

Right-Wing Policy in the 2010 Election Programs

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Abstract: *Programs of political parties offer important material for political science research. According to the parties' positions stated in their programs we can define and quantify positions of political parties in their mutual competition. This is highly significant in situations when political parties compete for the same segment of the electorate. This situation occurred in the 2010 parliamentary elections in June of that year. The Czech electoral race faced the content of three parties in the same part of the political spectrum. These were ODS, TOP 09 and KDU-CSL. In my contribution we analyzed electoral programs of these parties with the aim to distinguish common and distinct elementary features that influenced their mutual competition. For my inquiry I used the method of content analysis adapted by MRG/CMP of European Consortium for Political Research.*

Keywords: *electoral programs, ideology, electoral competition, Czech republic, elections 2010*

1 Political Programs and Ideology

The study of the political parties' identification on the right-left axis of the political spectrum represents a relevant topic in the political science research. At present time we could find a vast amount of scientific literature dedicated to the research of political parties' ideological positions within the system of their mutual political

competition. The increasing number of studies devoted to the research of parties' political programs testifies to the importance of this scientific focus. However, we could identify only a reduced number of literature which deals with the above mentioned topic. Nevertheless, programs of political parties could be the subject of political inquiry of pre-eminent importance, since "the political texts are at once the most widely available source of evidence about politics and the most neglected in terms of quantitative analysis" (Klingemann 2006: xvi).

The analysis of ideological documents belonging to political parties' programs could bring answers to key questions related to the understanding of parties' competition. One of the significant functions of political parties' programs is their usefulness in determining the political party with regards to their political rivals. At the same time political programs "offer an operational basis — ideological background — for future program's negotiation". (Eibl 2010: 69) Peter Mair's thesis on the usefulness of the left/right axis to comparative analysis of political parties and voting behaviour is therefore very important for quantitative research of political parties' programs (cf. Mair 1986: 456–457).

Czech Parliamentary elections, which were held in June 2010, were, besides other things, interesting due to the competition of political parties which proceed from similar ideological-personal bases and respectively were formed around identical political cleavages. In the Czech political environment three relevant political parties were formed on the right part of the right-left axis for the last parliamentary election whose mutual competition was focused on an analogous electoral segment. The emergence of a new political party named TOP 09 in May 2009, whose political capacity was formed around cleavages that were until then occupied by the ODS and KDU-CSL, brought a new feature to the competition of political parties. This is why I have chosen these three political parties as an object of my analysis. The second reason is ideological and personal background of TOP 09 that emerged from KDU-CSL and ODS. As a relevant research topic we can describe the ideological orientation of electoral programmes of these parties, whose primary aim is to address voters and lay down topics that shall "hit the political opponents" (cf. Fiala, Mareš 1998, 6).

2 Methodology

Electoral programs issued for the 2010 parliamentary elections of selected political parties will be analysed. This investigation of the electoral programs is seen as very important in the endeavour of catching the multidimensional space which political parties are associated with. Contemporary research of Czech political parties' manifests is frequently limited to making individual programs' summaries with-

out paying attention to their ideological foundations. Nevertheless ideological basis is an important aspect of political parties' orientation and a source of their value self-identification on the right-left axis. Ideological orientation also represents one of the basic phenomena making up the basis of political parties, because as Klaus von Beyme quoted, historically only ideologically based political parties succeeded (cf. Beyme 1985, 29).

From the methodological point of view the investigation is based on the content analysis of electoral programs. One way to analyze parties' electoral programs is the method of the content analysis recommended by authors such as Kimberley A. Neundorff (2002) and Klaus Krippendorff (2004). Content analysis is especially useful in the investigation of distinct features of political communication. Therefore we can consider political programs as one of the basic features of political communication.

In my investigation I used substantive content analysis which "analyses selected texts by counting the frequency and distribution of key words" (Pierce 2008, 268) in the political programs of selected political parties. This type of analyses was used by Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP) of the European Consortium for Political Research. This analyse offers a comparison of the political programs of selected political parties based on the general premises of the content analysis used in other areas of social sciences. Research's prerequisite of the election programs is such that those parties, which are fair in their programs, stress those issues that they want to prefer later.

