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ELECTORAL MANIPULATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Electoral manipulations in democratic countries are a kind of political manipulations aimed at influencing the ultimate election result. But unlike electoral fraud and falsification, they do not violate the binding laws. The main mechanism of electoral manipulations involves affecting the level of political uncertainty, since one of the fundamental assumptions of democratic regimes is the process of “institutionalization of uncertainty”¹. The very concept of uncertainty is the object of interest of scholars studying politics in the context much broader than the issues of elections only, making them analyze its influence on political processes². In the case of elections, affecting its level allows to intentionally increase or decrease the perspectives of certain subjects, usually in relation to other participants of electoral competition. Hence, electoral manipulation is an activity aimed at moderating the process of electoral competition by influencing the level of political uncertainty. The very political uncertainty can be considered on two basic planes: the institutional one and the communication one, which directly refers to two basic types of electoral manipulations. Institutional manipulations assume normative and/or informal influence on the mechanisms of the political and party system so as to achieve the expected level of political uncertainty. Electoral manipulations may also be legal actions regarding elections. Law can include regulations which

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¹ A. PRZEWORSKI, *Some problems in the study of the transition to democracy*, [in:] G. O'DONNELL, P. SCHMITTER, L. WHITEHEAD (eds.), *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Prospects for democracy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1986, p. 58.

² T.R. PALFREY, H. ROSENTHAL, *Voter Participation and Strategic Uncertainty*, “American Political Science Review” Vol. 79, 1985, p. 62.

are considered to be corrupt. Law itself can also be the product of corrupt practices³. The communication plane refers to the possible impact on the motivations determining citizens' voting behaviours (e.g. emotional or cognitive ones)⁴ and to the mechanisms constituting voters' self-definition in the sphere of political competition⁵. The object of campaign activities is legal competition for votes by means of influencing the sphere of electoral communication in which some ways of canvassing and political persuasion are acceptable. The legal character of campaign activities also results from the fact that in the campaigns, the subjects of political competition carry out the functions assigned to them by the system, necessary for the process of creating the self-identification of voters' preferences. Candidates, political parties, the media and selected institutions of the political system create the channels of communication and communicate with the citizens using these channels in order to affect the form of their self-identification and electoral decisions. This dimension of electoral competition is indispensable from the point of view of political pluralism, shaping attitudes and the freedom of choices.

The article concentrates on the identification of the key dimensions of electoral manipulations in the institutional sphere. Its preliminary assumption is the distinction between electoral manipulations regarding the impact of political uncertainty. This distinction will allow to differentiate the category of electoral frauds and falsifications (which are penalized) from electoral manipulations⁶. The tool used for the proposed distinction was the *Chain of Democratic Choice*, as breaking this chain means that the election cannot be recognized as free and honest⁷. Using the links of the chain of democratic choice, nine basic dimensions of electoral manipulations were identified, referring to creating modifications of political uncertainty level. The proposed approach has a model nature. Although the identified dimensions are not autonomous, they allow to functionally combine the issues of electoral manipulations in democratic systems with changes of political uncertainty level.

³ A. SIMPSON, *Why governments and parties manipulate elections: theory, practice, and implications*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013, p. 34.

⁴ More in: A. TURSKA-KAWA, *Specyfika motywacji w aktywności politycznej*, [in:] J. GOLINOWSKI, F. PIERZCHAŁSKI (eds.), *Osobliwości polskiej demokracji w XXI wieku. Uwarunkowania kulturowo-medialne*, Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego 2011.

⁵ A. WESTHOLM, *Distance versus Direction: The Illusory Defeat of the Proximity Theory of Electoral Choice*, "American Political Science Review" 91(4), 1997, pp. 865-884.

⁶ S.I. LINDBERG, *The Power of Elections Revisited*, Paper presented at the conference, Elections and Political Identities in New Democracies, Yale University, April 28-29, 2007.

⁷ A. SCHEDLER, *Elections Without Democracy: The Menu of Manipulation*, "Journal of Democracy" Vol. 13, No. 2, 2002, pp. 39-41.

1. POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

The concept of impact of political uncertainty on the democratic nature of electoral choice refers to the phenomenon of uncertainty of election result, and especially to the management of its dynamics in the electoral process. The uncertainty of election result may have an impact e.g. on the very outcome of election, participation in elections or the ultimate decisions taken. Scholars identify two basic sources of uncertainty of the result of electoral competition⁸. The first of them refers to uncertainty related to voters' behaviour and motivations determining their decision of participating in the election and choosing a particular party or candidate. The number of factors affecting the taking of the electoral decision, their character and subjective gradation of motivations of an individual voter allow to identify individualized uncertainty of a single voter's decision and the uncertainty of whole segments of the electoral market. The other type of source of uncertainty of electoral result originates from the assumption that voters do not have appropriate resources to assess candidates' or political parties' positions or that the perception of these positions may not be accurate. It results from activities of the candidates themselves, who "blur" the electoral message in order to increase the probability of their victory. In this case, decisions are taken on the basis of ideas and beliefs instead of rational knowledge.

Schedler treats political uncertainty as the basic parameter moderating electoral processes but he also sees it as an object of competition between political forces, who want to increase or decrease its level. The basic dimensions of political uncertainty are communication and institutional issues⁹. Usually they are closely interrelated, having a synergic effect on the subjects interested in changing the level of uncertainty. The basic assumption of communication uncertainty is the statement of a positive correlation between the pluralism of available information and the choice made with the use of this information. Hence, the temporal area in which communication uncertainty functions is the present time, as the image of reality on the basis of which voters are to take their decisions is shaped in the presence. Political forces operating in the conditions of limiting information uncertainty focus on shaping the information environment which enables intentional selection of messages to create the expected attitudes and make choices in the conditions of imperfect access to information. In the opposite situation, when

⁸ J.H. FOWLER, O. SMIRNOV, *Mandates, Parties, and Voters: how Elections Shape the Future*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press 2007, p. 4.

⁹ A. SCHEDLER, *The Politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism*, Oxford: University Press 2013, pp. 22-24.

information uncertainty is the goal, the subjects of electoral competition tend to generate strategies which enable them to control increasing recipients' perception, the media compete to look for voters and reach them, and to ensure them free access to information. Contrary to communication uncertainty, the institutional dimension concentrates on the future, aiming at designing the institutional form of the political system which will make it possible to affect (increase or decrease) its level. Looking for the sources of limiting institutional uncertainty, we can identify the reactions which may serve as protection from the increasing risk of uncertainty or creation and articulation of expectations regarding its reduction. A classic mechanism of reducing institutional uncertainty is directed changes of rules of political competition at the electoral level, which assume to reduce the chances of subjects against which they are directed and as a consequence increase the perspectives of the originators of the changes, e.g. changes of the electoral system result from the existing system of political forces in the Parliament and the government. They make political parties promote the institutional models and procedures which give them chances to consolidate or increase their relative strength¹⁰. Articulating the need to reduce uncertainty may in this case refer to the demands of replacing proportional system with a majority one (in accordance with Duverger's laws), promoting greater groupings, or introducing election thresholds which force voters to vote strategically (and some political parties, to implement consolidation activities)¹¹. Protective responses to institutional threats result from identification of negative consequences of the high level of political uncertainty. An example of such mechanisms is the will to limit the effective number of parties at the parliamentary level, treated as a panacea for high instability of governments generated as a result of elections. Opposite strategies, basing on attempts to increase the level of uncertainty, refer to the need to change the existing system of relations, and particularly to the possible alternation of power. Growing institutional uncertainty will in most cases serve against the ruling group, making it more probable for the political chances of their opponents to grow. A possible institutional factor of uncertainty growth is the reduction of institutional control of the formation and activity of political parties, also as regards formal requirements which condition running for election. A classic factor of increasing the degree of uncertainty in this case is the reduction or total elimination of financing party ac-

¹⁰ J.M. COLOMER, *The Strategy and History of Electoral System Choice*, [in:] J.M. COLOMER (ed.), *Handbook of Electoral System Choice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan 2004, p. 3.

