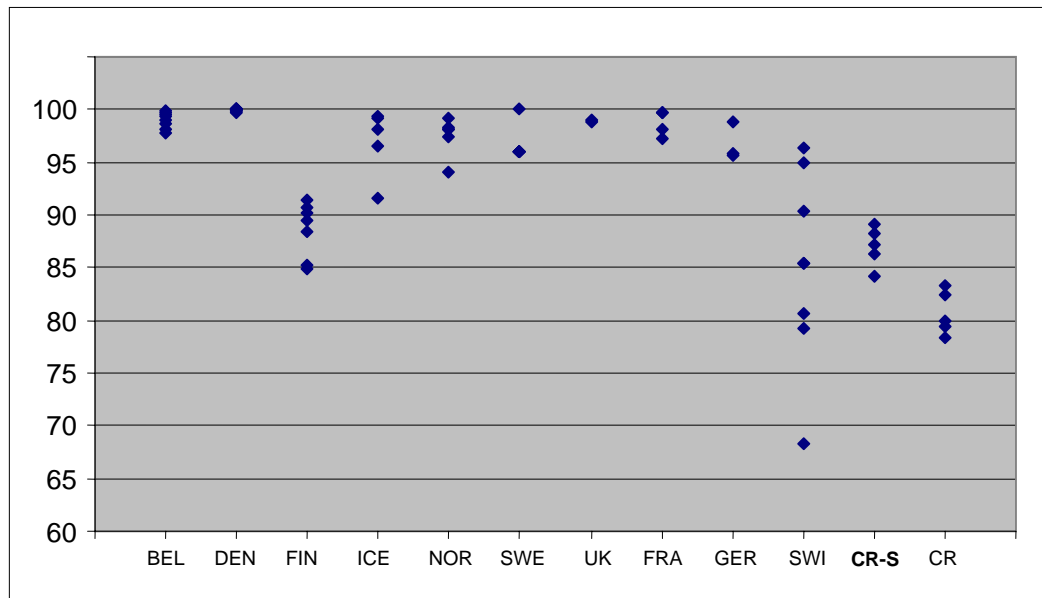
Table 4.3. Participation in voting in the Chamber of Deputies (1998–2002) (in %)

year, number of votes/ party	1994–1996	1996–1998	1998–2002 (13 594 votes)
ČSSD	64.2	87.0	85.3
KDU-ČSL	75.2	85.8	81.7
KSČM	76.0	90.6	86.1
ODS	74.4	84.6	85.4
US-DEU	-	75.4	76.3
ODA	66.4	82.8	-
SPR-RSČ	47.4	87.6	-
average*	69.9	86.2	84.2

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*

Note: * weighted average, the ruling party is given in **bold**.

Figure 4.2. – Comparison of unity of PPGs in selected countries – Rice’s Index



Source: *DePauw* 2002, only for Czech Republic Parliamentary DICe

4.2 Unity and participation in voting in the Chamber of Deputies between 1998 and 2002

In this section we will look into the unity of Czech PPGs based on measuring votes against a party position and abstentions. Based on a questionnaire survey in the UK House of Commons, Edward Crowe defined these two acts as the two most prominent manifestations of disunity [Crowe 1983]. It is clear that there are also other ways to demonstrate disagreement, for example, critical texts and interviews given to the media, critical speeches in the parliament or outside the parliament and, last but not least, expressions of disagreement within a PPG or privately to the chairperson of the PPG or to selected colleague-MPs. The last two expressions of disagreement, in particular, are closely tied to the operation of a PPG but their closed and non-public nature prevents a systematic analysis. To use Ervin Goffman's theatre metaphor, we will analyse the stage but not the backstage [Goffman 1999].

Data on the unity of PPG voting in sessions of the Chamber of Deputies are calculated for the entire third electoral term (1998–2002) and for individual years. A total of 13,594 votes were analysed. In the tables that follow we give the values of Rice's Index and the percentages of participation in votes in the Chamber of Deputies between 1998 and 2002.⁵⁴ Aggregated data are presented for the period 1994 to 1998.

It is clear from the tables that PPGs are relatively unitary in voting. Through a comparison with selected Western countries, we arrive at the conclusion that the values of Rice's Index in the Czech Republic are relatively low (see Figure 4.2).⁵⁵ Higher values of PPG unity are achieved if we select only those votes that directly influenced the shape of

⁵⁴ The method for calculating Rice's Index of Party Cohesion and the percentage break-up by individual types of votes are contained in Appendix 2.

⁵⁵ A gross comparison to other countries reveals little about the unity of individual parties because the voting procedures, the number of votes and the required majorities differ from country to country.

Table 4.4. Comparison of participation in voting in the Chamber of Deputies (1994–2002) - %

year, number of votes/ party	1994–1996	1996–1998	1998–2002 (13 594 votes)
ČSSD	64.2	87.0	85.3
KDU-ČSL	75.2	85.8	81.7
KSČM	76.0	90.6	86.1
ODS	74.4	84.6	85.4
US-DEU	-	75.4	76.3
ODA	66.4	82.8	-
SPR-RSČ	47.4	87.6	-
average*	69.9	86.2	84.2

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*, for the period 1994–1996 Kopecký, Hubáček, Plecítý [1996], for the period 1996–1998 Linek [2002].

