

not least, there is no single “new member” pattern of Europeanisation. Comparison and generalisation is made in a complex way. Unfortunately, some theoretical notions tackled by Baun and Marek in the introductory chapter remain undiscussed here. It is an extraordinary pity that the interesting empirical finding pointing to the lower importance than expected of horizontal Europeanisation remains elaborated only vaguely.

To conclude, Baun and Marek’s book is a must for scholars dealing with the foreign policy of Central and Eastern European countries. Rich in detail and accurate in analysis, the book shows both the importance and limits of EU impact on the foreign policies of NMS. The reader (including myself) who reads the book because of their primary interest in Europeanisation theory can be however a little disappointed with the rest of the book after reading an excellent introduction to the topic in the first chapter.

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Charvát, Jakub:

***POLITIKA VOLEBNÍCH REFORM
V ČR PO ROCE 1989***

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Elections and electoral systems are one of the fundamental institutions of modern democratic political systems. They represent one of the basic pillars of modern democracies. These (systems) are also an important element of the political development process because they (represent one of the most) are the most specifically manipulable instrument

of politics to for setting new game rules, the more so talking about a newly emerging form of government, or democratising state. The study of electoral systems and their mechanisms and policy of electoral reforms and electoral engineering is the (subject) topic of large amount of specialized literature. The environment of Czech political science is no exception.

A lot of authors paid attention to the issue of the electoral system for establishing the first-order elections after the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia in 1989 and later its modifications (in the Czech Republic). There are two reasons for this. First of all, we are talking about an institution which was supposed (in a term of transition as the dominant paradigm of democratisation of the time) to end the communist supremacy and establish a new democratic system. The electoral system’s choice or its settings for the first Czechoslovakian free elections in 1990 thus naturally became the No. 1 subject of interest. Secondly, the central topic of discussions about the possibility, or the necessity of the assembly electoral reform is (was) the low level of government’s ability of action, particularly with reference to the weak government majority in the Czech Republic. The chosen electoral mechanism was named as the culprit and its reform was seen as a solution.

Jakub Charvát’s monograph *Politika volebních reform v ČR po roce 1989* published by Grada publisher in 2013 is the latest contribution to 20 years’ discussions of the first-order electoral changes. Although it could seem at first glance that the publication does not present any new information on these problems, because (as stated above) it is a relatively attractive area of interest, especially in the Czech environment, Jakub Charvát takes a more detailed approach to the topic in comparison with other authors and he brings (to the readers) a detailed insight into the politics of electoral

reform and electoral engineering in the Czech environment.

The detailed diachronic comparative analysis of the politics of electoral reforms in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic after 1989 and its transformations over time is the central and main goal of the publication. The author makes a commitment to reflect, explain and expose the circumstances of the parliamentary electoral reform policies as impartially as possible. He observes the conditions in which the issue of electoral reform became a part of the political agenda in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic after November 1989. He deals with the power-political constellations of the electoral reforms and reflects the political realities of its time.

The total of 232 pages is divided into six chapters where the explication is supplied with summaries of particular electoral reforms, or the key milestones in electoral legislation development in the Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia). The author divides the actual electoral reforms into three phases, namely the years 1990–1992 (Electoral System for New Democracy), 1998–2002 (Politics of Electoral Reforms in the So-called Opposition Agreement) and 2006–2009 (Electoral Reforms of the Second Topolánek government). Each section gives a survey of strategy chosen by each relevant policy actor in the selection process of electoral reform. The author makes efforts to outline the factors leading individual actors to choose the specific strategies, where he points out that he has no emotional attachment to any of the electoral systems. There is always a summary after listing of the electoral reforms and evaluation of their constitutional limits, within the meaning of the political analysis of potential impacts of the discussed and adopted proposals of electoral reform. It is the survey of attitudes of the individual actors that is the book's most interesting contribution to the literature of similar orientation.

The monograph's author also makes a commitment towards quantitative evaluation. He uses calculations of over-representation or under-representation of political parties in the case of particular electoral reform realisation – advantage ratio and Least squares index – and the subsequent assessment of the impact that an alternative electoral system should have on the overall level of proportionality or disproportionality of election results and post-election coalition negotiations. However it must be said that the first modelling is not introduced until as late as page 113 (Chapter 4) and the first own calculations of the author are introduced on page 132 (also Chapter 4), then to a greater extent until the end of the book. The monograph clearly processes single contributions to the discussion on Czech electoral reforms, which readers should seek in various journals and anthologies (for example authors Jakub Šedo, Tomáš Lebeda, Miroslav Novák and so on). The benefit of the author's calculations is somewhat complementary or expanding an assessment of the electoral reform proposals, which also affects the calculations of additional submissions in which the author reflects on a possible modification of the current electoral system for selecting the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

The monograph contains a good made theoretical base dealing with an electoral reform study. However, it supposes the reader's (at least) elementary knowledge of the classification and effects of electoral systems, as well as about Czech politics (political and party systems, the socio-political context and political power constellation in 1989 and later on). The author does not deal with facts such as the introduction of individual Czech political parties or single election outcome characterisation, which is certainly not perceived as a defect of the study. He focuses on the introduction of specific actors, their motivations and chosen strategies.

That is why the book can also function in the term of Czech post-communist politics study for readers with only a superficial interest in electoral reforms in the Czech environment.

The central topic of the discussions about the possibility, or necessity of electoral reform of the assembly in the Czech Republic was (and still is) the low level of the government's ability of action, particularly with reference to the weak government majority, as the author reminds. He advocates the opinion that modification of the electoral system is not the final solution of the issue above, similarly to the authors of earlier publications (for example Lubomír Kopeček and Vlastimil Havlík). Instead, the root of the problem lies in the presence of parties with minimal or no coalition potential in the Chamber of Deputies, temporary reduction of coalition potential of some, otherwise ideologically and politically moderate, political parties, the low level of consensus between political elites, internal divisions within the most electorally powerful parties, and the phenomenon of "tergiversation". Charvát, on the other hand, reopens the issue of the establishment of a constructive vote of no confidence by the Chamber of Deputies, or modifying the existing electoral system to more proportional settings (i.e. contrary to the reform proposals, which in turn invariably strengthen majority elements), especially in the size of constituencies as potential solutions of the Czech problems. However, a great number of studies confirming this position do not persuade political elites, and in a certain sense neither the Czech non-specialized public, that the electoral system is not an illness and its reform will not be a cure (which is demonstrated by calling for the introduction of a majority electoral system, for example Janeček's draft of an

electoral reform, or the takeover of the bid electoral mechanism for selecting the Senate (the upper chamber would then be elected under the electoral system currently used for the Chamber of Deputies). These and other alternatives, however, the author has not addressed.

The monograph *Politika volebních reforem v ČR po roce 1989* is a quite successful excursion into the Czech electoral legislative and electoral engineering. Its greatest contribution is mainly its complexity – the author in a well-arranged way processes the single contributions to the electoral reform debate not only of the actors themselves, participating in the debate, but also of experts, assessing the effectiveness of designs (whether realised or not) in terms of the desired goals. The book introduces information about specific actors, their motivations and strategies in the alternative assembly electoral system selection to which previous literature has not paid full attention.

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