¹¹ J. HAMAN, *Demokracja. Decyzje. Wybory*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar 2003, pp. 33-34.

tivity from public sources, whose existence promotes political parties with a high level of institutionalization.

2. DIMENSIONS OF ELECTORAL MANIPULATIONS

Writing about elections, Schedler considers their democratic nature from the perspective of seven attributive dimensions. Not only do they provide the formal demands concerning electoral procedures, but they also assume the necessity for them to occur together for the “chain of democratic choice” to be maintained. These are¹²: (1) *Empowerment*. It assumes the causative role of citizens in the creation of political processes by commonly taken electoral decisions. The voters’ decisions must result in real authorization of decisions regarding the creation of power, made within the possible scope; (2) *Free supply*. The subjects of electoral competition must have the freedom to create the political offer for the voters. Any forms of political concession or actions limiting the supply of political offers are contrary to the democratic axiom of free choice; (3) *Free demand*. At every stage of the electoral process, citizens must have unlimited access to information on the existing electoral alternatives. This requires the existence of multiple sources of information, which can freely shape their message; (4) *Inclusion*. The existing formal and traditional rules must ensure the subjectivity of all adults equally. The universality of elections assumes no exclusions based on ethnic, religious, social etc. grounds; (5) *Insulation*. Voters need to have the freedom to identify and express their political preferences. The act of voting should ensure the freedom of choice without the unlawful external pressure and without revealing the direction of their individual preferences; (6) *Integrity*. Both the applied electoral system and the procedures of voting must ensure neutrality of the way of determining the election outcome. The voting power of each voter should meet the criterion of formal and material adequacy; (7) *Irreversibility*. Elections which do not have systemic consequences are not democratic. The victors have to be able to assume and exercise power and achieve their goals in accordance with systemic delegation, and in the case of defeat of the currently ruling ones, alternation of power is necessary.

The above-mentioned assumptions of impact of the level of electoral result uncertainty on free and honest elections allow to present the general categories of dimensions of the possible institutional electoral manipulations. Classification of

¹² A. SCHEDLER, *Elections Without Democracy: The Menu of Manipulation*, pp. 39-41.

factors which may affect the course and outcome of an election in a particular direction makes it possible to study their manipulation potential used by the subjects of electoral competition to maximize their chances or to reduce the perspective of the rivals. It also determines the areas which are particularly susceptible to manipulative actions. The presented list indicates 9 main dimensions of the possible instrumental impact on the ultimate result of an election: (1) temporal; (2) participation; (3) material; (4) communication; (5) deputation; (6) factor; (7) obligatory; (8) systemic; (9) alternation¹³.

The temporal dimension, which results from the passing of time, is connected with the influence of factors affecting the subsequent stages of the electoral process. Its essential components include: (1) the duration of voting. An important element in this case may be determining the election to last one day or longer (the latter version especially in the case of correspondence voting or the requirement of a certain turnout threshold for the election to be valid); (2) the time of opening of ballot centres (the number of hours, whether they are open permanently or periodically, e.g. with a break); (3) the term framework (whether the term of office is fixed or whether the competent institutions have some freedom in determining the date of election, and thus the time of campaign). In the second case, they can make the decision taking into consideration instrumentally understood strategic goals, e.g. support in opinion polls or the expected effects of the rule; (4) the day of election (elections taking place on bank holidays may result in higher turnout than elections organized on working days)¹⁴; (5) the season (with the exception of emergency cases such as death, an office falling vacant, or shortening the term of office, elections should occur in seasons facilitating voter attendance because of the expected weather conditions); (6) the official duration of campaign, connected with the possibility to carry out electoral activities, such as collecting signatures for letters of support, money collections, broadcasting advertisements in mass media etc. (generally it can be assumed that shorter campaign duration is beneficial for the ruling ones, due to the logistics of the electoral campaign and institutional base they have).