Note: * weighted average. Bold means governmental PPG.

public policies formulated through bills (votes on bills as a whole and votes on amendments to bills).⁵⁶ Still, these values do not reach the values of Western European PPGs. This may be due to the fact that all the votes on amendments to bills (which may be concerned with extremely detailed and marginal modifications, sometimes purely technical) were included in our analysis.

For comparison the tables also contain information about the unity and participation in voting between 1994 and 1998. By comparing unity since 1994 we discover that the dominant voting pattern of Czech PPGs is that they are more unitary than the ruling PPGs and the PPG of KSČM. In preceding terms, this pattern was disrupted only by the PPG of SPR-RSČ, which was ruled by an authoritarian party chairperson. A similar party can also be observed with respect to the participation in voting.

5. Conclusion: Why is there less unity among Czech PPGs?

In the previous chapter we presented data about the unity and participation in voting in the Czech Chamber of Deputies. A comparison with Western European countries has revealed that the unity of Czech PPGs is not great. The relatively low figure of Rice's Index is especially striking if we take into account the institutional drive toward unity and the number of tools to enforce discipline among Czech MPs. Moreover, these tools are not dramatically different from the tools available to parties in Western Europe (see Chapters 2 and 3). What then are the reasons for the lesser unity of PPGs in the Czech Republic? If neither the outlined institutional relationships nor the mechanisms in Czech parties are the cause of the low unity, we have to look elsewhere. In our opinion, the main reason is the nature of the coalition majorities that approved individual bills. In this final chapter we will attempt to prove and explain this thesis and present some arguments that have lead us to propose it.

In view of the fact that our initial presupposition that both the institutional and intra-party impulses result in greater unity of PPGs in the Czech Republic is likely not to hold, we

⁵⁶ For a methodology of selection, see Appendix 2.

Table 5.1. Winning and losing majorities in the Chamber of Deputies (1998–2000)

winning coalition/losing coalition	majority	%
ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, KSČM, ODS, US	200:0	33.3
ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, ODS, US versus KSČM	176:24	20.0
KDU-ČSL, ODS, US versus ČSSD, KSČM	102:98	12.5
ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, KSČM, US versus ODS	137:63	11.0
KDU-ČSL, KSČM, ODS, US versus ČSSD	126:74	5.0
ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, KSČM versus ODS, US	118:82	5.0
ČSSD, ODS versus KDU-ČSL, KSČM, US	137:63	3.0
ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, US versus KSČM, ODS	113:87	3.0
ČSSD, KSČM versus KDU-ČSL, ODS, US	98:102	2.6
ČSSD, KSČM, ODS versus KDU-ČSL, US	161:39	2.6

Source: Linek [2000].

Note: A total of 304 votes on all bills of acts between 1998 and 2000 were analysed (these are votes that directly decided on the existence of the bill - rejection of the act, passage of the act); for detailed methodology, see Linek [2000:3].

have to look for an explanation elsewhere. In Chapter 1 we mentioned that some Western studies draw attention to the effect of the size of ruling majorities on the unity of PPGs. Let us examine this possibility. Table 5.1. shows the composition of coalitions that approved individual bills in the course of the third electoral term (the calculation concerns the years 1998 to 2000, for 304 debated bills). It is evident from the table that in only 15% of the cases were the voting majorities evenly balanced (102:98). In the rest of the cases the majorities were so persuasive (no less than 113:87) that, in order to pass the bill, it was not necessary to enforce absolute party discipline among MPs. In the case of bills approved by the narrow margin of 102:98, we can see nearly absolute unity within PPGs; unfortunately, the data for the entire electoral term is not available. Our hypothesis is further supported by the situation in the previous electoral term (1996–1998). A right-of-centre coalition was in office for three quarters of the term, and in the beginning it had a minority of 99:101 and later a majority of 100 + 1 unaffiliated MP : 99. By comparing the years 1996 to 1998 and 1998 to 2002 we will discover that during the period when the cabinet had a narrow majority, Rice's Index was up 6 points (see Table 4. 2.).

We can also consider the relationship between the unity of PPGs and the composition of the voting coalitions from the opposite perspective. The lower unity of PPGs is not only a consequence of the existence of large majorities in voting; the existence of large majorities (thanks to which bills are approved) may be a consequence of the fact that such votes have lower transaction costs than approvals of bills by narrow margins. It is not easy for PPGs to secure absolute support for individual bills in each vote. If the PPG executive demands absolute support, it must come to terms with the fact that a potential deviation from the party position must result in some punishment: from the softest to the harshest (an expulsion from the party or a PPG). This ultimately leads to a decrease in the number of PPG members, which is what political parties want least. The costliness of transactions for the approval of bills by a narrow margin lies precisely in (1) ensuring unity, and in the case where unity has not been observed (2) punishing those who defect from the party. PPGs, given the fact that they can secure wider support for their proposals, may demand party unity only in those cases that are crucial for the party.

