

Abstract

The Czech party system underwent significant reconfiguration in the second decade of the 21st century. The presented research focuses on MPs (deputies) and senators navigating this dynamic environment, specifically examining their perception of the parliamentary mandate. The text describes the representatives' relationships with citizens, parties, and constituencies, and explores changes in these relationships from a long-term perspective. Special attention is given to legislators from new parliamentary groups, especially those who define themselves against the elites and the party government model. These representatives distinguish themselves by emphasising a direct connection with the people and the return of power from the elites to the people, suggesting a different understanding of their mandate. The core of the research covers the parliamentary election period from 2017 to 2021, when half of the Chamber of Deputies consisted of populist movements. Additionally, the research takes into account other political developments and previous studies on Czech parliamentary representatives and debates concerning the crisis of representative democracy. The upper chamber's environment is also examined in detail. The research also addresses the overlooked issue of politics as a profession. An added value of this research is its timing during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing unique data on parliamentary representatives in this exceptional situation.