

**Kostelecký, Tomáš and Mikešová, Renáta and Poláková, Markéta and Čermák, Daniel and Bernard, Josef and Šimon, Martin:**

**KOHO VOLÍ VAŠI SOUSEDÉ?  
Prostorové vzorce volebního  
chování na území Česka od roku  
1920 do roku 2006, jejich změny  
a možné příčiny.**

Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství  
(SLON). 2014. 173 pages.

DOI: 10.5817/PC2017-2-221

The main aim of the publication *Koho volí Vaši sousedé? Prostorové vzorce volebního chování na území Česka od roku 1920 do roku 2006, jejich změny a možné příčiny* (*Who do your neighbours vote for? Voting patterns in the territory of Czechia between 1920 and 2006, their changes and possible underlying factors*) is to analyse spatial patterns of voting behaviour in the elections to the Lower Chamber of the Czech (oslovak) Republic.

A short introduction is focused on the phenomenon of elections and describes different types of approaches used to analyse them. The authors define four research questions: they want to find out how large the regional differences in electoral results are, how stable the voting patterns over time are, if we can identify relations between some of the socioeconomic characteristics of the population and voting patterns, and if we can discover some similarities between voting patterns before WWII and after democratization in 1989. After that, they describe their methods and data sources.

The analysis includes the elections which took place in the territory of Czechia before WWII (in 1920, 1925, 1929 and 1935) and

then the elections after the *Velvet Revolution* in 1989 (1992, 1996, 1998, 2002 and 2006). The term 'Czechia' is used to signify that this study of electoral behaviour is focused just on the Czech Republic and the Czech part of the former Czechoslovakia, which was dissolved in 1993. They divided this part of the country into more than 300 territorial units which were comparable over time and at the same time they identified units settled predominantly by Czechs and units where German-speaking people were predominantly settled. The reason is that there were two separate party systems in the territory of Czechia in the pre-WWII period – Czech political parties and German political parties. The only exception was the *Communist Party of Czechoslovakia* (KSČ) which was successful throughout the whole state because it contained both Czech and German politicians.

The following two chapters provide us with the historical context of these elections and describe the pre-WWII party system and then the most relevant political parties after 1989. In both parts the reader finds a classification of these political parties into the party families. This is important in terms of the study's goal to analyse the stability of voting behaviour, because political parties came into existence, merged, split and so on. The concept of party families enabled the authors to search for continuity in voting behaviour based on the ideology of these parties.

Chapters four and five are devoted to the analysis of the spatial patterns of voting behaviour in the pre-WWII elections and to the post-1989 elections. However, just a few of the most relevant political parties are analysed in these chapters (unfortunately some of the parties which were in the Parliament or even in the Government were not included). On the other hand, one very interesting contribution of this study is a series of maps which illustrates the areas where these parties

were most successful and areas of their stable electoral support. Probably for the first time, we can clearly see on the maps that in pre-WWII elections Czechoslovak parties were elected primarily in 'Czech' units and German parties in 'German' units. The stability of the electoral results of these political parties was analysed over time using *Pearson's correlation coefficient*. This method identified the (*Christian and Democratic Union -*) *Czechoslovak People's party* (ČSL and its successor KDU-ČSL) to be the political party with the most stable electorate. Almost the same level of stability (around 0.95) was discovered in the case of the *Republican Party of Farmers and Peasants* (RSZML), but other analysed parties in the 'Czech' and 'German' units were also quite stable. The same method was used to discover possible relationships between electoral results and a few socioeconomic characteristics and proved that correlation between parties in both parts of the state and these socioeconomic factors were on the same level. However, the authors didn't use the more advanced regression analysis that is commonly used in other studies of electoral support. Nevertheless, a correlation analysis for example discovered a high correlation coefficient (0.70 and 0.75) between the electoral results of both RSZM and its German counterpart and the percentage of farmers in the units. We can see a similar situation between the electoral support for Christian democratic parties and the percentage of Roman Catholics in the area and even a greater level of correlation in the second period (0.91 in 2006). In this era, the territory was without ethnically homogenous 'German' units, so that this very important factor of voter ethnicity in the post-1989 era disappeared.