There are two reasons why parties took advantage of large majorities to approve bills in the Chamber of Deputies:

- (1) the interpretation of some bills as technical bills;
- (2) the application of the mechanism of the 'Opposition Agreement'.

Political parties are able to pass bills by large majorities because of the technical nature of some bills and the inability of parties to interpret the content of some bills in terms of the *socio-economic cleavages/divisions*, a type of cleavage dominant in the Czech Republic. In the surveyed period, the Chamber of Deputies debated a large number of bills (781 bills). The nature of the bills often lay in harmonising Czech law with the directives and resolutions of the European Communities. A large portion of these acts may be viewed as technical in nature, in the sense that no other alternative was in fact possible because the boundaries were given by the European directives and resolutions and the agreed harmonisation deadlines in A-lists. The nature of other bills was not related to party politics, or rather the political parties did not perceive them as political.

The fact that in the surveyed period there were various majorities that approved or rejected individual bills was also owing to the Opposition Agreement, which allowed the existence of the minority cabinet of ČSSD and ensured that it was not possible to recall this cabinet (for more see Chapter 2). Thus ČSSD could selectively seek support for individual bills in the Chamber of Deputies.

* * *

Despite our initial expectation, the presupposition that both the institutional and intra-party impulses lead to an increased unity of PPGs in the Czech Republic is likely not to hold. In the end, we found the reason for the relatively lower party unity (Rice's Index of Party Cohesion around 80 units) in the size of voting coalitions that approve individual bills. Large majorities make it possible for PPGs not to act in absolute unity. This results in a reduction of the transaction costs of parties they would otherwise have to expend if they wanted to ensure that their bills are approved by narrow-margin majorities. It is not a problem to secure absolute party unity for Czech parties, as can be gleaned from numerous votes. The problem is to ensure absolute unity when the number of votes is so large.

The study of parliamentary politics during other terms and its comparison to other countries may reveal the extent to which the relatively low degree of unity of PPG behaviour between 1998 and 2002 was influenced by temporary factors (the Opposition Agreement, the nature and number of debated bills) versus more permanent factors (the organisational structure of Czech parties, institutional factors).

Appendix 1. Data about the MPs and senators of the Parliament of the Czech Republic

Surveys of MPs and senators

The survey of MPs was carried out in four phases, in 1993⁵⁷, 1996⁵⁸, 1998⁵⁹ and 2000⁶⁰. The survey in the Senate was carried out for the first time in 2000. The first comprehensive questionnaire was based on a survey of German and Dutch parliaments carried out at the end of the 1980s/beginning 1990s. The questionnaire was modified to suit the Czech environment, and in each subsequent phase it was updated and the results from the previous surveys incorporated. Major changes in the questionnaire were made after the first phase and the findings were implemented in the next phase. Since 1996, approximately 90% of the questionnaires have been fully comparable with the phases that followed. In each phase, there is a preliminary discussion of the questionnaire involving Czech and foreign experts who have been dealing with the subject of legislative studies for a long time. The same applies to those directly involved in the research, i.e. selected MPs and senators, employees of the offices of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate PCR, the Parliamentary Institute, and the Archive PCR.

The survey looked into issues such as the structure of the MPs' activities and the time these activities consume, the form and frequency of contacts with voters and the subject matter of these contacts, the importance of individual activities and parliament functions and performance evaluation, information sources, political parties, their leaders and the role of parliamentary groups in the Parliament, decision-making and voting by MPs or senators, opinions concerning voter participation in politics, contacts with the cabinet, tools for exerting influence, ambitions of MPs etc. In the last phase, new subjects (the mutual relationship of MPs and senators, the position of the Senate in the Czech constitutional system, the position and competence of the president and regions) were added.

The first phase of the survey was carried out in March 1993 in the Chamber of Deputies PCR, at the beginning of the first term. Concurrently, the research was also carried out in the Slovak National Council. Of the total 200 MPs, 136 took part in the survey, which represents 68% of the total. A relatively higher number of MPs affiliated with left-wing parties took part in the survey; only a few MPs from extremist and nationalistic PPGs (PPGs) participated. The questionnaires returned were allocated as follows among the political parties represented in the Parliament:

⁵⁷ A grant entitled 'The Party System and Parliament in the Election Year 1992', Research Support Scheme, the Central European University, 1 September 1992 – 31 August 1994. The research was carried out in co-operation with Professor Kees Niemöler from the Centre for Electoral Studies, Department of Statistics and Methodology PSCW University of Amsterdam.

⁵⁸ Grant GA CR No. 403/96/0388 in co-operation with East Carolina University in Greenville and Charles University.

⁵⁹ The grant was financed by the Institute of Sociology, AS CR.

⁶⁰ Grant GA CR No. 407/00/0747 'Deputies and Senators of the Parliament CR in the Third Term' and grant GA AS CR No. S7028003 'Documentary Centre for Parliamentary Research'.