One of the leading researchers of ECPR Ian Budge quotes that the above mentioned "MRG/CMP coding scheme is build around the presumption that rival parties do not take opposite views on issues. Instead they endorse the same specific issues but prioritize them differently. For example, most voters benefit in one form or another from welfare services provided by the state. On that account political parties offer resembling issues but approach them from different ways" (Budge 2001: 75).

We could say that political parties "rather emphasize those policy areas where the chance of picking up votes is high or those policy fields they claim to represent most (in our example either the high quality of welfare services or tax cuts)" (Budge 2001: 75). As we will see later I have dealt in my investigation with this condition with significant outcomes which could strongly support this theory.

According to the methodology developed by MRG/CMP, political programs are coded and then gathered data is classified according to its belonging to one of the 56 categories. Generally, content analysis of selected texts consists in counting the frequency of key words. The approach of the content analysis of election programs, however, is somewhat different. The approach used by MRG/CMP uses the so-called quasi-sentences instead mere counting the keywords. Program text is encoded into coding units — these are called quasi-sentences — defined as an argument or verbal expression of political ideas or questions.

3 Analysis of Electoral Programs

Elections to the Parliament of the Czech Republic, which took place in June 2010, brought an interesting election contest of three political parties fighting for a similar segment of the electorate. These were ODS, TOP 09 and KDU-CSL. My analysis of their mutual competition focuses on a comparative analysis of their election programs from the view of the quantitative content analysis. The aim of my research is to highlight the contact points in the political programs of these parties, but also to determine whether their pre-election rhetoric coincided with the actual content of their programs.

MRG/CMP works with the distribution of each category into six basic domains (Table 1) expressing main ideological profiles included in political parties' manifestos. For a basic overview of each program it is enough to focus exclusively on those domains. Needless to say, I have conducted my analysis using categories used in the 56 and I haven't used new subcategories, which is working for MRG/CMP in Central and Eastern European countries. In my research I haven't worked with categories relating for example to the position on Russian army, communism, and property restitution or Romany issues.

Table 1: Domains of program analyses

Domain 01	External Relations
Domain 02	Freedom and Democracy
Domain 03	Political System
Domain 04	Economy
Domain 05	Welfare and Quality of Life
Domain 06	Fabric of Society

The ODS, the largest right-wing political party, introduced its electoral program called "Solutions which help." Its program is based mainly on the determination of right-wing policy towards leftist solutions which are offered by the Social-Democratic Party. TOP 09 as a new political formation built its electoral program on the topics which addressed the potential right-wing electorate. TOP 09 made its program in the form of a government policy statement and called it simply "2010 Electoral program — elections 2010 to the Chamber of Deputies. The electoral program of KDU-CSL is the most extensive text in comparison to the other two analyzed programs. KDU-CSL called its program "Electoral Program 2010–2014."

We can firstly look at the comparison of party programs in the view of their basic domains. In the graph (Graph 1) we can see a breakdown of the various domains in the ODS. This party dedicated the main part of its electoral program to economic issues. This topic comprises almost 41% of the electoral program. Surprisingly, a small part of the program is devoted to foreign relations and the party position on freedom and democracy. However, historically ODS was a party, which gave strong importance to these topics. The main part of the economic provisions proposed by the ODS electoral program is based on the support of free entrepreneurship. The ODS supports the decline of state expenses as do other right-wing political parties.

A similar program structure as that of the ODS can be found in the program of TOP 09. But the TOP 09 electoral program wasn't dedicated purely to economic issues, but also emphasised the parties' positions regarding the environment and education (Graph 2). We could say that the program of TOP 09 is more restrictive in the field of state financing and proposes an orthodox state policy which consists of the reduction of the budget deficit and stresses the common approach of thrift and saving. There is practically no stress on the support of private enterprise in the TOP 09 program. This mainly differs TOP 09 from the ODS in the field of economic issues.

