CHAPTER – 2

Theories Of Coalition

Having discussed the theories of the party system in general, attention should now be given on coalitions. The process of formation of government, its sustenance and suspension in parliamentary systems are replete with obscurities under minority situation deriving from the failure of all parliamentary parties to attain single-handedly the required majority for the formation of government and its sustenance, thus leading to the creation of a hung parliament. In a hung parliament, parties and party leaders shall have no alternative than to form either a single-party minority government with the support externally provided to it by some party or parties, or to make a combination of some parties to form a government. In forming a coalition, the behaviour of political parties is guided by two contradictory motivations. Political actors make strange bedfellows in pursuit of power disregarding ideological variance and sometimes actors of dissimilar ideologies come forward to cooperate in matters with regard to formation and sustenance of government. Different theories attempt to explain the behaviour of actors in coalition politics in some unsystematic manner. Each and every theory of coalition emphasizes a particular aspect as size, ideology, policy and programme and so on. No theory of coalition-building and coalition behaviour has offered a complete picture embracing all aspects of coalition politics. They only point out some tendencies and possibilities that may or may not happen in coalition politics in some specific situations, as coalition politics, being based on pragmatism, does not always move steadily and freely along a straight line and frequently follows a bumpy and crisscross path to bend to the compulsions of pragmatic politics. Political parties and their leaders move toward forming coalition with discrete partners with a specific object in their mind, that is to share power, to exercise control over government policies from narrow ideological perspective, even at the cost of national interests, and above all, to have some portion of the payoffs distributed among coalition partners and its supporting parties This parochial motivation of political actors often make coalition politics more complicated, more opportunistic and more unstable. But if directed in right course, coalition politics may come to much usefulness. In many West European and Scandinavian countries, coalition politics has been a viable means for nourishing national unity and integration as well as a means for reconciliation of conflicts among diverse ethnic groups by virtue of its "consociational characteristics".1 Strong willingness and commitment of political leaders to cooperate in coalition formation and its maintenance can make it truly effective and successful.

Parliamentary democracy that formally privileges the majority of the representatives elected by the people is the most widely accepted and the most popular

---

form of democratic regimes. In a parliamentary government, policies of the government are decided by a legislative majority. With a cohesive two-party system as in Britain, legislative majority is usually available to one of the two parties. That is why a minority government cannot be found there and a single-party majority rule has become a norm. Coalition at the governmental level through the formation of 'Government of National Unity' consisting of most, if not all, the political parties to combat a national emergency arising out of war or economic crisis, is not unfamiliar in Britain. For example, the Asquith coalition from May 1915 to December 1916, the Lloyd George wartime coalition formed in 1916, the National Government of August 1931 under Ramsay MacDonald's leadership and the Churchill coalition which governed the country from May 1940 to May 1945. But these are not power-sharing coalitions to which the Continental Europe is well adapted. Spread of parliamentary government and the ever-increasing application of proportional representation have added much complexity to parliamentary democracy. Multi-party democracy had become a norm of twentieth century Continental Europe. Elections in multi-party systems often result in a minority situation in which "the possibility always exists that no party will alone command a parliamentary majority. Indeed, that possibility has become the rule, rather than the exception, in the majority of the world's parliamentary systems." European politics can hardly be understood without any reference to coalition politics. Though the incidence of minority cabinets had decreased to some extent in the 1980s, yet it occurred to a larger extent in the early post-war period as shown by the survey conducted by Kaare Strom in fifteen countries of which Canada and Israel were the two non-European states. By the middle of 1983 only Britain, Spain and Greece had single-party majority rule and the rest of Europe were under either minority governments or coalitions. Minority situations induce political parties to associate with the delicate game of inter-party coalition building. Some important factors that act as a stimulant and deterrent to political parties in coalition building process can be enumerated as under: 1. decline in partisan identification or party dealignment; 2. volatility in electoral market; 3. electoral systems and electoral laws; and 4. constitutional and institutional rules and conventions providing a room to manoeuvre a specific structural situation.

Theories of partisan identification were developed by the Michigan school. This model, based on social psychology, refers to voters' psychological attachment to a particular party at the individual level rather than a broader group level or an institutional level. This party identification seems to begin developing at a pretty young age and becomes consolidated in an matured age. Moreover, strong party alignment makes the individual a dependable partisan voter. Party identification is composed of two elements – one is its direction, that is support in favour of particular parties across left-right

---

continuum and the other is its strength signifying whether voters are permanently tied with a particular party or whether they are inclined toward it only for the time being. These psychological attachments to established political parties, being transmitted across generations through socialization process, may form a stable support base for political parties by forming 'a long-standing orientation toward electoral choices' of individuals and 'their places within the political system.'

Electoral researchers have generally recognized partisan alignment as one of the determining factors in voting behaviour in most democratic systems. Changes in party identification of an individual could likely be related by the way in which an individual responses to his or her new changing social circumstances shaped by "marriage, a new job, or a change of neighbourhood" that "exerts a pressure on the individual to confirm to the political values of a new environment". Though the concept of party identification is, no doubt, much attractive, its usefulness in the typical West European multi-party perspective has often been called into question. Attempts to measure party identification, unlike in the USA, have proved to be inconsistent across nations and across time in West European multi-party structures.

Notwithstanding the variations in the measurement process of party identification in the West European countries and the USA, most of the scholars now are of the same opinion that party identification has considerably declined in most of the West European democracies. The dealignment thesis clings to the idea that social and political modernization has slackened party bonds in advanced industrial countries. In 1995, Schmitt and Holmberg used data from the national election studies and the Eurobarometer (EB) surveys for West European nations in their extensive research work to measure tendencies to partisanship. They recorded the propensity of partisanship among the citizens of fourteen European nations and the United States. The findings of their study confirmed the incidence of partisan dealignment. Their inconspicuous conclusion was "If there is an 'overall' tendency in West European partisanship it is of loosening party bonds. But specific developments, by country and by party, are so varied that any general 'overall' view disguises more than it discloses." Dalton identified some problems associated with the work of Schimitt and Holmberg. But he has also affirmed the existence of party dealignments spread over a larger number of countries. Dalton argues:

In summary, these social trends lead to a general process of partisan dealignment that we believe is occurring in most advanced industrial democracies. Moreover, this dealignment hypothesis differs in fundamental ways from explanations based primarily on party performance (e.g., Zelle 1995). The dealignment thesis implies that we are witnessing a broad and ongoing decline in the role of political parties for contemporary publics - not a temporary downturn in public satisfaction with parties as others have argued. Dealignment also suggests that new form of democratic politics - such as the expansion of direct democracy, the opening of administrative processes to public input, and the expanding use of the

---

7 ibid, pp.149-150.
9 ibid, p.121.
courts by citizen groups - will develop as citizens shift to non-partisan forms of action. The result of these processes should be a general erosion of partisanship in among contemporary publics.  