Table 1. Surveyed respondents according to PPGs (1993)

PPG	Number of interviews
ODS	52
KDS	7
ODA	1
KDU-ČSL	8
ČSSD	16
LSU	1
LB	35
HSDMS	7
SD	2
SPR-RSČ	4
Without party affiliation	3
Total	136

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*.

The breakdown of the interviews of MPs in the Slovak National Council (127 out of the total 200 MPs were interviewed):

Table 2. Surveyed respondents according to PPGs (1993)

PPG	Number of interviews
HZDS	56
SDL	26
KDH	17
SNS	12
MKDH-ESWO	12
Without party affiliation	4
Total	127

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*.

The second phase of the survey was carried out between February and April 1996, at the end of the first term of the Chamber of Deputies; Factum⁶¹ conducted the fieldwork. At that time two general meetings took place (39th and 40th meeting) during which most MPs were interviewed. The number of respondents increased to 146, or 73% of the total 200 MPs, and the representation of individual parliamentary groups was more balanced compared to the previous phase.

⁶¹ Factum is a company working in the field of marketing and opinion research. Later it changed its name to Sofres-Factum.

Table 3. Surveyed respondents according to PPGs (1996)

PPG	Number of interviews	Number of MPs in the group
ONAH	6	6
LB	22	23
ČSSD	19	22
KDU-ČSL	20	24
KSČM	8	10
ODA	11	16
ODS	45	72
ČMUS	8	15
SPR-RSČ	1	5
Without party affiliation	6	7
Total	146	200

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*.

The third phase was unplanned and was carried out in spring 1998 before the early elections in order not to lose the data concerning the second term of the Chamber of Deputies PCR. The interviewers from Sofres-Factum interviewed MPs during the 24th meeting of the Chamber of Deputies; the last interviews took place as late as May 1998. A total of 161 interviews were conducted, representing 80.5% of the total 200 MPs; the whole PPG SPR-RSČ refused to take part in the survey.

Table 4. Surveyed respondents according to the PPGs (1998)

PPG	Number of interviews	Number of MPs in the group
ODS	36	38
US	24	29
ODA	6	12
KDU-ČSL	15	19
ČSSD	55	58
KSČM	21	22
SPR-RSČ	0	18
Without party affiliation	4	4
Total	161	200

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*.

During the fourth phase of the project, a comparative survey of senators⁶² was prepared for the first time, and therefore a number of questions were added to the questionnaire relating to the mutual relationship of the two chambers. Both questionnaires (for MPs and senators) are for the most part fully comparable; each interview lasted for approximately one hour. The survey in the Chamber of Deputies took place during its 26th meeting (27 June 2000 - 11 July 2000). A total of 179 interviews were conducted, representing 89.5% of the 200 MPs, including a vice-chairperson of the Chamber, three chairpersons of political parties, ten chairpersons and forty-five vice-chairpersons of parliamentary committees (see Table No. 5). In 2000 the research group itself carried out the research of MPs and senators.

Table 5. Surveyed MPs according to PPGs (2000)

PPG	Number of interviews	Number of MPs in the group
ODS	56	63
US	17	18
KDU-ČSL	18	20
ČSSD	65	74
KSČM	22	24
Without party affiliation	1	1
Total	179	200

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*.

The fieldwork in the Senate took place during the 19th session of the Senate between 19 and 26 October 2000. A total of 73 interviews were carried out, representing 90.1% out of the total 81 senators, including the chairperson and four vice-chairpersons of the Senate, one political party chairperson, five chairpersons and twenty-five vice-chairpersons of senate committees, nine chairpersons of senate sub-committees and four chairpersons of delegations.

Table 6. Surveyed senators according to PPGs-Senate (2000)

Senate caucuses	Number of interviews	Number of senators in the group
ODS	24	24
US-ODA	11	11
KDU-ČSL	16	17
ČSSD	16	23
Without party affiliation	6	6
Total	73	81

Source: *Parliamentary DICE*.

⁶² The Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic was set up only after the 1996 autumn elections. As a result, in 2000, senators had some experience in performing their office. Moreover, the Senate was well established and thus the results of the first research were relevant.

The results of the first three phases of the survey of MPs were mainly published in the work 'Deputies of the First Czech Parliament (1992–96)' and in the chapter 'Czech and Slovak Political and Parliamentary Elites' in the publication *Post-communist Elites and Democracy in Eastern Europe*.

Data from these surveys are also included in a number of contributions that members of the research group have presented at Czech and international conferences, in particular 'Parliament as a Place of Interest Representation and Political Integration', IPSA congress, Quebec 2000, 'Czech Political Elite Emerges', 'The Role of the Committees in the Chamber of Deputies PCR (1993–1999)' and 'The Parliament as a Place of Interests Representation and Political Integration' at the 1st Congress of ČSPV, Brno 2000, 'The Relationship of Deputies to the Voters', FIFUK and SZPV of SAV Bratislava 2000, 'The New Political Elite', FF UK, Prague 2000. In autumn 1998 the research group organised a seminar in the Chamber of Deputies entitled 'Chosen Problems Related to the Entry of the Czech Republic into the EU from the Deputies' Viewpoint', which was attended by MPs, senators and experts alike.

