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Agric. Econ. – Czech

Blažek P., Kubalek M.

Comparison of agrarian political parties in selected Central European states after 1989

Agric. Econ. – Czech, 48 (2002): 544-553

This study deals with the founding and development of agrarian political parties and movements in selected postcommunist states (with the emphasis put on the Czech party system in the early 1990' s). The topic is discussed

from the point of view of classic political science theories, namely the historical conflict approach of Stein Rokkan and Seymour Martin Lipset, complemented with Derek Urwin's theory regarding emergence of agrarian parties as a means of defense of country against urbanization. The results of research into the urban – rural cleavage and its influence on the genesis of agrarian political parties in selected post-communist countries after 1989 seem to support the above mentioned theories (even though those were originally formulated for a much earlier period when the Western party systems were first coming into existence. These can be applied also to the Czech environment, where several profession-based political parties were established in the early 1990's, some of which were concerned with the defense of peasants' and farmers' interests. The attempts to create profession-based parties in the Czech political system were destined to fail for several reasons. The first was a striking ideological profiling of the bipolar party spectrum, causing general parties to pick up the themes and voters

concerned with economic recession, and radicalization of electorate. The second reason lied in the diminishing numbers of potential voters, a result of agriculture modernization and general urbanization of society, which caused that the city-country conflict was reflected in the election results only marginally. The result was similar to other post-Soviet states, with a specific exception of Poland: agrarian parties and movements lost their former influence.

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