Different surveys carried out by eminent scholars corroborate the fact that the decline in party identification must have some consequential implications for 'mass political behaviour', the most important of which is its impact on the electoral behaviour of citizens. The greater the degree of erosion of citizens' bond with political parties, the greater will be the extent of volatility in election results. The long-standing relationship between citizens and parties changes in response to changing party identification. In opposition to dealignment, wide-ranging partisanship among the electorate plays a positive role in stabilizing alignments keeping realignments among parties away from being consolidated and in decreasing changes in election results.

Dealignment manifested in the volatility of citizens' electoral choices may occur both at micro level and macro level. Electoral change can be measured by "the volatility of party vote shares between elections – the average change in party vote shares between adjacent elections." \(^\text{12}\) Dalton and others have demonstrated in their research how volatility in party vote share has increased by the late 1970s. \(^\text{13}\) Their views regarding electoral volatility are in variance with the views held by Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair. They have pointed out that the post-war European politics was characterized more by stability than volatility and the extent of volatility was greater in the inter-war period. \(^\text{14}\) Dalton and others do not contradict Bartolini and Mair, but they do not address the basic question as to whether party systems have changed from the pattern as they were in the post-war period. \(^\text{15}\) As partisanship manipulates voters to cast their votes in favour of their favoured party with the anticipation of that party's seriousness in representing their interests, dealignment facilitates their shifting of loyalty to other political contestants. Fragmentation may develop within existing parties and new political forces may surface the political arena with new appeals to which the hovering voters may respond. Thus, the newly emerging parties try to have a stake in the share of votes of major parties. For example, the parliamentary position of Canada's Progressive Conservative Party was challenged by the emergence of the Reform Party that brought many of the supporters of the Progressive Conservative Party in its own favour and thereby suddenly reduced its parliamentary position to a mere couple of seats in the 1993

---


\(^\text{11}\) For details see Peter Mair, Wolfgang C. Muller and Fritz Plasser (eds), *Political Parties and Electoral Change*, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2004.


election. Similar was the fate of New Zealand's Labour Party in 1990. The number of its seats in parliament came down from 56 to 29 that indicated a period of intense fragmentation in the party system. Existing parties in most of the democratic party systems have been confronting challenges from the newly emerging forces on the left-right spectrum – from Green parties on the left and nationalist or neo-liberal parties on the right – since 1982. Dealignment has also increased the number of effective parties amounting to more than an average growth rate of 150 per cent by the mid-1990s that resulted in an increased fragmentation of the party systems of industrially developed countries.\textsuperscript{16} We can say with Pippa Norris that "At systemic level, with less ballast, a fall in partisanship could generate more unpredictable outcomes, strengthens the prospects for minor parties, further fractionalize party systems, and, therefore, complicate coalition building and the government formation process."\textsuperscript{17}

The electoral system and electoral laws of a country determine the nature of the cabinet that it may have. It may be a single-party majority cabinet, a minimal-winning coalition, a surplus majority cabinet, a single-party minority cabinet, or even a minority coalition. Electoral systems used in different countries all over the world are classified into three main groups each containing its subcategories. These are: 1. majoritarian formulae including First-Past-the-Post (FPTP), Second Ballot, the Block Vote, Single Non-Transferable Vote and the Alternative Vote systems; 2. combined systems incorporating both majoritarian and proportional formulae; and 3. proportional formulae that include the subcategories of List PR system and Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.\textsuperscript{18}

The majoritarian formulas intend to establish an effective single-party government with a working parliamentary majority-natural or manufactured – required for the survival of the government. It is considered as manufactured when it creates a winner's bonus for the majority party by contributing an additional proportion of seats to that party in comparison to its proportion of votes. At the same time, they set high thresholds for minor parties, especially those minor parties whose support bases are spatially dispersed in different regions and thus throwing them into disadvantageous position. The leading party in 'Winner-takes-all' elections benefits from an extra advantage as it can enhance its support base, while the minor parties trailing behind the leading party are deprived of the reward.

The First-Past-the-Post electoral system (FPTP), also known as single-member plurality system, is used in fifty four countries across the world, including the United Kingdom, India, Canada, the United States and many other Commonwealth countries, to choose the lower chambers of their parliaments.\textsuperscript{19} For being elected under this electoral system, candidates need not essentially cross a minimum electoral threshold, that is a

\textsuperscript{16} ibid, pp.40-41.
\textsuperscript{19} Norris, n. 17, pp.42-44.
minimum number of seats won in the lower-tier districts and / or a minimum percentage of the total national vote or to acquire an absolute majority of total valid votes. What is required for this purpose, is to gain a simple plurality, that is one vote more than their nearest rivals. Under this system, the party with the largest number of parliamentary seats, incoherent with the percentage of share of popular votes won by that party, forms the government. This type of electoral system does not necessarily encourage the formation of minority governments and the exceptions to this norm can be found under special circumstances.

Second ballot systems, often called 'run-off elections', are used as a subcategory of majoritarian electoral formulas to ensure absolute majority of votes for the winning candidate. In these systems, any candidate securing an absolute majority of votes, not less than 50% or above, in the first round is declared elected. If no one of the candidates receives absolute majority in the first round, a second round of election is held on the second ballot between the two top contenders receiving the highest number of votes of the first round election. These methods are in wide use among the world's twenty four nations in the elections of lower houses of parliaments. They are also used in the presidential elections in France, Austria, Portugal and, since 1994, in Cambodia and Finland. Moreover, the Israeli Prime Minister, though not its legislature, is elected by this method. The National Assembly of France, the Lower House of the French parliament, is elected by a 'mixed majority-plurality formula' in single member districts. A candidate obtaining an absolute majority on the first ballot is elected in the National Assembly. But if the candidates become unsuccessful in gaining an absolute majority in the first round election held on the first ballot, a plurality vote on the second ballot will determine the fate of a candidate. Lijphart finds very hardly any difference between the majority-plurality formula and the majority run off formula. This system provokes centrist party competition and heightens the legitimacy of the final winner as he or she enjoys the support of at least half of the voters. The minor parties are penalized under these rules also as under the FPTP method.