Appendix 2. Characterisation of the methods used for measuring unity and the analysed roll-call votes

Methods used for measuring unity [see especially Ozbundun 1970: 306–308]

During the study of legislative behaviour, several tools to measure voting unity were developed. The techniques used to measure party unity vary, depending on the nature of the roll-call data and the form of party competition. Some tools are more suitable for bipartisan systems, some for multiparty systems. A simple comparison of data is complicated by a number of factors that influence the form of voting in individual parliaments, including:

- public vote or the vote being public only in some cases;
- availability of the roll-call data, especially in electronic format;
- the nature of the legislative process;
- differences in the salience of the legislative vote;
- differences in the significance of absences from voting and difficulties pertaining to the inclusion of absences into the voting analysis statistical models.

Despite these difficulties, we think it is very important to measure the voting unity of parliamentary party groups (PPGs). In the text that follows, we will introduce some formulas for measuring party unity: Lowell's concept of party vote, Stuart Rice's index of party cohesion, the index of party cohesion, and the index of party loyalty. The first three are used to measure and describe the behaviour of a group – in our case a PPG. The last index is used to measure the behaviour of individuals.

Lowell's concept of party vote

Lowell defined party vote as a vote in which more than 90% of the members of a PPG vote the same way. A non-party vote is a vote in which less than 90% (inclusive) of the members of a PPG vote the same way. A non-party vote is a vote in which more than 10% of members

of a PPG split off from the rest. This technique was used to analyse party coalitions in the Chamber of Deputies PSP CR between 1998 and 2001 [Linek 2001].

Stuart Rice's index of party cohesion

The basic presumption is that in the case of a division of a PPG into equally numerous groups of MPs that stand against each other, the party cohesion is 0, and in the case of absolute unity cohesion is 100.

There are two ways to calculate Stuart Rice's index. Both of them lead to the same results. We would like to stress that the calculation of the index may be modified with respect to the voting procedure in individual parliaments, especially with regard to the institute of abstention from voting.

The first method calculates the index as the absolute magnitude of subtracting the percentage share of votes in favour within a PPG and the percentage share of votes against within a PPG.

$$\text{Formula: } I = \left| \%_{\text{yes}} - \%_{\text{no}} \right|$$

The second method calculates the index as the result of dividing the number of MPs in a PPG forming a majority in a given vote by the number of voting MPs; then we take this figure and deduct 0.5 and multiply it by 2.

$$\text{Formula: } I = \left(\left(N_{\text{majority}} / N_{\text{whole PPG}} \right) - 0.5 \right) * 2$$

The problem with Rice's Index is that it does not take into account the size of a PPG. A different vote of one MP in the case of a seventy-member and a twenty-member PPG may have entirely different consequences. Moreover, the standard form of Rice's Index does not take into account absent MPs.

Index of party cohesion

An alternative to Rice's Index is the 'percentage' index. Neither the authorship of this index nor its use in specialised literature has been proven. It is used by the Czech monthly *Parlamentní zpravodaj* to measure the unity of a PPG.

The calculation is very simple. It involves the identification of a majority opinion (on the one hand in favour and on the other against, and then those who have abstained) and the calculation of this figure as a percentage of the number of the members of a PPG present. The figure varies between 50 and 100, where 50 indicates a split within the PPG and 100 an absolute unity. In a way it is an analogy of Rice's Index, but the scale of Rice's Index is from 0 to 100.

$$\text{Formula: } I = N_{\text{majority}} / N_{\text{whole PPG}}$$

Index of party loyalty

This index is used to discover the extent to which individual MPs vote in the same way as the party. The index equals the percentage of votes in which an MP's vote is identical to the vote of the majority of the party in cases when parties vote against each other. The index varies between 0 (indicating the lowest possible degree of loyalty) and 100 (indicating total party unity). This index may be used to study party cohesion and discipline. It can, for example, reveal cases of MPs systematically voting against the opinion of their PPG. Hypothetically, however, a situation may arise where voting against the majority of a PPG is the same as voting with the leadership of a PPG – in such a case, the party loyalty index would measure something else. Therefore, it is necessary to check the extent to which the majority opinion of a PPG corresponds to the opinion of the leadership of a PPG.

Voting in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the CR

Details pertaining to voting are defined in the Act on the Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies. Voting in the Chamber of Deputies occurs in such a way that each MP logs in using the voting equipment upon entering the conference hall (and logs out upon leaving). It is only possible to log in using the identification card. The vote proceeds in such a way that the chairperson of the session first calls the vote in favour and then against. There is an electronic board above the MPs that provides information about the number of voting MPs, the required quorum, and the number of MPs in favour and the number against.