A completely different content of domain's distribution is offered in the electoral program of KDU-CSL (Graph 3). The most significant part of the program is not devoted to economic issues, but to the organization of society. KDU-CSL is primarily devoted to the issues of social relations, security, law and traditional morality. We could say that in many parts of the KDU-CSL program there is a strong reflection of the social dimension of Christianity. However, in its electoral program KDU-CSL emphasizes only the social dimension of Christian values without connecting it to political aspects of the modern society. The party is also strongly devoted to issues of cultural and educational expansion. We can see a comparison of all three programs in the following graph (Graph 4).

Now we will focus our attention on an interesting comparison of different categories. Firstly, we will analyse the attention given to the programs positive aspects regarding European integration in each of the analysed electoral programs (Graph 5). It is certainly not surprising that the most pro-European declarations can be found in the program of KDU-CSL, while the newest program of the ODS showed a reticence towards European integration. From its origin in May 2009, TOP 09 has been defining itself as a pro-European political formation. This approach was clearly reflected in its electoral program.

In the parties' position on market regulation we can see a strong difference given in the program of KDU-CSL (Graph 6). In this aspect of party ideological orientation KDU-CSL is more leftist than the other two compared parties — the ODS and TOP 09, because these parties do not propose market regulation. KDU-CSL in this sense

presents itself somewhat differently. At this point it is necessary to emphasize that some authors believe that this category does not necessarily divide parties on a left-wing axis. If we look for example at the case of Germany the principles of market regulation are included in the programs of right-wing parties (cf. Franzmann, Kaiser 2006: 165).

We have also recognized a significant difference among parties' position on the protection of the environment. The electoral program of TOP 09 contains more positive declarations on this issue than the programs of two other parties (Graph 7). This fact needs to be clarified with the factors which affected the origin of TOP 09 as an independent party. From its beginnings TOP 09 also attempted to address, among others, the voters of the Green Party. According to the pre-election polls the Green Party would not pass the threshold necessary to enter the Chamber of Deputies. TOP 09 saw the electorate of Green Party as its potential electorate. For this reason the electoral program of TOP 09 was equipped with many ecological positions and proposals.

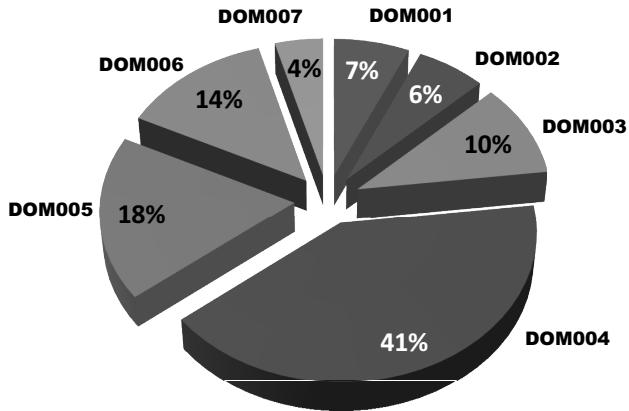
There is an interesting comparison of aspects of traditional morality contained in the programs of the political parties (Graph 8). This reflects a significant gap between KDU-CSL and other parties. This is understandable. However, the program of TOP 09 is interesting in this context. This political party presented itself as a party standing on traditional and conservative values. Some party representatives spoke out against the possibility of legislative approval of euthanasia or against legal homosexual partnership. However, TOP 09's electoral program is too unresponsive to such a declaratory statement.

4 Conclusion

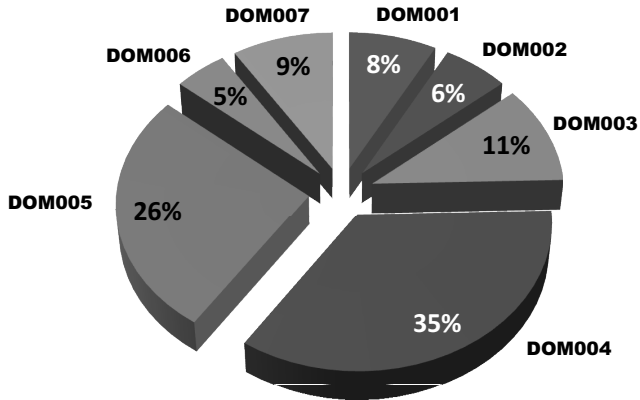
According to my investigation I could identify great similarity between electoral programs of the ODS and TOP 09 in their basic ideological orientations. In a detailed inquiry I could recognize distinctions in their programs related to the different concepts of solutions which these parties offer in the economic area. TOP 09 presented itself in a more orthodox way in economic policy. The electoral program of TOP 09 was also made up of issues that could have had an impact on potential voters of this political party (the green orientation of its program).

