

Abstract

Scrutiny of legislative behaviour of members of parliament (MPs) has a long tradition in Western Europe. Nonetheless, there has been a research gap in the Czech Republic. Thus, the dissertation thesis identifies the most burning and exciting questions and delivers the answers as a collection of to some extent separated but still interconnected studies. To be more specific, I employ quantitative methods of analysis. I deal with the data on all the members of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic who held the mandate between 1993 and 2017. Overall, the original and unique dataset consists of 1,518 legislators and their comprehensive parliamentary activity. The results suggest that two main conflicts drive parliamentary politics – the institutional division between ruling parties and opposition, and the ideological left-right socio-economic dimension. Besides this, the thesis shows that both the age and tenure of the MPs noticeably affect their parliamentary activity. While older and more experienced MPs propose more bills, address more speeches and obtain more intra-parliamentary posts than young novices, the latter group focuses on the work outside of the parliament. Next, the gender differences in the parliamentary activity of Czech legislators resemble patterns from Western Europe. Most importantly, female MPs speak less than their male colleagues, and there are substantial gender distinctions among committee assignments. Last but not least, the thesis delivers pioneering findings on the MPs' individual voting dissent, which affects the legislators' parliamentary activity, especially if they vote against the majority of their counterparts. Moreover, the rebels attend fewer roll calls, abstain more, and elucidate their position through addressing the plenary session more compared to other MPs. The final chapter summarizes impressions expressed by contemporary members of the Chamber of Deputies who were acquainted with the results. Overall, the dissertation thesis delivers a complex and pioneering picture on the legislative behaviour of the MPs in the Czech Republic. Importantly, the legislative behaviour of the MPs in the Czech Republic is more similar than different to the parliamentarians' performance in Western Europe despite the forty years of the communist regime.