The basic rule is that voting on laws is public. The option of secret vote is used only in the case of some votes (the election of the chairperson and deputy chairperson of the Chamber and chairpersons of party groups and committees, and also when filling certain positions outside the Chamber of Deputies). When debating confidential material, such as reports from intelligence services etc., neither the debate nor the vote is public.

The Chamber of Deputies achieves quorum if at least one third of all MPs are in attendance. The threshold for passing a resolution is a simple majority of all the MPs present. The Constitution requires a different quorum in the case of some votes. The threshold for passing a constitutional act is a three-fifths majority of all the MPs. A simple majority of all MPs is required when voting: (1) on a bill of an act rejected by the Senate; (2) on a bill returned by the president of the Republic; (3) on a vote of no confidence; and (4) on declaring a state of war and on the approval of the presence in the country of the armed forces of another country.

A typical feature of the Czech Chamber of Deputies is that it votes very often and about almost everything. The Rules of Procedure state that 'the Chamber of Deputies shall make decisions about each bill by voting'. Thus, despite the fact that the rules of procedure are relatively clearly defined, MPs insist on a very wide interpretation of this provision. As an example we would like to give the case of 'vote revoking': if there is a vote on a salient matter with a very narrow margin, an MP of one PPG – the one that did not succeed in the vote – casts the vote into doubt by declaring that s/he voted differently than the statement shown by the voting equipment. The Chamber of Deputies then votes on this objection, and if approved a new vote on the same matter is held. Thus, there is a total of three votes on one proposal (the doubted vote on the bill, the proposal to reject the doubted vote, and a new vote on the bill).

During the third term there were 13,594 votes in the Chamber of Deputies. Approximately 47% of the votes concerned voting on bill amendments – the high figure is due to the fact that each MP is entitled to submit amendments to bills. Only 5% of the votes involved

voting on bills as a whole. The remaining votes – less than 50% – involved the five basic types of voting: (1) agenda of the session; (2) procedural issues; (3) ordering a bill for debate in the committees; (4) votes when the Chamber of Deputies makes decisions about filling various positions within and outside the Chamber of Deputies (members of the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting, the Council of the Czech Television, Czech Radio Broadcasting Company, the leadership of the Supreme Audit Office etc.); and (5) various resolutions whereby the Chamber of Deputies asks the cabinet to take certain measures. These five different types of votes are split approximately equally among the 50% of the votes [for data, see Linek, Stary, Čada, Hujer 2002].

Characteristics of the roll-call data

In the Chamber of Deputies, votes are electronically recorded. The following information is available about each MP (with codes provided by the Department of Informatics of the Chamber of Deputies):

In favour of a bill (special voting button) – code A

Against a bill (special voting button) – code B

Abstention (special voting button) – code C

Registered for voting but not to vote (in consequence similar to C) – code F

Not present – code @

Letters A, B, C and F mean that the MP is registered for voting; @ means that s/he is not registered.

When processing data we have taken into account two basic facts: (1) the large number of votes; and (2) voting procedures in the Chamber of Deputies which distinguish between several types of voting.

As a result of the large number of votes (a total of 13,562) we counted indexes for entire periods using all votes that were not marked as faulty. For a detailed analysis we have selected only some sessions of the Chamber of Deputies. With respect to the detailed analysis we have coded the votes according to the importance for the creation of laws. We have selected ‘law-making decisions’. These votes include:

- rejection of a bill of an act in the first, second, and third reading;
- returning a bill of an act to the proponent for completion;
- an amendment to a bill of an act (third reading);
- a bill as a whole (third reading, after rejection or return by the Senate, after the president’s veto).

The coding was conducted based on shorthand records, which contain information about which bill is being voted on.

The **voting procedure** and the voting options at the disposition of the MPs have led us to re-code the voting in the following manner. Voting in favour of a bill is coded as 1 (A re-coded to 1) and voting against a bill, abstention from the vote in attendance, and non-voting have been coded as 0 (B, C and F re-coded to 0). By registering, the MP – although s/he may not necessarily vote – increases the quorum required for approving a bill in the Chamber of Deputies. When calculating Rice’s Index we disregarded absences.

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Abbreviations

Political Parties

ČSSD	Czech Social Democratic Party
HSD-SMS	Movement for Autonomous Democracy – Association for Moravia and Silesia
KDS	Christian Democratic Party
KDU-ČSL	Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party
KSČM	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
LB	Left Block
LSU	Liberal-Social Union
ODA	Civic Democratic Alliance
ODS	Civic Democratic Party

Abbreviations

SPR-RSČ Association for the Republic - Republican Party of Czechoslovakia
US-DEU Freedom Union - Democratic Union

Others

PPG parliamentary party group
PiG party in the government
EPO extra-parliamentary party organization
MP member of a parliament

Shrnutí

Hlavním cílem předkládané práce je zodpovědět otázku, jak se rozhodují čeští poslanci a poslanecké kluby. Hlavní zájem autorů se proto zaměřuje na otázky jednotnosti českých poslaneckých klubů, mechanismy vnitřní kontroly a vyjednávání a zvláště na faktory, které ovlivňují, strukturují a omezují jednání jednotlivých poslanců a poslaneckých klubů. Práce se zaměřuje na třetí volební období Poslanecké sněmovny (1998–2002) a v některých případech využívá možnosti srovnání s předchozími obdobími.