Other alternative forms of electoral methods available under the majoritarian electoral formulas are the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV), the Cumulative Vote, the Limited Vote and the Bloc vote. Japan used the SNTV to elect the first chamber of the Japanese Diet for a long period from 1948 to 1993. Jordon and Vanuatu so far follow this electoral system for parliamentary elections. In Taiwan, nearly two-thirds of the legislators are elected by this rule. In this system, voters cast a single vote in small multimember constituencies. Multimember from the same party are pitted against one another in the same electoral district with an eye to gain simple plurality of votes for getting themselves elected. The Cumulative Vote System is not used for election at the national level. In this system, voters are given as many votes as representatives; votes can be cumulated on a single candidate. This system was found to be used in dual-member seats in the nineteenth-century Britain and in the state of Illinois of the United States until 1980. The Limited Vote system is similar to the Cumulative Vote system, but voters are given lesser votes than the number of representatives to be elected. The Bloc Vote system

---

20 *ibid*, 48-49.
21 Lijphart, n. 18, pp.146-147.
has a parallel to the FPTP system, but the constituencies are multi-member constituencies. Electors cast as many votes as there are the number of seats to be filled and they usually vote independently for individual candidates regardless of party. The candidates with a simple plurality of votes take the office. Parliamentary elections of nine states, including Laos, Thailand and Mauritius, have pursued this system.\(^\text{22}\)

The Alternative Vote system, commonly known as 'preferential voting', is used in electing the House of Commons of Australia as well as in the presidential elections in Ireland. This system is of purely majoritarian nature. Here the voters have to indicate their preferences as 1, 2, 3 and so on among the candidates. If any candidate receives an absolute majority of first preferences, he or she emerges as winning candidate. In case of the non-availability of any such absolute majority after the completion of counting of first preferences, the candidate, receiving the lowest number of votes of first preferences, is eliminated from the electoral fray and the votes of first preferences obtained by the weakest candidate are redistributed among the other candidates. The process of elimination and redistribution goes on until a majority winner emerges. This process holds the parties and candidates remaining at the bottom of the poll at bay and thereby builds up conducive political environment for the formation of single-party government by the winning party.\(^\text{23}\)

Proportional Representation (PR) is based on the prime principle of allocation of parliamentary seats to each party in conformation with the proportion of numbers of votes cast for each party. The most commonly applied forms of the PR formulas are the List PR system and Single Transferable Vote (STV) system. Party Lists system is further sub-divided into open, partly open or closed list system. Irrespective of having some slight variations between different forms of List PR formulas, all the Party List systems require that parties put forward nomination of lists of candidates in multi-member districts. Voters are asked to cast their ballots in favour of a party list or another and sometimes they are permitted to distribute their votes on their own choice among several party lists. Seats are distributed to the different party lists proportionally to the share of votes earned by them. In a purely open-list system, as it is best used in Finland, voters can make their choice for particular individual candidates on the list and the ranking order of candidates is determined by the votes received by them individually. In closed-list system, as it is found to be used in Germany, Portugal, Costa Rica and Israel, voters can only vote for the complete list and they cannot express their preference for any specific candidate. Partly open list system prevails in Belgium, the Netherlands and in several other countries where voters can express their preference for particular candidates, though the ranking order of candidates selected by parties in the party lists are likely to remain unaffected. List PR systems again can be subdivided on the basis of mathematical formulas. These mathematical formulas are used in Proportional Representation in order to convert votes into seats. The most widely used method is d'Hondt method in which 1, 2, 3 etc. are used as divisors and this method is applied in Romania, Spain, Poland and Israel. This method is a little bit disposed with a tendency of

\(^{22}\) Norris, n. 17, p.48.
\(^{23}\) ibid, pp.49-50.
privileging larger parties at the cost of minor parties. The other methods are the 'pure' Sainte-Laguë method, found to be used in New Zealand, divides votes by odd numbers as 1, 3, 5, 7. The 'modified' Sainte-Laguë method resembles the 'pure' Sainte-Laguë method with the only difference that it replaces the first divisor by 1.4. An alternative to the 'pure' and 'modified' Sainte-Laguë methods is the largest remainder method which applies a quota to be calculated in various ways. The Hare quota, followed in Denmark and Costa Rica for parliamentary elections and for list constituencies in Lithuania, Ukraine and Taiwan, is calculated for each constituency by dividing total valid votes by the total number of seats allocated. The Droop quota, leaning to a slightly disproportional result, increases the divisor by adding one to the total number of seats. South Africa, Greece and the Czech Republic are the countries that follow this Droop quota.

The second alternative type of proportional Representation is 'Mixed Member Proportional' (MMP) formula, as it is known in New Zealand. According to this formula, voters have two votes; one vote they can cast for the district candidate in single-member constituencies and the other for the party list. The combination of the single-member districts and party list method comply with the criteria of Proportional Representation. List PR seats can compensate for the loss created by disproportionality ingrained in district member seats. The amount of list PR seats to be had for compensating the disproportionality caused by the district member seats actually determines the degree of proportionality in the election results. Nearly half of the legislatures of Germany, New Zealand and Venezuela, not less than three-fourths of legislatures in Italy are elected by plurality in single-member districts and the remaining seats are filled by party lists.

The third one is the Single Transferable Vote (STV). It differs from the Party List system on this point that under this system voters can cast their votes in favour of individual candidates in lieu of for party lists. The STV appears to be proportional because a quota is used for election in this system. The system divides the entire country into several multi-member constituencies and the voters are asked to 'rank-order' the candidates according to their preferences, such as 1, 2, 3 etc. The system follows a somewhat complicated method than the alternative vote method in selecting the winning candidate. The total number of valid votes obtained by candidates is divided by the total number of seats to determine the quota. In order to be elected, the candidates must reach the quota. Transfer of votes takes place in two ways; first, the surplus votes of the candidates, who have already touched the quota required for winning election, are transferred to the next most preferred candidates on the ballots in question; second, the candidate with least number of votes of first preferences is eliminated and the votes secured by that candidate are redistributed according to second preferences among the candidates. This process continues up to the fulfillment of all the seats. In spite of having the potentiality of rendering proportional results for elections, the STV is seldom used.

---

25 Norris, n. 17, pp51-55.
26 *ibid*, pp.48-49.
Ireland and Malta use STV for their legislative elections and Australia uses it for its Senate election.  

District magnitude and electoral thresholds are the two important issues frequently taken up for discussion by electoral analysts. These two factors have a significant consequence upon the degree of proportionality or disproportionality in electoral results and on the effective number of parliamentary parties.  

Electoral magnitude has received such an importance in determining voting results that George Horwill has regarded it long ago as the "all-important factor" and it appears to be "the deceive factor".  

