

Internal and External Changes, Ideological Shifts and Strategic

Procedures after the Change of the Party's Leader

Comparison of the Development and Functioning of the Civic Democratic Party in its Opposition Role in the years 1998-2002 and 2002-2006

The contents of this study deal with the opposition role of the Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana, ODS) in the years 1997-2006. For the given issue, it is necessary to recall the conditions under which the party originated, what inspirations created the basis of its policy principles, what the party promoted at the times of its origin, who the founder of the party was and, last but not least, who created its opposition – political, nonpolitical and personal. All of the above stated factors, and many more, have more or less influenced its following development. Therefore the first part of the study shall be dedicated to the CDP's "origin" and functioning in the political system until the conclusion of the opposition agreement.

The second part deals with the CDP's internal functioning in greater detail, stressing the issue of the CDP's "ideological stretching", which most noticeably projected into the disputes over the acceptance or nonacceptance of the CDP's longterm policy. The dispute about the longterm policy was held by two basic lines – the supporters of the "anglosaxon" and the "continental" inspiration for the future CDP's functioning.

The second subchapter concentrates on the period of the opposition agreement and its consequences, stressing the necessity to review the generally accepted propositions about a "higher ideological profiling of the CDP" in the years 1998-2002 and its following consequences on the CDP's election result in the 2002 parliamentary elections.

The third subchapter analyzes the CDP's 2002 pre-election campaign. This subchapter should, based on the analyses of the campaign leadership methods and particularly the party's priorities presented on the "market of voters" confirm or refute the generally accepted propositions about the party's "higher ideologization" in this period and no responding to the wishes and will of the electors. The resource for such analysis should be the CDP's pre-election campaign, along with a

number of sociological studies by The Public Opinion Research Centre (Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění, CVVM).

The concluding chapter, dedicated to the opposition era of the CDP in the years 2002-2006 should serve as a confirmation or refutation of the "opening", or more precisely "ideological stretching" of the CDP under the new leadership, the goal of which was to win the 2006 parliamentary election. It also deals with period of the "power hand-over" – the changes at the party's chairman post and the question to what extent the new CDP chairman Mirek Topolánek has changed the party's profile and character.

The concluding analysis shall, based on the election results, the change of the coalition potential, or media observations of the CDP in both of the opposition periods, interpret, whether it is fair to claim that whereas under the leadership of Václav Klaus in the years 1998-2002 the CDP was more closed and ideologically profiled, under the new leadership it is more ideologically open, which enabled the party to win in the 2006 parliamentary elections.