The participation dimension, whose subject reference is the possibility to influence the level of election turnout. In this context, the factors which affect the

¹³ W. WOJTASIK, *Podstawowe wymiary manipulacji wyborczych*, [in:] J. PODGÓRSKA-RYKAŁA, K. STELMACH, M. MARMOLA (eds.), *Vademecum Śląsk*, Vol. 2, Katowice: Towarzystwo Inicjatyw Naukowych 2014.

¹⁴ A. TURSKA-KAWA, W. WOJTASIK, *Postawy, zachowania i decyzje wyborcze jak przedmiot badań empirycznych*, „Preferencje Polityczne” 1, 2010, pp. 7-22; A. TURSKA-KAWA, *Percepcja istotności wyborów samorządowych a partycypacja polityczna*, [in:] M. BARAŃSKI, A. CZYŻ, S. KUBAS (eds.), *Rola samorządu terytorialnego w modernizacji Polski*, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Śląsk 2010.

turnout level include among others the perspective of power distribution as a result of the election, uncertainty of the ultimate result and the related competitiveness, as well as media interest¹⁵. Intentionally influencing electoral turnout is justified by the fact that its level is not unimportant for the subjects of electoral competition at least in two cases. The first of them involves political parties and candidates whose support is correlated (positively or negatively) with the level of turnout. The other one is based on the division of subjects into the ruling and opposition ones. The general rule is that lower election turnout is rather favourable for the ruling ones, and the opposition parties need greater public activation to remove them from their positions. This refers to the so-called Tingsten's law, and the scholar exemplified this process with the Nazis taking over the power in Germany¹⁶. The most important factors affecting the election turnout may be: (1) the choice of the electoral system (studies prove that the average turnout is higher in proportional than in majority voting¹⁷); (2) pro-turnout campaigns which may particularly activate some segments of the electorate; (3) changing (lowering) the age threshold of active voting right; (4) a specific form of manipulations in the participation dimension is artificial migration movements, which increase the number of people with the right to vote in a given electoral district. This most often occurs in elections in which electoral districts are relatively small and a relatively low number of votes may be decisive for the victory.

The material dimension, whose specificity results from the differentiation of resources of electoral competition participants, connected with financing the sphere of politics in general and electoral campaigns in particular. The process of mediatization of politics and the necessity to reach smaller and smaller segments of the electorate require the availability of appropriate resources which facilitate the presentation of political offer. (1) The first element which significantly diversifies the chances of subjects on the electoral market is the way of financing of political parties, usually related to the obtained voting outcome. The possibility to establish the principles of budgetary financing of political parties (combined with limitations on acquiring funds from other sources) is a particular field for manipulation in this case, as it can dramatically diversify the conditions of political competition. The model of budgetary financing of the political sphere has the tendency to petrify the relevance of the parties which can benefit from it. (2) The

¹⁵ M. CZEŚNIK, *Partycypacja wyborcza w Polsce. Perspektywa porównawcza*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar 2007, pp. 92-93.

¹⁶ H. TINGSTEN, *The problem of democracy*, New York: Bedminster Press 1965, p. 64.

¹⁷ A. LIIPHART, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1999, pp. 284-286.

factor connected with the material dimension of electoral manipulations is the way of financing electoral campaigns, with particular consideration of the determination of sources of financing and limitations on campaign expenditure¹⁸. Limiting the available sources of financing of electoral campaign activities and relatively low levels of possible expenditure may be a factor reducing the electoral chances of opposition parties. It results from the natural tendency for greater media presence of the ruling entities, which can be reduced by the activity of the opposition in an electoral campaign, obviously if the opposition has sufficient resources. (3) Another aspect of the material dimension is the ruling ones having the possibility to use the attributes of their authority to indirectly finance electoral campaigns. It may involve phenomena such as participation in state celebrations and social actions which have a positive influence on their image, as well as using dependent institutions to execute their particular interests.