District magnitude enormously affects both plurality-majority and PR formulas in two reverse ways. An increase in district magnitude in plurality-majority methods engenders greater disproportionality which comes to the benefit of large parties. On the other hand, high percentage district magnitude in PR systems produces greater proportionality and thereby more conducive atmosphere for minor parties. The degree of proportionality varies in different types of PR system and it is not so in plurality-majority systems. On the whole "high magnitude PR districts tend to maximize proportionality and to facilitate representation of even very small parties." Percentage of electoral thresholds may also be high or small. High thresholds ensuing from the formal barriers imposed in some countries, such as the five percent formal barrier of Germany or the four percent restriction in Sweden, constructs a legal perimeter for the entry of new parties into the legislatures. This not only defends the established parties from new challenges and new competitions that they could have faced from the new entrants, provided they got entry into assemblies, but it becomes easier for them to ignore and nullify the demands and aspirations of the sprouting groups in the event of the absence of their representatives in the national parliaments. Conversely, low percentage of electoral threshold in PR systems, as it is experienced in Denmark, the Netherlands and Israel, hardly produces any negative impact upon minor parties. Low thresholds inspire smaller parties to make an inroad into parliaments and to uphold their endurance. This occurs not because of any positive or active effect, but rather because law barriers do little to force the amalgamation or merger of parties or exclude parties which are losing support. Belgium adopted proportional representation in 1899 mainly to undermine the Liberals and to encourage the rising of the Socialists.

---

27 This system is also used in India in the election of the President  
28 The magnitude of electoral district does neither refer to the geographical area, nor the total number of registered voters of the district, but it refers to the total number of candidates to be elected in each district. Electoral threshold means a barrier of a minimum number of seats and / or a minimum percentage of total votes that each party has to cross in the lower-tier districts.  
All electoral systems, irrespective of whatever formula they follow – plurality-majority, semi-proportional or even proportional representation – generates a tendency for creating disproportional electoral outcomes.\(^{32}\) Even the Netherlands, whose electoral system appears to be most proportional, is not above this tendency. But what is worth mentioning is that the extent of disproportionality in plurality-majority system is much higher than in PR systems. Taking the various facts of party systems and electoral systems into consideration, it can be well stated that multi-party parliamentary democracy in combination with PR system exemplified by high percentage district magnitudes and low percentage electoral thresholds, constitutes the most ideal conditions for coalitions. Lijphart argues:\(^{33}\)

The scholarly consensus is that the world's many divided societies, like South Africa, are best served by PR and parliamentary government rather than FPTP and presidential government. PR makes it possible for minorities to be fairly represented, and it encourages the development of a multiparty system in which coalition governments, based on compromises among the minorities, have to be formed. Parliamentary systems entail collegial cabinets that are the best sites for coalitions of the leaders of the minorities. FPTP, on the other hand, discriminates against minorities, and it tends to produce artificial majorities, two-party systems, and one-party governments. And presidentialism entails a great deal of concentration of power in the hands of one person and is therefore inimical to the formation of coalitions.

The effect of Duverger's law\(^ {34}\) is limited to the constituency level of voting and it gives little hint about the overall aggregation of seats. Moreover, even at the constituency level, voters are bewildered about which candidates are the probable winners in the scarcity of correct information. Alistair McMillan has observed, "As such, while a strong party performance can provide a focus for voter co-ordination on party candidates across constituencies, the overall impact of Duvergian influences is weak. In particular, parties with strong constituency or regional-based support can benefit from the disproportional returns inherent in the SMP system."\(^ {35}\) This is particularly pertinent in the Indian context where constituencies are large enough both in terms of geographical area and number of electorates divided into assorted multicultural and multilingual groups and the voters are not supplied with adequate and accurate information about candidates.

Constitutional and institutional rules and conventions can be an influential variable in determining the nature of government that a nation may obtain. Rules for parliamentary investitures are used in some countries to restrain the emergence of minority cabinets as investiture requirement makes it obligatory for a new government to


\(^{34}\) Duverger's law is a principle which asserts that a plurality rule election system tends to favour a two-party system. This is one of the two hypotheses proposed by him. Duverger's second law states that "the double ballot majority system and proportional representation tend to multipartism." His law suggests a synthesis between a party system and an electoral system: a proportional representation system creates the electoral conditions necessary to foster party development while a plurality system marginalizes many smaller parties resulting in what is known as two-party system.

secure a vote of confidence of the national assembly immediately before assuming the office during its first encounter with it. Investiture rules are applied in France, Belgium, Italy, Ireland, Spain and Israel. Non-appliance of a parliamentary investiture may often persuade political parties to form minority and oversized cabinets as a replacement for minimal winning cabinets. A minority cabinet is expected to continue, so long as parliamentary majority endures its survival, without giving it formal approval.

Investiture rules are not found in many parliamentary democracies as in the United Kingdom and its former colonies, except Ireland and Papua New Guinea, as well as in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries. The constitution of Denmark strongly encourages formation of minority governments in the absence of an investiture rule. There the existence of government does not depend on a vote of confidence in the Folketing at its investiture. Rather, the government continues to exist until other political parties can put up a majority in the Folketing against it. Absence of an investiture rule, thus, allowed the Hartling government to remain in office from 1973 to 1975 with only 22 seats out of 172 in the Folketing. The Swedish constitution insists on having the Prime Minister, nominated by the Speaker, in his office unless an absolute majority in the Riksdag develops against him. In 1978, but the Speaker proposed the name of Ola Ullstén, leader of the Liberal Party, as the Prime Minister, his nomination was approved by only 39 votes of his own party. The Conservative party and the Communist party opposed his nomination by 72 votes, while other parties desisted from voting. Though Ullstén did not receive an absolute majority of 349 votes in the Riksdag, his position as the Prime Minister was confirmed with a thin parliamentary support of lesser than ten percent.