V první kapitole autoři stručně nastiňují rámec, který používají pro konceptualizaci jednání poslaneckých klubů: institucionální pravidla a stranickou hierarchii. Ve druhé kapitole jsou detailně analyzována základní institucionální pravidla a rámec pro jednání poslaneckých klubů v České republice; jedná se zvláště o vztah mezi Poslaneckou sněmovnou a vládou, volební systém, povahu mandátu a pravidla pro ustavení poslaneckých klubů. Ve třetí kapitole jsou poslanecké kluby umístěny do struktury politické strany a jsou zkoumány základní vztahy mezi jednotlivými stranickými úrovněmi – poslanci tvořícími poslanecký klub, stranou ve vládě, stranickým vedením a členskou základnou strany. V kapitole 4 je zkoumáno hlasování poslanců a poslaneckých klubů na schůzích Sněmovny, zvláště jednotnost hlasování.

Jednotnost českých poslaneckých klubů byla počítána na základě Ricova indexu. Agregované údaje za celé volební období jsou: ČSSD 82,5, KDU-ČSL 87,4, KSČM 83,3, ODS 79,4 a US-DEU 80,0. Tyto údaje byly vypočítány na základě všech hlasování na plenárních schůzích Poslanecké sněmovny. Pro detailnější analýzu byly vybrány tři schůze Sněmovny a ta hlasování, která mají přímý vliv na vytváření zákonů (hlasování o zamítnutí návrhu zákona, hlasování o pozměňovacím návrhu, hlasování o zákonu jako celku). Jednotnost poslaneckých klubů v těchto vybraných hlasováních se zvýšila v průměru o šest bodů (z 80,7 na 87,0). Přesto byla jednotnost hlasování českých poslaneckých klubů nižší při srovnání s hodnotami Ricova indexu jednotnosti hlasování západoevropských poslaneckých klubů.

Nízké hodnoty byly zarážející, jestliže je vzato v úvahu institucionální uspořádání a nástroje stran pro udržování jednoty; navíc když se tyto nástroje dramaticky neliší od těch, které používají západoevropské strany, jak bylo ukázáno v kapitolách 2 a 3. Autoři hledali důvody pro nižší jednotnost ve velikosti hlasovacích většin, neboť některé studie ze západní Evropy a Spojených států amerických upozorňovaly na vliv velikosti většin na jednotnost hlasování poslaneckých klubů. Pouze v 15 % hlasování o zákonu jako celku byla většina těsná (102:98). V ostatních případech byly hlasovací většiny tak velké (ne méně než 113:87), že k tomu, aby byl schválen návrh zákona, nebylo nutné vyžadovat absolutní stranickou jednotu mezi poslanci. Možným faktorem tedy může být skutečnost, že strany preferovaly schvalování zákonů pohodlnými většinami jako důsledek faktu, že takové hlasování má nižší transakční náklady než schvalování zákonů těsnými většinami.

Summary

The main objective of the work is to answer the question of how Czech MPs and PPGs make decisions. Thus main concerns of the authors are issues of PPG unity, the adopted mechanisms of internal control and negotiation and, primarily, the factors that influence, structure and restrict the behaviour of individual MPs and PPGs. The work focuses on the 3rd electoral term of the Chamber of Deputies (1998–2002); in some cases a comparison with previous terms is provided.

In the first chapter the authors briefly outline the frameworks they use to conceptualise PPGs: the institutional rules and party hierarchy. In Chapter 2, the basic institutional rules and framework for the behaviour of PPGs in the Czech Republic are examined in detail; the issues under focus include the relationship between the Chamber of Deputies and the cabinet, the electoral system, the nature of the mandate and the rules for establishing PPGs. In Chapter 3 PPGs are placed within the structure of the political party and the relationships between individual party levels – MPs constituting the PPGs: the party in the government, the party in the central office, and the party on the ground analysed. In Chapter 4 examines one of the basic activities of MPs and PPGs: voting in plenary sessions. Thus the unity of PPGs, and MPs' decision-making are explored.

Unity of Czech PPGs was counted on the basis of the Rice's Index and the aggregate figures for the surveyed parties are: ČSSD 82.5, KDU-ČSL 87.4, KSČM 83.3, ODS 79.4 a US-DEU 80.0. These numbers are counted for the all votes at the plenary sessions. For a detailed analysis there were selected only three sessions of the Chamber of Deputies and only those votes that were important for the creation of laws (rejection of a bill of an act, an amendment to a bill of an act, a bill as a whole). The unity of PPGs in these selected votes increased by average of six degrees (from 80.7 to 87.0). Even though, the unity of Czech PPGs was lower when comparing with those of PPGs in western European countries.