The KDU-CSL electoral program was based on other political presumptions. This Christian Democratic Party had to address voters in a way different from right-wing and left-wing parties. Its electoral program is focused more on social policy and less on strict economic policy. KDU-CSL also presented itself as a political party which is able to protect traditional morality and attitudes related to the family protection policy. It is also significant that KDU-CSL upheld a policy aiming to establish market regulation in selected sectors of the Czech economy.

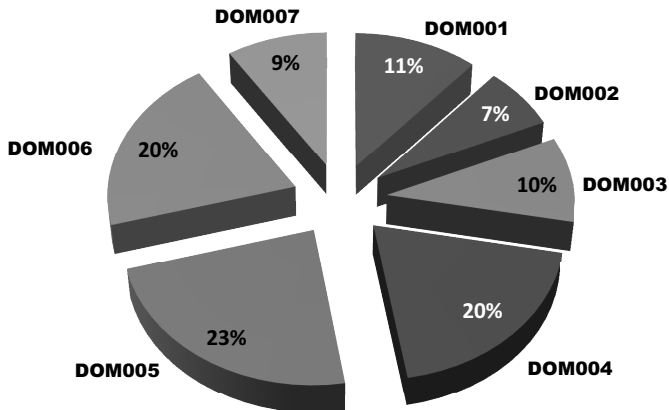
Graph 1: ODS Program Domain Share (author)



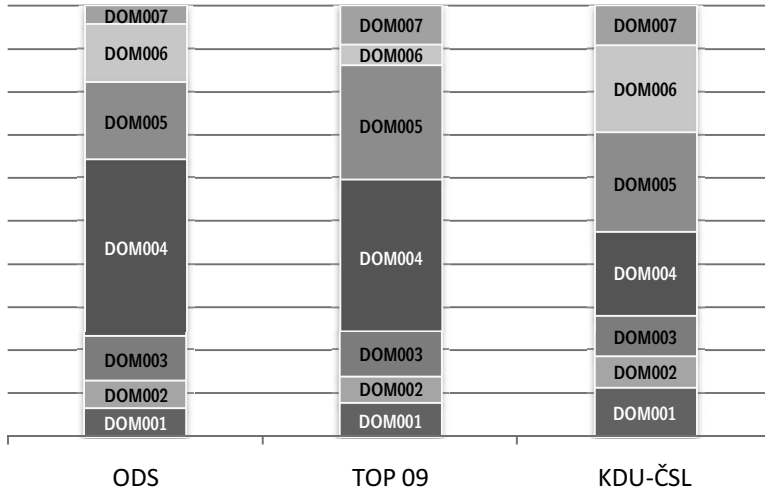
Graph 2: TOP 09 Program Domain Share (author)



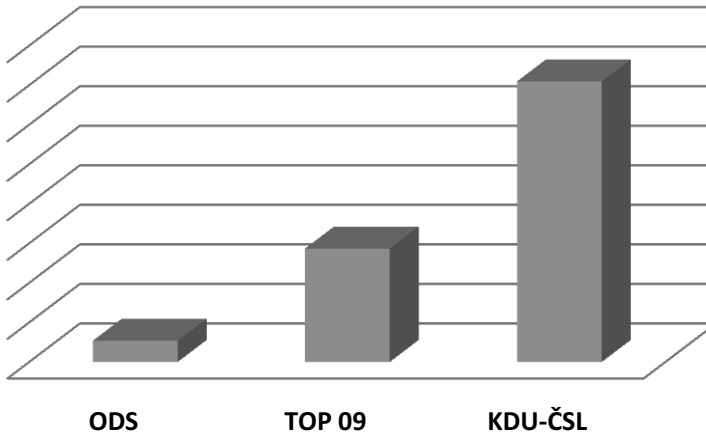
Graph 3: KDU-CSL Program Domain Share (author)