Rules regarding the dissolution of parliament may also interrupt the possibility and functioning of minority governments. Easier rules of parliamentary dissolution will make it easier for the Prime Minister of a minority government to get parliament dissolved. If the opponents want to defeat him on the floor of parliament, he can restrain them from going berserk by threatening the dissolution of the national parliament. This threat enables the Prime Minister to negotiate easily with both the constituent coalition partners and the opposition members in conducting a minority government and a coalition government, even that be a minority coalition. The constitution of Denmark can be referred to in this context. The monarch cannot refuse a dissolution of the parliament even if the proposal comes from a government which is in a minority in the Folketing. Dissolution of parliament acts as a restraint to prevent other parties from toppling the government. On the contrary, minority governments pass through confusion and uncertainty where parliament cannot be dissolved before the termination of its term as stipulated in the constitution as in Norway or where it can only be dissolved under extraordinary circumstances as in Italy, Germany and Finland. Here the supporting party or parties keep the government under pressure by the occasional threat of withdrawing

---

36 Strom, n.4, pp.78-79.
support from it on trivial issues as they know that defeat of the government is possible without having the mandate of the new electorate.\textsuperscript{39} Coalition formation occurs in an institutional context which is subject to manipulation. Tsebelis notes that institutional design of a country does not always appear as an exogenous factor. Political actors want to change the rules and structures that regulate political interactions.\textsuperscript{40}

It is evident that the formation of a coalition is closely linked with the party system, electoral system and parliamentary investitures of a country. The word 'coalition' is derived from the Latin word 'coalescere' which means clubbing or joining together. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'coalition' as an "alliance for combined action of distinct parties, persons and states, without permanent incorporation into one body."\textsuperscript{41} As a political term, a coalition can be categorized as "a group of individuals (or group of groups)\textsuperscript{42} whose members posses at least one goal in common – that goal may be of power-capturing or policy controlling. They agree to coordinate their behaviour by pooling their resources at least to some extent for the attainment of that shared goal.

In multi-party parliamentary democracies, political actors form coalitions in two ways: 1. coalitions that take shape before the holding of elections, known as 'pre-electoral alliances' or 'anterior coalitions', and 2. post-electoral alliances' or 'posterior coalitions' that take place after elections. In pre-electoral coalitions, voters are kept abreast of the policies and programmes that the parties want to implement after winning the elections. So, voters know well in advance which parties are forming coalitions with whom and they can decide which coalition they will vote for. Political parties keen on forming pre-electoral alliance, come into an agreement among themselves that provides for seat adjustments by putting up no candidate against one another in the same constituency or by mutual withdrawal of candidates in the constituencies to evade vote-splitting that may be detrimental to each party forming alliance for winning elections. But such an agreement is difficult to reach as parties do not want to surrender their strong bastions in favour of some other party. Thus, complicity arises in case of pre-electoral alliances in countries like India that follow the first-past-the-post electoral system. The problem emanates from the difference that lies between vote-seat ratios. Countries having proportional representation do not suffer from this problem, mainly because seats are allocated to each party in proportion to the number of votes obtained by them. Post-electoral coalitions take place after the completion of elections when citizens get a vivid account of the final allotment of seats to each party. People are not explicitly informed of the probable constituent partners and leadership of the prospective coalition before the election. They are kept unaware of the governmental policies and programmes. Parties squander no time to avail the opportunity of flouting peoples' verdict in presence of fractured electoral mandate and form post-electoral alliance at the governmental level. Jan Vis's argument is noteworthy in this perspective. He has stated that "Election results

\textsuperscript{39} Bogdanor (ed), n. 2, pp.1-13.
\textsuperscript{40} George Tsebelis, \textit{Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics}, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990, pp.92-118.
in a minority system produce a change in the power relations; they change the minority positions in Parliament and they influence the positions in the coalition talks, …"  

Elections do not make governments. They just change the power relations between the parties in Parliament vis-à-vis their positions in the previous legislature. Making use of this altered power relations, parties take initiative to realign and to form post-electoral government coalitions even disregarding the electoral mandate. This particular type of coalition also crops up as an intervening arrangement when the government in power fails but fresh election is not called.

In a mixed motive situation characterized by the collective role of elements of conflict and coordination, two group members form coalition in which they bring together their resources, that is their investments, to utilize them more efficiently than the resources the third man has at its disposal. The underlying object in doing so lies in the intention of taking a grip of rewards and outcomes. Gamson has indicated that only in a mixed motive situation of conflict and coordination, a coalition assumes a proper connotation; it makes a sense.  

In a pure coordination situation, the question of coalition formation does not carry any sense as the interests of the group members correspond with one another. They do not differ, rather, they are positively interrelated. As a consequence, an increase in the profits and outcomes of a member inextricably augments the outcomes of other members of the group. A coalition is also meaningless in a pure conflict situation where group interests are negatively interlinked; that is to say, there exists a permanent inconsistency in group interests among its members. In a divergent political ambiance marked by mutually hostile interests, a coalition can not function well as it sets numerous impediments that are difficult to surmount in reaching agreed policies acceptable to both the members. One member of the group can bring both positive and negative outcomes for other members on different occasions depending on the prevalence of amiable and hostile political conditions. Two members integrate their resources to their maximum benefits without taking the interests of the third. The question of forming coalition can be interpreted from different attitudes of the analysts. While one stresses the effects of coordination as a prerequisite for coalition formation, other ascribes it to conflict. There are still others to emphasize on the formation of coalition in opposition to the third person.

What has been stated above needs to be followed by a detailed discussion of the theories of political coalitions that have evolved into the field of coalition literatures over the three decades since the sixties of the last century. These traditional theories, revolving around the size principle and ideological proposition of coalition formation, have used the mechanisms of cooperative game theory and spatial modeling to guess whether size and ideology of a potential coalition have any effect on the possibility of its formation. Theories of minimal winning coalition, of minimum size coalition, theory based on bargaining proposition, and minimum range theory – all belong to the traditional category. These theories explain government formation as a zero-sum game. Political

parties want to secure their entry into parliament in search of governmental power in which they devote energy and resources to maximize payoffs or office-benefits deriving from holding different portfolios in the cabinet. As holding office seems to be the basic issue to political parties in coalition negotiations and bargaining, these theories assume that only majority cabinets instead of minority cabinets will come out into reality. No party would like to stay away from demanding a share of the payoffs of a coalition and, therefore, they will neither support the formation of a minority cabinet nor would they seek to join a cabinet having surplus members in normal circumstances. Coalitions containing fewer members, far short of achieving minimal winning status, will lose; if they are of a greater size than minimal winning, then the additional members will claim a share in the distribution of payoffs and thus, there may subsist another coalition. A coalition can, however, be a winning coalition even if these superfluous members are excluded from the coalitional group. The exclusion of unnecessary members from the group seeking to forge coalition, will expedite the process of increasing the payoffs. Thus, in simple games theory minimal winning coalition is the norm. This key concept of coalition politics found its first appearance in the game theory constructed by John Von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern in *The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. However, this idea does not commensurate with what happens in the real world of politics. It goes against the widely accepted opinion that politicians will always try to widen support as far as possible. But they do not do so by crossing the threshold of obtaining a majority of votes. Gamson and Ricker have suggested that the minimal winning coalition consisting of nominal number of individual votes, even if parliamentary factions are included within the ambit of the coalition, will realize the largest revenue 'per vote'. They have applied the rules of zero-sum games to government formulation. Riker's 'size principle', which is applied to coalition formation, is based on the rules of n-person constant-sum games, known as "simple games" The essence of Riker's model is:

"In n-person, zero-sum games, where side-payments are permitted, where players are rational, and where they have perfect information, only minimum winning coalitions occur."

