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Agric. Econ. – Czech

Čmejrek J.: Political mediation and participation in the Czech rural areas

Agric. Econ. – Czech, 54 (2008): 575-581

The objective of this paper is to show the mediation between citizens and political power by political parties in Czech rural areas. The position of political parties in rural municipalities is demonstrated in two perspectives. The top-down perspective is based on the distribution of several tens of thousands mandates in local municipal councils between political

particular the opposite perspective provides the bottom-up point of view — from the level of the individual municipalities, their party systems and party organisational structures. The analysis of the municipal election results reveals clearly that the role of political parties in local politics depends namely on the size of the given municipality. In this sense, the Czech Republic represents a very interesting example as it is characterised by a dense and heavily fragmented population settlement with a large number of small rural municipalities. In rural municipalities, we encounter incomplete party spectra and the absence of political parties in the smallest municipalities. Besides, the lists of candidates in rural municipalities reveal the weakness of the local party organisations that cannot avoid cooperating with the independent candidates. The small distance between the citizen and the elected body in a rural community significantly determines the forms of the local politics; the ideological and party mediation is superfluous, in fact, it is often seen as something harmful which divides the rural community.

political mediation, participation, rural municipalities, municipal councils, elections, political parties, party systems, independent candidates

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