The communication dimension, whose area of influence is the information plane and the subject axis, the impact on the media and its consequences for activities as part of the communicative function of elections¹⁹. The most important references of political manipulations in this dimension include: (1) material issues connected with the financial resources held, especially regarding the opportunities of creating and distributing political parties' own information. In this respect, gradual decrease of traditional media importance leads to the necessity to use new communication channels and create original ones; (2) creating institutional facilitations of media access for parties reaching the threshold of electoral relevance, having the form of e.g. free programmes in public media or free broadcasting time in the period of election campaigns. This mechanism can contribute to the reduction of competition and cartelization of the party system (involving dramatically different concessions for different parties); (3) political influence of the ruling entities on the public media, connected with their supervision and management functions. It can lead to the limitation of pluralism of public media in the election period; (4) political agentization of the media. It results in informal attribution of certain media to particular political parties on the basis of dominant ideas; (5) politicization of self-governmental media, especially the press and city Internet websites. Self-governmental authorities can have an impact on the message of the media operating on their territory by influencing the presented contents and intentional distribution of funds; (6) limitations of reaching the voters as a result of

¹⁸ D.W. REA, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1969, p. 14.

¹⁹ A. TURSKA-KAWA, W. WOJTASIK, *Communication Function of Elections*, „Communication Today” 1, 2013, pp. 36-47.

bans on political advertisements in mass media or on the use of particular means of communication (e.g. billboards).

The deputation dimension, being a derivative of the aim to reproduce the image of social structure as a result of the election. Aiming at ensuring political representation as an intentional mechanism of reproducing the shape of social structure may lead to adopting solutions that distort citizens' real voting preferences. On the other hand, most of supranational studies show that a high level of disproportionality of elections lowers the turnout, which basically agrees with the assumption that the lack of proportionality in converting support into mandates decreases the sense of efficacy of some voters and results in behaviours related to absence²⁰. In classic democratic circumstances, the outcome of elections reflects the conflict character of the social structure, making political representation possible by referring to the phenomenon of socio-structural paradigm. Their functional basis is socio-political cleavages, described by Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan²¹. Currently, in Western democracies the process of heterogenization of classic groups and classes is advancing, hence the possible temptation to look for other categories of fair representation, exemplified by parity rules in electoral systems or the quota model of creating candidate lists. Currently, except the territorial representation (also questioned, e.g. through the existence of systems which make the whole country one electoral district), every other method of intervention aimed at compensation of participation of a certain social group (including national or regional ones) may be perceived as manipulation, even if it is motivated by lofty assumptions, e.g. affirmative *gerrymandering*²². Most frequent manipulative activities in this dimension are: (1) application of elements of electoral system leading to deproportionalization of election results; (2) granting electoral privileges for certain social groups or a special status for selected territories; (3) nominating candidates who do not intend to take the mandate in the case of victory.

The factor dimension, connected with departure from the direct electoral act. Obvious areas of electoral manipulation in this respect can be the issues of lack of

²⁰ S.A. BANDUCCI, J.A. KARP, *Political Efficacy and Participation in Twenty-Seven Democracies: How Electoral Systems Shape Political Behaviour*, „British Journal of Political Science” 38, 2008, p. 314.

²¹ S.M. LIPSET, S. ROKKAN, *Osie podziałów, systemy partyjne oraz afiliacje wyborców*, [in:] J. SZCZUPACZYŃSKI (ed.), *Elity, demokracja, wybory*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar 1993, pp. 97-99.

²² A. ŻUKOWSKI, *Gerrymandering – manipulacja granicami okręgów wyborczych w systemach demokratycznych*, [in:] M. KOWALSKI (ed.), *Przestrzeń wyborcza Polski*, Warszawa: PAN IGiPZ 2003, pp. 179-190.

reference to the real election outcome in the form of the representation which results from it. Manipulating mechanisms can then include: (1) the indirect formula of elections, involving the existence of electoral colleges and other bodies moderating the ultimate choice, constitutes the departure from the principle of direct elections and may lead to the reduction of political uncertainty. Different factors in the electoral process may distort the outcome of elections, including the net one, which can be exemplified by the 2000 presidential election in the USA; (2) equalizing offices resulting from elections with political nominations by granting mandates to people who were not directly elected and allowing them to take seats along with those who have the democratic mandate (e.g. former presidents or prime ministers as perpetual deputies etc.). The latter issue is explained with the will to use the political potential of people who used to hold the highest positions in the country.