"In social situations similar to n-person, zero-sum games with side-payments, participants create coalitions just as large as they believe will ensure winning and no longer."

The normal form of a coalition likely to occur in zero-sum games situations, as predicted by Riker, is a "minimum winning" coalition which is an outcome of his 'minimum size principle'. A coalition that controls as much votes or weight as is sufficient to win majority in parliament is regarded as a "winning" coalition. Coalitions, which are not winning, are either losing or blocking coalitions. A minimum winning coalition is defined as "one which is rendered blocking or losing by the subtraction of any member." A winning coalition does not include all the actors. The members, who do not belong to the winning coalition, may either form a coalition of their own, or dispense

47 *ibid*, p.40.
them into various coalitions, all of which are essentially losing coalitions, or they may decide to keep themselves aloof from joining any coalition and thereby to wait alone for some time. Of all the probable way outs, they will resort to the right one which is likely to minimize their losses. Political parties always prefer to join a minimum winning coalition in which there is assurance about the distribution of total payments to the coalition partners. This is known as "characteristic function". Sufficient payoffs to the coalition is not the only consideration in joining a coalition. Each actor of a coalition badly calculates the amount of the payoff that he can drag out from the coalition. It is called "imputation". Thus, coalition formation is limited by characteristic function and imputation as well.\textsuperscript{48} Inclusion of any unnecessary member, whose vote is not required to win a majority, will not enhance the value of the minimal winning coalition, rather it will create an adverse and disgusting impact upon the existing members as they will have no other way than to remain contented with the same or smaller value of the coalition. In a coalitional situation, the absence of a minimal winning coalition will inevitably lead either to a smaller coalition (minority coalition), or to a larger (oversized) coalition. Political parties deliberately refuse to form either of the two types of coalitions. In case of the former type, there is no certainty of success in making government and there is every possibility of losing majority in the legislature following the pulling out of support by any partner at any moment on this or that ground. The latter type is not attractive as the entry of an unnecessary member will act as a hindrance to maximization of payoffs that could be averted by the exclusion of that unnecessary member from the coalition.\textsuperscript{49} Riker himself visualized the possibility of forming an oversized coalition for the lack of precise information about the strategies that different players may undertake in the well calculated game of coalition politics (information effect). It is easier to form a minimum winning coalition when the players gather exact information about one another of their attachment to a particular one among different coalitions. However, in the real world of politics, it is not possible for each actor to collect specific information about the positional dimensions of all other actors. To quote Riker:

Since the members of a winning coalition may be uncertain about whether or not it is winning, they may in their uncertainty create a coalition larger than the actual minimum winning size. When this occurs, the members cannot be said to have behaved irrationally for their behavior can be interpreted as a purely rational attempt to ensure that they win, rather than lose.\textsuperscript{50}

Thus, an increase in the size of the coalition is quite possible as the political actors are not fully assured of the actual resources that they consider to be in their own possession and future support of the members. Since the effective actors, in apprehension of strict party discipline being imposed on them, constitute parliamentary groups, the minimal winning coalition will consist of 'the alliance of whole parties' that jointly

\textsuperscript{48} ibid, pp.36-39.
\textsuperscript{50} Riker, n. 46, p.48.
commands a majority in parliament in spite of their control over least number of parliamentary seats.\footnote{Abram de Swaan, "An Empirical Model of Coalition Formation as an N-Person Game of Policy Distance Minimization", Sven Groenings, E. W. Kelley, Michael A. Leiserson (eds), The Study of Coalition Behavior, Holt, Rinhart, and Winston, New York, 1970, p.426.}

Riker's 'size principle' used in the sense of minimum winning coalition has no consistency with the derivation of some "minimum size principle". The concept of minimum winning coalition is quite different from the concept of minimum size principle.\footnote{Abram de Swaan, Coalition Theories and Cabinet Formations, Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1973, pp.62-65.} A coalition consisting of the smallest weight, i.e., the smallest number of votes, is considered to be a minimum size coalition. In simple games, a minimum size coalition consisting of actors having equal weight of votes in the voting body is seen to come into existence. The substantive problem is the existence of two levels at which 'actors' seek to maximize profits at the level of individual vote as well as of parliamentary factions. The degree of parliamentary faction can not remain in a stagnant condition and it is likely to show a rising tendency if individual parliamentary members are permitted to increase profit without any restraint whatsoever. This predicament is nothing new to parliamentary leadership as in regular parliamentary politics, the crisis managers face this dilemma in managing factions within Parliament. Riker's 'minimum size principle' has not given any solution to this formal and substantive problem.

Coalitions are formed through the process of bargaining and negotiations that may continue for a long time. Prolonged bargaining among large number of ideologically discordant actors creates complexities in the process of government formation as they fail to reach an amicable decision. Not only ideology, but the question of distribution of payments, encumbers the procedure of fruitful bargaining following which political stalemates arise over the issue of the formation of government. Bargaining becomes easier among as many small number of actors as possible having ideological uniformity. Such a view has been upheld by Leiserson's "bargaining proposition", a theory closely connected with the minimum winning and minimum size hypotheses. Bargaining proposition alleges that with an increase in the number of actors, a minimum winning coalition having the smallest possible number of members will be formed, since smaller groups of parties will find it easier to enter into an agreement among them over the question relating to the formation of a potential coalition among many alternative minimal winning coalitions. Thus, Leiserson has developed a model of coalition formation in which parties, among all winning coalitions, look for those coalitions that put together partners at a minimal ideological distance from each other.\footnote{Michael A. Leiserson, Coalitions in Politics: A Theoretical and Empirical Study, Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1966.} The bargaining proposition suggests that as the number of actors increases, each actor tends to form a minimal winning coalition with as few members as possible.
The proposition regarding bargaining is that as the number of actors increases, there is a tendency for each actor to form a minimal winning coalition with as few members as possible. Thus, two-party coalition is more likely to be formed than three-party or so forth.54

It is possible to form an ideologically compatible coalition among different actors in the true sense of the term when they share absolutely consistent attitudes. Policy implementation is not a difficult task in this type of coalition, as lack of consensus resulting from ideological dissimilarity does not stand in the way of effective implementation of policies. In case of ideological inconsistency, or when the actors hold divergent attitudes on some common issues, they fail to form a coalition based on attitudinal similarity. Leiserson has changed the hypothesis. He argues: "

...if an actor and his ideological allies are too weak to control the decision; he should not insist on as much similarity in attitudes as possible when forming a coalition. Instead, he should form a coalition with someone with whom it is relatively easy to compromise."55

It will be easy to reach a compromise among actors when "the conflicting attitudes are held with the greatest difference in intensity". Two actors "who disagree and feel unequally strongly about what they disagree about", can reach a compromise more easily than the two actors "who agree on one issue but disagree equally strongly on another"56. Two hypotheses follow from Leiserson's experiments:

First, when two actors disagree and have equal intensities, it really is difficult for them to decide which way they will vote. Bargaining may go on indefinitely; uncertainty, then confusion, and perhaps mistrust creep into the negotiations. In frustration or despair, they may well turn elsewhere for support. Second, when some sort of compensation can be made to compensate an actor for the unpleasantness he must suffer in order to achieve anything at all, then the size of this compensation will be greater the more strongly his ideologically strange bedfellow feels.