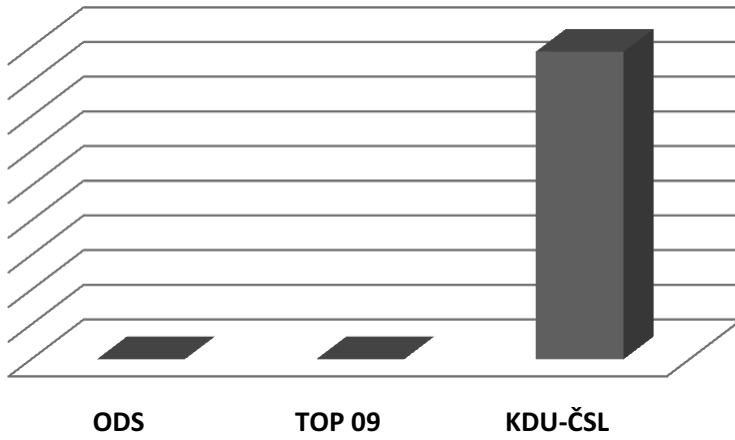
Graph 4: Program Domain Share Comparison (author)



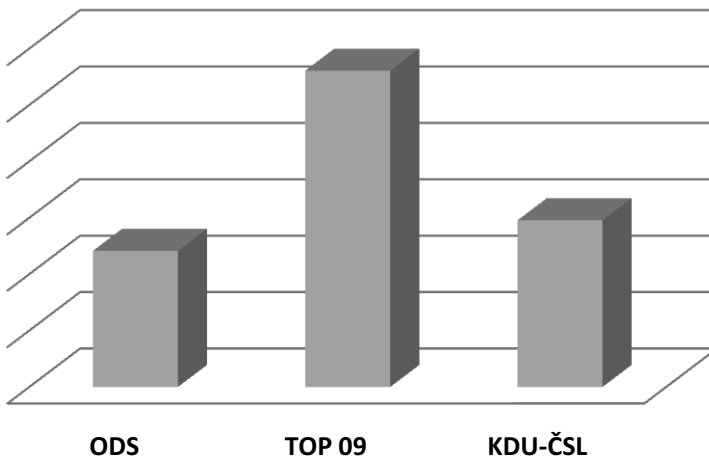
Graph 5: Parties' position on European Integration: Positive (author)



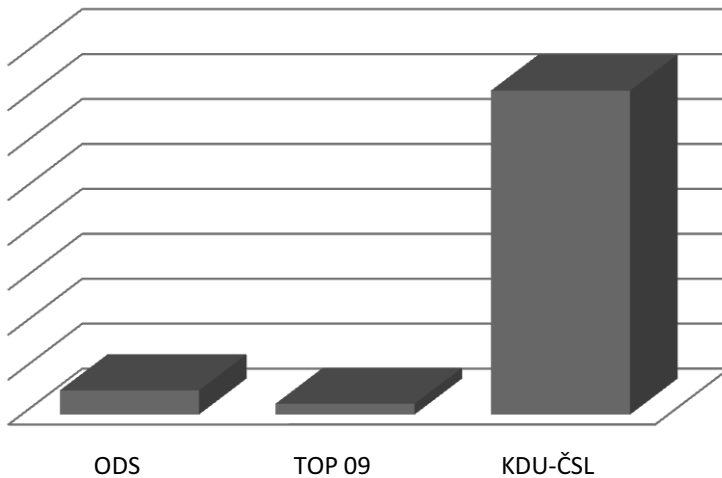
Graph 6: Parties' position on Market Regulation: Positive (author)



Graph 7: Parties' position on Enviroment Protection



Graph 8: Parties' Position on Traditional Morality: Positive (author)



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List of abbreviations

ECPR — The European Consortium for Political Research

MRG/CMP — Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project

ODS — Občanská demokratická strana

KDU-CSL — Křesťanská a demokratická unie-Československá strana lidová