The last point of interest of this book is the stability of electoral behaviour over time, which is analysed in the sixth chapter. A correlation analysis proved a very high stability of

electoral results in the case of ČSL and its successor KDU-ČSL between the 1935 election and the elections after the Velvet Revolution. The highest coefficient was in 1992 (0.86), but others were high as well. The results of other parties with long-term continuity (socialist and communist parties) were only stable in 1992 (0.50 and 0.41). On the other hand, it is interesting that the analysis discovered a stability of electoral support between two different right-wing parties – the pre-WWII *Czechoslovak National Democracy* (ČSND) and the post-1989 *Civic Democratic Party* (ODS; 0.51 to 0.54).

To sum up, it is not the first study of voting behaviour in the Czech Republic. However, previous studies focused mainly on the elections after 1989 (see e.g. Pink 2012, Voda 2014) or one political party over time (see e.g. Voda 2011). These studies included more sophisticated statistical methods and analysis of political parties and elections was more detailed. However, the contribution of this new study is still very high regarding the possibility to compare contemporary and pre-WWII voting behaviour and the possible underlying factors for it for the first time. The authors state that in addition to the analysed factors such as ethnicity, religiosity and selected socioeconomic characteristics, many other factors and circumstances could also be important. This book introduces the most relevant political parties of the pre-WWII and post-1989 periods and provides the reader with many interesting maps and tables. Nevertheless, these maps and tables are focused just on a few of the most relevant political parties and only on selected years, so we cannot see the changes between all elections in sequence. However, it is necessary to note that this simplification, which is presented in language that is not too technical, makes this book accessible to a wide range of readers (this was the authors' stated aim) and is still a very important contribution

to the knowledge of spatial patterns of voting behaviour in the territory of Czechia.

## References:

- Pink, Michal, ed. 2012. *Volební mapy České a Slovenské republiky po roce 1993: vzorce, trendy, proměny*. Brno: CDK.
- Voda, Petr. 2015. *Jaká je role postkomunismu? Volební geografie České a Rakouské republiky v letech 1990–2013*. Brno: CDK.
- Voda, Petr. 2011. 'Geografie volební podpory KDU-ČSL 1920 až 2010.' *Evropská volební studia* 6, no. 2, 104–127.

Ondřej Sax  
Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University

**Müller, Karel B.:**

## ČEŠI, OBČANSKÁ SPOLEČNOST A EVROPSKÉ VÝZVY.

Praha/Kroměříž: Triton. 2016. 296 pages.

DOI: 10.5817/PC2017-2-223

In 2016, the political scientist Karel B. Müller, author of the well-received canonical title 'Czechs and civil society', presented a new book with the same title: 'Czechs, Civil Society and European Challenges'. This edition has an addition subtitle which elaborates also his own normative elaborations and the trajectory of his aspirations: 'Between Nationalism and Liberalism or from Ethnic Exclusion towards an Active Boundary'. This latest work by the mid-generation political scientist, as characterised in the preface, summarizes eloquently the central topics of the academic interests he has been developing over the past fifteen years of his research career.

At the beginning, we must make clear that this book may be interesting for more than just one group of readers. Firstly, the accessibility of the language and very logical structuring of the chapters may attract a wider public who demands a profoundly informed text on the given subject. Starting from the very personal, unconventional observation of the 'Czech way' of officially commemorating places and statues in the villages, the author may easily facilitate bridging the academic and general debates about the limits of the current civil society in the Czech Republic; this may be objectively and visually evident and familiar for every rural, but I think also urban, pedestrian. With an opening chapter like this one, it is surely much easier to capture the attention of readers who come from outside of social science circles. This title is definitely laudable for the way it approaches the general public and therefore meets the promise of popularising science, which is so often rhetorically mentioned, but less often substantively fulfilled.

But then, the second branch of readers stems from the community of undergraduate and perhaps even graduate students. For them, Müller's contribution may serve as a textbook introducing the basics regarding the very same concept of civil society. Their methodological skills may be boosted thanks to the fact that author intentionally expresses the links between conceptual and empirical levels. Therefore, the various conceptualisations in the book are presented for the practical purpose of analysing different aspects of civil society and this results in a truly instructive academic text. Definitely, this text is written as scholarly rigid application of appropriate theories on the case study of the long-term process leading to the formation of civil society in the Czech lands. Ultimately, students may use this publication also as a rich and useful reservoir of data regarding the diverse actors, milestones, stages and transformations of