Political actors often plunge into 'political dilemma' over the issue of coalition formation as they place two reciprocally incongruous and diametrically opposite goals of power-sharing and pursuit of ideology in tandem on their political agenda. Usually political actors try to make alliances with like-minded partners sharing the same ideology, values and attitudes. Both winning election and sharing of power along with pursuance of ideologies, values and attitudes may significantly determine the course of political action in a coalition situation. When they fail in searching out such ideologically companionable partner(s) in their bid for forging prospective coalitions, they strive to come closer with other partner(s) upholding the same attitude on at least one or two of the above issues for the purpose of forming the forthcoming coalitions. Following the rule of attitudinal closeness, small coalitions are likely to come up. When power-maximization is the watchword of coalition actors, their focal point is concentrated entirely on controlling other actors, or driving out the outcomes of policy decisions in their favour. They try to keep other actors within their grip when they expect the coalition to endure for a long time.

54 Michael A. Leiserson, "Coalition Government in Japan", Groennings, Kelley and Leiserson (eds), n. 51, pp.80-102.
56 ibid, p.331.
time. On the other hand, when coalition actors can well anticipate an unexpected breakdown of the coalition with some discrete episode, they devote full energy and enthusiasm in controlling policy outcomes. This theory, known as "decision-control theory", is based on the six assumptions that Caplow has introduced to surmise the resultants which will follow in case of a triad consisting of members with varying degrees of power. It is to be noted that Caplow has not offered any precise definition of "power" as a concept, but he has used the concepts of "control" and "strength" as a substitute for "power". His first three assumptions are:

i. Members of a triad may differ in strength. A strong member can control a weaker member and will seek to do so.

ii. Each member of the triad seeks control over the others. Control over two others is preferred to control over one another.

iii. The strength of coalitions takes place in an existing triad, so there is a pre-coalition condition in each triad.

If any stronger member of a triad tries to exert coercion on a comparatively weaker member in the pre-coalition condition, it will rouse the possibility of forming an alternative coalition against the coercion.

Later on, Caplow has added two additional assumptions to the three aforesaid assumptions. These are:

iv. The 'chooser' in a triad seeks the maximum advantage or minimum disadvantage of strength of his partner.

v. The 'chooser in a triad seeks to maximize the strength of the coalition in relation to the excluded members.

Caplow's hypotheses suffer, at least partially, from inconspicuousness as they do not provide any straightforward definition of 'strength'. The first hypothesis presupposes that actors aim at controlling their fellow members, particularly weak members in a coalition. The second hypothesis is that they try to keep as many of their fellow members as possible under their control. The last two vindicate the formation of the most viable coalitions. Caplow has probably wanted to suggest that a political player always prefers to form the weakest one of all the coalitions. His main contribution to the theory of coalition formation seems to be the line of demarcations drawn by him between different types of triads. Vinacke and Arkoff found both of the theories of Caplow to be erroneous in their experimental study.

Apart from their primary goal of having assignments in government, politicians are assumed to be motivated solely by policy considerations on some occasions in

---

assessing the pros and cons of joining a coalition. When a party is not in a position on its own to garner a comforting majority, it will make incessant efforts to resolve it by taking initiatives to look out for a neighbouring partner where minimum policy adjustment will be needed to make a coalition with it. The process of searching a partner is of almost the same policy scale, ceases to continue right away with the achievement of majority. But in case of failure to establish majority, searching is carried on by both the parties among their own neighbours and so on.

A regular and step by step searching for coalition partners "with incremental policy adjustments" undertaken by political actors calls for the appearance of 'closed' minimal range coalitions. In this context, references can be made particularly to Axelord's 'Minimal Connected Winning Coalition' theory and Swaan's 'Policy Distance' theory that highlight this point. Axelord's theory is closely related to Leiserson's "minimal range theory" of coalitions. Axelord has used the term "connected" to mean coalitions consisting of actors who are closest to one another on policy scale. "Minimal connected winning" coalitions or "closed" coalitions, as they are called in present terminology, will always be 'winning' and 'minimal' as they incorporate no additional member than the requirement of closed coalitions to be winning. Thus, unnecessary members may have place in the coalition, but it would be an "open" coalition barring all these unnecessary members, i.e. such unnecessary actors must hold policy positions lying in between the policy positions of two actors who are the members of the coalition. The inclusion of extreme actors in the coalition must always be necessary. Axelord has clarified this point with an instance. Swaan has also clarified this with an example.

The rationalization of Axelord's minimal connected winning coalition theory is embedded in his theory on "conflict of interest". Conflict of interests diffuses into the whole society and into politics. In two-person bargaining game, the level of conflict of interest can be measured by a unique function fulfilling several "reasonable properties". The measure of conflict 'must be "symmetric" (independent of the labelling of players and "independent" invariant) as to the origin and unit of the utility scale, thus making the interpersonal comparison of utilities unnecessary. The measure can be applied to the n-person game of the whole society where the players may be dispersed in accordance with their policy positions on some given policy dimension.

---


Let us assume the policy position of i who is one unnecessary actor of a coalition consisting of actors h and i and j. The policy position of i lies in between h and j who are the two necessary actors of the coalition. The extreme actors h and j must be there in the coalition.

61 Swaan, n.52, p.73.

Suppose that a legislature consists of actors h, i, j and k, and i with policy position in the same order, and the majority criterion, m is m = 51. The weights (w) of h, i, and j are respectively 25, 19 and 27. A minimal winning coalition of h and j can be formed. The actor i is unnecessary in the coalition of h, i and j, but i does not contribute to the range of the coalition h and i and j, since the policy position of i is in between the policy position of h and j. Extreme members must be included in a minimal range coalition to win the majority, otherwise they could be excluded and a winning coalition of smaller range would result.