The obligative dimension, referring to imposing an obligation on citizens to participate in the elections. The electoral obligation may lead to distorting the real preferences of voters or to favouring parties and candidates that benefit from increased participation. That is why the decision to introduce obligatory participation in elections may be analyzed in the context of potential manipulation, whose supposed effect may be the advantage in the electoral competition of the originators of such changes. The main motivation to introduce electoral obligation is legitimization issues, which seem to be losing their original importance nowadays. This results not only from the gradual decrease of election turnout observed since the 2nd half of the 20th century²³, but also from the increasing number of elections in particular countries. Decentralization processes resulting in constituting new levels of self-governmental authorities on the one hand, and the European Parliament elections on the other hand, make a citizen encounter the act of voting much more often than before²⁴. In the case of obligative dimension, manipulation mechanisms are: (1) penalization of the act of voting; (2) social expectation of participation in elections by creating the pressure of a “civic duty”.

The systemic dimension, whose impact results from the opportunity to shape the election rules. It is considered from the perspective of components of the applied system of electing political representation, their mutual relations and their consequences for the ultimate result of elections. Among many systemic factors

²³ A. ANTOSZEWSKI, *Partie i systemy partyjne państw Unii Europejskiej na przełomie wieków*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek 2009, pp. 46-49.

²⁴ R. GLAJCAR, *System wyborczy do Parlamentu Europejskiego w Polsce*, [in:] R. GLAJCAR, W. WOJTASIK (eds.), *Wybory do Parlamentu Europejskiego w Polsce 2009*, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Remar 2010, p. 51.

which may be the subject of electoral manipulation, the most important are: (1) questioning the representation character of majority voting, especially in the relative majority formula. It may result in representation which not only does not reflect the social structure but also the actual distribution of votes in the election²⁵; (2) secrecy of voting, especially in the conditions of correspondence voting, Internet voting, and voting through proxies. It may motivate voters to resign from participation in elections for fear that the allocation of their votes will be revealed; (3) the structure of candidate lists, especially closed ones. Because it is parties that determine the order of candidates (which cannot be changed by the voter), closed lists increase the dependence of candidates on political parties, yet giving parties the possibility to plan the composition of fractions. The order on such lists is determined top-down by party authorities, which sometimes meets the charge that the voter actually does not have a full influence on the election of a given candidate for a representative body (it is related to the voter's direct authorization to create the political composition of the body and only indirect authorization to shape its personal composition). Besides, such a list effectively limits intra-party competition for votes of the electorate and makes the functioning of the party dependent on the leader or a small circle of its key politicians²⁶. (4) determination and changes of electoral districts. It includes both the above-mentioned phenomena such as *gerrymandering* and *malapportionment*, and instrumental determination of electoral districts in proportional elections²⁷; (5) election thresholds applied. If they are instrumentally used, they can be a tool of limiting the chances of political competition; (6) methods of converting votes for mandates. Despite some controversies, most scholars agree that their intentional use may be beneficial for certain parties at the expense of others²⁸.

The alternation dimension, whose reference is the reduction of electoral chances of the opposition. In this case, lowering the level of political uncertainty may be achieved by: (1) the ruling ones intentionally influencing the image of political uncertainty; (2) creating false electoral alternatives; (3) instrumental changes of the electoral system. The image of opposition parties and politicians is also affected by the media, which can be pressured by the ruling ones in various

²⁵ P. NORRIS, *Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian, and Mixed Systems*, „International Political Science Review”18(3), 1997, p. 309.

²⁶ W. SOKÓŁ, *Geneza i ewolucja systemów wyborczych w państwach Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej 2007, p. 37.

²⁷ A. LIJPHART, *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies 1945-1990*, New York: Oxford University Press 1994, pp. 126-128.