The low figures were striking if the institutional drive toward unity and the number of tools to enforce discipline among Czech MPs; moreover, these tools are not dramatically different from the tools available to parties in Western Europe as shown in Chapters 2 and 3. The authors found the reasons for lower unity of PPGs in the size of voting majorities for several Western studies draw attention to the effect of the size of ruling majorities on the unity of PPGs. Only in 15% of the cases were the voting majorities evenly balanced (102:98). In the rest of the cases the majorities were so persuasive (no less than 113:87) that, in order to pass the bill, it was not necessary to enforce absolute party discipline among MPs. It may be the case that parties preferred the existence of large majorities as a consequence of the fact that such votes have lower transaction costs than approvals of bills by narrow margins.

Zusammenfassung

Das Hauptziel der vorliegenden Arbeit ist die Beantwortung der Frage, wie tschechische Abgeordnete und Fraktionen ihre Entscheidungen treffen. Die Autoren befassten sich daher vor allem mit der Frage der Kohärenz der tschechischen Fraktionen, mit den Mechanismen der internen Kontrollen und Absprachen und insbesondere mit den Faktoren, welche das Verhalten der Abgeordneten und der Fraktionen beeinflussen, strukturieren und einschränken. Schwerpunkt der Arbeit ist die dritte Legislaturperiode der Abgeordnetenkammer (1998–2002), wobei manchmal der Vergleich mit früheren Legislaturperioden herangezogen wird.

Im ersten Kapitel skizzieren die Autoren den Rahmen der Konzeptualisierung des Verhaltens der Fraktionen: die institutionellen Regeln und die Parteihierarchie. Im zweiten Kapitel werden die institutionellen Grundregeln und der Verhandlungsrahmen der tschechischen Fraktionen eingehend analysiert; dabei handelt es sich insbesondere um die Beziehung zwischen Abgeordnetenkammer und Regierung, das Wahlsystem, Umfang und Inhalt des Abgeordnetenmandats und um die Regeln für die Aufstellung der Fraktionen. Im dritten Kapitel werden die Fraktionen in die Parteistruktur eingeordnet; untersucht werden auch die Beziehungen zwischen den einzelnen Parteiebenen – den Abgeordneten, die zusammen eine Fraktion bilden, den Regierungsparteien, der Parteiführung und der Mitgliederbasis. Im vierten Kapitel wird das Abstimmungsverhalten der Abgeordneten und der Fraktionen insbesondere hinsichtlich der Kohärenz der Abstimmung untersucht.

Die Kohärenz der tschechischen Fraktionen wurde mit Hilfe des Rice-Index berechnet. Die aggregierten Zahlen für die gesamte Legislaturperiode lauten: ČSSD 82,5, KDU-ČSL 87,4, KSČM 83,3, ODS 79,4 und US-DEU 80,0. Diese Angaben wurden auf Grundlage aller Abstimmungen auf den Plenarsitzungen der Abgeordnetenkammer gewonnen. Für die Detailanalyse wurden drei Sitzungen der Abgeordnetenkammer und innerhalb dieser diejenigen Abstimmungen ausgewählt, die sich direkt auf die Gesetzgebung auswirken (Abstimmung über die Ablehnung eines Gesetzentwurfes, Abstimmung über Änderungsanträge, Abstimmung über das Gesetz als Ganzes). Die Kohärenz der Fraktionen erhöhte sich in diesen Abstimmungen durchschnittlich um sechs Punkte (von 80,7 auf 87,0). Trotzdem war die Kohärenz der tschechischen Fraktionen im Vergleich zu den Werten des Rice-Index für westeuropäische Abgeordnetenfraktionen geringer.

Angesichts der institutionellen Struktur und der den Parteien zur Verfügung stehenden Instrumente zur Aufrechterhaltung kohärenten Abstimmungsverhaltens waren die niedrigen Werte überraschend, insbesondere wenn man bedenkt, dass sich diese Instrumente – wie in Kapitel 2 und 3 gezeigt – nicht wesentlich von den in westeuropäischen Parteien eingesetzten Instrumenten unterscheiden. Die Autoren suchten die Gründe für die geringere Kohärenz in der Größe der Abstimmungsmehrheiten, da mehrere Studien in Westeuropa und in den USA auf den Einfluss der Größe der Abstimmungsmehrheiten auf die Kohärenz im Abstimmungsverhalten der Fraktionen hinwiesen. Lediglich bei 15 % der Abstimmungen über ein Gesetz als Ganzes handelte es sich um eine knappe Mehrheit (102:98). In den übrigen

Fällen war die Abstimmungsmehrheit so groß (nicht kleiner als 113:87), dass zur Verabschiedung des Gesetzentwurfes keine absolute Parteidisziplin erforderlich war. Ein möglicher Faktor kann also darin bestehen, dass die Parteien eine Verabschiedung von Gesetzen mit größeren Mehrheiten vorziehen, weil mit diesen Abstimmungen geringere Transaktionskosten verbunden sind, als dies bei Abstimmungen mit knappen Mehrheiten der Fall ist.

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Groups in the Chamber of Deputies
in the Years 1998–2002**

Petra Rakušanová, Lukáš Linek

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