62 Axelord, n.60, pp.32, 150.
Conflict of interest in society on a given policy dimension is the average conflict of interest between a pair of people, as each one of the pair takes on all the positions in the policy dimension in proportion to the position's frequency in society.\(^63\)

The measure will vary proportionally in response to the changes in the distribution of policy positions of different actors along some policy dimension.

Intuitively, this means that the more spread out or dispersed is the distribution of people along the policy scale……the higher is the average conflict of interest for the whole society.\(^64\)

The application of the concept of conflict of interest to a theory of political coalitions comes to identify policy dimension as an ordinal policy scale. The range of the coalition along policy scale indicates the 'spread' or 'dispersion' of actors in that coalition. The smaller the range of the coalition, the lesser will be the extent of conflict of interest among its actors.

Swaan has not conceded to Axelord's view that a closed coalition should contain a lower amount of conflict of interest in comparison to an open coalition of the equal range.\(^65\) A coalition will have probably 'a minimal conflict of interest', despite the inclusion of a member in the coalition, providing its policy position lies somewhere "in the middle" of the coalition. The inclusion of such an additional member would not increase the average score of conflict of interest in that coalition. However, an "all-but-extreme" actor would add a higher score of conflict of interest than the average score to the coalition. Therefore, the inclusion of such an actor should be carefully avoided, if not his entry into the coalition is exclusively needed to make it a winning coalition and if its members seriously want to reduce the conflict of interest to the lowest point within the coalition.

All the theories of coalitions, enumerated so far, stress on the formation of minimal winning coalitions in the sense that they exclude from the arena of their discussion the coalitions that involve a member whose weight is needless to command majority. Coalitions must not always be minimal winning. European parliamentary politics is often imbued with the predisposition towards forming non-minimal winning coalitions, i.e. coalitions containing an unnecessary actor, even when its inclusion leads to a surging in the range of the coalition. Non-minimal winning coalitions occur not only in times of exigencies when forming 'grand or national coalition cabinets' are the usual practice, but their occurrence is not quite aberrant during the periods of 'apparent normalcy'. Swaan has developed a number of hypotheses to construct a general theoretical framework that provides an explanation for the occurrence of non-minimal winning coalitions.\(^66\) According to this hypothesis, "Coalitions emerge from the interaction among actors, each of which strives to bring about and join a coalition that he expects to adopt a policy which is as close as possible to his own most preferred policy."\(^67\)

\(^{63}\) ibid.
\(^{64}\) ibid.
\(^{65}\) Swaan, n. 52, p.77.
\(^{66}\) ibid., pp.81-87.
\(^{67}\) ibid, p.82.
indicates that in joining a coalition, what appears to be the most vital issue that the actors nurture in minds is policy considerations and that they engage in parliamentary game with the foremost intent of influencing the decision-making process of the government or the determination of its major policy decisions, thus making governmental decisions compatible with their own policy expectations. The willing actors appraise the benefits of taking part in the coalition from the approach of 'the proximity of their expected policy to the party programme'. If there exists an insurmountable distance between the policy preferences of the promising actors and those of the impending coalition, the actors will probably show aversion to become partners in that coalition. Interaction of the actors stemming from their preferred expectations, may result in the appearance of some kind of coalitions more than others. Such coalitions are not eventually minimal in the sense in which early theories have used it. Unnecessary members are frequently included into such coalitions with the consequential effect of an augmentation in the range of the same. On some occasions, even all actors cluster together to formulate a coalition. The idea of 'policy distance minimization' corresponds with the conceptualization of 'utility maximization of the rational decision model'. Policy distance is spelt out from the perception of weights, the actors possess, and the policy positions assumed by them.

The underlying assumption of Swaan's policy distance theory that determines the behaviour of the actors in a coalition stipulates: 68

i. An actor strives to bring about a winning coalition in which he is included and which he expects to adopt a policy that is as close as possible, on a scale of policies, to his own most preferred policy.

ii. There exists a complete and connected order of the most preferred policies ("policy positions") of the actors, such that the most preferred policy of an actor is either "to the right", or "to the left", of the most preferred policy of another actor or the most preferred policies tie with one another.

iii. An actor's most preferred policy is close to the expected policy of a coalition in which he is pivotal than to the expected policy of a coalition in which he is not pivotal.

iv. Of two coalitions with the same pivotal actor, the coalition with the larger excess will have an expected policy that is placed more to the left on the policy scale than the expected policy of the other coalition.

Actors' behaviour in a coalition is drifted towards their attempts in influencing the policy of the coalition in two stages; initially at the stage of its formation and eventually in the course of its preservation and endurance in line with their most preferred policy. Their success in this respect depends on their proportional weights. The pivotal actor is situated in an advantageous position "to throw in his weight with either side and thus to win the vote", needed in getting the policy approved in the legislature. But it is needless to say that each actor is surrounded by individual representatives who constitute the voting strength (weight) of such an actor. It may so happen that some of these individual representatives may defect and any attempt, made by the pivotal actor in the name of strict discipline, to prevent them from defecting may produce a high cost in the sense that the pivotal actor may be confronted with the unseemly and inexorable incident of

68 ibid, pp. 88-89.
defection because of shifting of allegiance of individual representatives to some another actor. Swaan observes:

If a coalition is perfectly balanced, the pivotal actor could suffer the defection of all but a single individual representative and still win the vote. But as the excess grows, the pivotal actor will need more of his individual votes to swing the majority, or to avoid a hostile majority. Thus the larger the excess of a coalition, the more likely it is for the expected policy of the coalition to diverge from the most preferred policy of the pivotal actor. At least, this is the rule of thumb which policy distance theory implicitly ascribes to the actors in their assessment of a coalition's expected policy. ..., it could be assumed (1) that the most preferred policies of the individual representatives that make up an actor all lie within a range that does not overlap with the range of another actor; and (2) that individual representatives vote individually according to preferences. In that case, there would be an individual representative (or pair of individual representatives) with an equal number of individual representatives on either side of the policy scale. Clearly, this individual representative (or pair) must belong to the pivotal actor. For that individual representative (or pair), the "excess" of the coalition would be zero (the weights of actors are equated here with the number of their individual representatives). Since the excess equals zero, the coalition is "perfectly balanced" and the coalition's expected policy, according to policy distance theory, coincides with the most preferred policy of this individual representative (or lies between the most preferred policies of the pair).69

The application of coalition politics in the context of India would necessitate a discussion of the party system of that country which will be taken up in the following chapter.

69 ibid, pp.112-113.