²⁸ R. TAAGEPERA, M.S. SHUGART, *Seats and Votes: The Effects and Determinants of Electoral Systems*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1989, p. 112.

ways to treat the subjects of political competition unequally or even be biased in the way of reporting and commenting political events. Another factor of electoral manipulations may be intentional multiplication of opposition entities so that the votes of those who are dissatisfied with the ruling ones might be dispersed among many options. Instrumental changes in the electoral system are introduced so as to reflect the votes of citizens in such a way which would limit the impact of opposition voters on the opportunity of the opposition acquiring mandates.

CONCLUSION

Electoral manipulations are a natural consequence of the possibility to affect individual chances of subjects in electoral competition. The deterministic character of politics as a social phenomenon leads to the subjects affecting the level of political uncertainty creating attitudes which may change the chances of individual candidates and political parties participating in the elections. The executed manipulation strategies assume the possibility of changing the level of political uncertainty but they do not guarantee the achievement of this goal. It results from the multiplicity of determinants affecting the ultimate election result, the effectiveness of activities carried out and the realism of the introduced strategy. The final effect of manipulation activities must be assessed with great caution, as it is not obvious whether it was the said activities that led to that effect. Hence, regarding the alleged effect, manipulations can be potential or actual, and taking into consideration the course of the process, they can be planned or accidental. All that means that it is much easier to analyze electoral manipulations *ex post*, although knowing certain mechanisms we can identify most of them even at the stage of designing and execution.

Institutional electoral manipulations are easier to identify than the communication ones, mainly because of the need to affect the systemic environment of the electorate. At the same time, the dimensions of their impact are much broader, which shows the possible scope of manipulation activities. As indicated at the beginning, the presented dimensions of manipulations are not independent from each other. Specific activities can often be assigned to more than one dimension, and the discussed planes of manipulation overlap. What is more, manipulations are often alleged, when the subjects of political competition take some actions to differentiate electoral chances but their decisions are not institutional in nature. All this means that the issue of electoral manipulations is difficult, both in theory and regarding the description of actual actions.

It is also hard to determine whether manipulative actions should be analyzed from a short-term or long-term perspective. The provisional nature of the need to

influence the result of election would suggest that the originators of manipulations will be interested in quickly affecting the electoral process, limiting themselves to the nearest election. This conclusion would also be supported by the difficulty with forecasting long-term effects of manipulations, especially in the context of system of reference which can dynamically change in time. Thus, it seems justified to conclude that the vast majority of manipulative activities are designed for the shortest possible time. Among the activities whose importance may be more lasting, the ones of the systemic, material and participation dimensions need to be emphasized.

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MANIPULACJE WYBORCZE

Streszczenie

Manipulacje wyborcze są mechanizmem trwałego wpływu na wynik wyborów. Podmioty rywalizacji wyborczej (*electoral competition*) chcą wpłynąć na swoje szanse w wyborach. Możliwe wymiary manipulacji wskazują na potencjalne podmioty ich dokonujące. Rządzący posiadają wyższy potencjał manipulacyjny niż polityczna opozycja. Manipulacje wyborcze zmieniają poziom politycznej niepewności. Jej wymiar jest kształtowany w sferze instytucjonalnej i komunikacyjnej. Skutki manipulacji wyborczych częściej mają oddziaływanie obliczone na najbliższy czas, ale te ze sfery instytucjonalnej mogą kształtować długoterminowy poziom niepewności politycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: manipulacje wyborcze, rywalizacja wyborcza, niepewność polityczna, wybory, fałszerstwa wyborcze.

ELECTORAL MANIPULATIONS

Summary

Electoral manipulations are a mechanism of exerting permanent influence on the election result. The subjects of electoral competition want to influence their electoral opportunities. Possible dimensions of manipulations are related to the potential subjects that carry them out. The ruling ones have a higher manipulation potential than the political opposition. Electoral manipulations modify the level of political uncertainty. Its dimension is shaped in the institutional and communication

spheres. The effects of electoral manipulations are more often aimed at the nearest future only, but those in the institutional sphere may shape the long-term level of political uncertainty.

Key words: electoral manipulation, electoral competition, political uncertainty, elections, electoral fraud.