Could a Referendum Change the Local Party System? Discussion of the Referendum's Consequences in the Context of Cleavages[1]

BARBORA ŠENKÝŘOVÁ AND STANISLAV BALÍK

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Abstract: *The local policy is sometimes degraded by this opinion: in the small village, there is no policy, self-government is based on the personal character without the political context, it is mainly oriented on the technical side of the government. However, different researches confirm that despite this claim local policy contains political (and ideological) fights. These researches focus on different topics and different attitudes in cleavages or conflict study. However, only a few research types mentioned the importance of local civic activism in connection with the local policy trends. It is interesting because civic activism, values and attitudes are the main points in the cleavage topic. In this research, we will discuss the term cleavage (concept by Deegan-Krause) in the context of four Czech municipalities which have experience with civic activism – the referendum. In our research, we will focus on four municipalities, on which we will present the application of the Deegan-Krause model. Based on the application, we will discuss if civic activism in the form of a referendum could lead to changes in the local party system.*

Keywords: ***local party system, referendum, concept of cleavages, civic activism, local-level politics***

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Introduction

Czech local politics and policy is a unique topic in many ways. Local politics and policies are usually not at the centre of attention in political science. In the Czech context, it is a bit different. Still, it is not the main topic for a political scientist. However, the complexity of the issue makes it attractive for many researchers. From our point of view, we focus mainly on the part of local civic activism, the possibility of using the referendum tool and the local party system. If we take a closer look at these two topics, civic activism at the local level is higher than at any other level of politics. One of the reasons is the possibility of holding a referendum only on the local level. However, the frequency of local political parties and associations is unique not only in the Czech context.

The local party system and the conflicts on this level have been studied by many researchers, which confirmed that Czech local politics has its conflict, and it is not without policy topics and fights (e.g. Bubeníček – Kubálek 2010; Kostelecký – Vobecká 2007). In comparison with our aim, these researches focuses on different topics and attitudes in cleavages or conflict study. Only a few researches mentioned the importance of local civic activism in connection with local policy trends. It is interesting because civic activism, values and attitudes are the main points in the cleavage topic.

In this research, we will discuss the term cleavage (concept by Deegan-Krause) in the context of four municipalities that have experience with civic activism – the referendum. The referendum variable selection is based on previous research (Marien – Kern 2018; Dalton – Welzel 2014; Smith 2009; Qvortup 2017). It is confirmed that the presence of tools of direct democracy leads to more extensive civic activism and interest. In the Czech context, the only means of direct democracy anchored in law is the referendum. In our research, we will focus on four municipalities, on which we will present the application of the Deegan-Krause model. Based on the application, we will discuss if civic activism in the form of a referendum could change the local party system. In the Czech local context, we faced a highly fragmented local party system, and there is no agreement on the concept of its study. This study's secondary aim is to present one unique way to study party system cleavages on the local level.

Previous research on the topic of local cleavages

Research on the local cleavages is not so exhaustive as the research on the national level. However, the local level also offers exciting studies. In this part, we would like to map the concept's approaches and point out their results.

Firstly, we will focus on Balík's (2016) research. In the first place, there is a need to point out the character of the article. The article aims to discuss the difficult moments in the local decision-making in contrast with the anti-political,

non-political (in the ideological meaning) approach to local politics. Based on this, the article discusses possible conflicts in the municipalities, which Balík named cleavages. He did not define the methodology of his research here because of the character of the piece. The concept of local cleavages he established on the *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* conflict (introduced by F. Tönnies). Based on this, Balík claims ideological and political conflicts exist in the municipalities (independently of their size). To spread this argument, he then introduces 11 possible conflicts (cleavages) in the Czech municipalities. To sum up, this article uses the world cleavages in the meaning of conflict (ideological) in the municipality.

The second article we will discuss is written by van der Veer (1994). His work is oriented to urban area studies. Based on this, the concept of cleavages has to be seen in this context. The author also did not define the term cleavages. However, in his research, he uses the term social cleavages, which he uses to differentiate society (socioeconomic differentiation). He then uses the separation of society in the cities and suburbs and explains the success of some political parties – here, he talks about political cleavages. The author uses social cleavages to name the diversity in the society (dichotomy between poor and rich) and the term city-suburban cleavages to differentiate the cities and suburbs. He points out in his text that the pillars in Dutch society do no longer exist. Based on this, we could sum up that this use of the term cleavages does not fulfil Rokkan and Lipset's approach to the cleavages. It is also important to mention the article's aim – the author tried to confirm the thesis that there are differences between old and young metropolitan cities, despite the national redistributive policies. The main objective of his article was not to analyse the cleavages.

Thirdly, a significant publication for the research of cleavages on the Czech municipal level is the work of Bubeníček and Kubálek (2010). They introduce three possible approaches for studying cleavages on the municipal level (specifically on the case study of the municipality Doubice). In the first approach, they analyse the economic conflicts in Doubice. They confirm that this conflict was presented in the municipality in the whole research period. However, the intensity and political impact were not stable (in some elections, the conflict was absent). They characterised this conflict as 'polémos' because this conflicted character does not fulfil the cleavage definition. In this approach, the author combines statistical methods (data from election, etc.) and qualitative methods (interviews and content analysis) (Bubeníček – Kubálek 2010: 34–35). The second approach is based on the dichotomy of *Gesellschaft* vs. *Gemeinschaft* (rationality vs. emotionality in Balík's conception). The authors then mention the base for the stable conflict based on this dichotomy (confirmed by Bubeníček's study). This conflict is characterised as a conflict about the future vision of municipality development. This conflict could be stable because it could be connected with the local political parties. Authors confirm this conflict as

the cleavage: function of the municipality (in the Doubice case – old traditional municipality vs. spa city). This cleavage was present in Doubice in the whole research period and impacted the political party system. Because of limited social space (small municipality), the cleavage tends to lead to the consensus. However, this consensus is only apparent (for example, reunion in one political party). In reality, the conflict is present inside the one political party and inside the assembly decision-making. This reality then confirms Bubeníček's thesis about the participative and deliberative model of democracy on the local level when conflict is not always presented due to election competition. This approach uses an inductive strategy of research. There is a need to go deep in the municipality's environment – for example, use interviews, etc. The analysis of election data, etc. is in this case inappropriate. The authors mention that this approach is challenging for application in a large number of municipalities. However, this approach is an opportunity to study cleavages on the local level (Bubeníček – Kubálek 2010: 35–39). The third approach analyses the conflict between the social groups of the inhabitants. The research method is similar to the second approach – deep analysis of the political process by qualitative methods. Authors confirm the presence of stable social conflict in Doubice, which does not always lead to political conflict. However, this conflict is also present in other conflicts and is very deep in the inhabitants' identity because of an absence of political representativity. They call this conflict a 'rupture' (the break) (Bubeníček and Kubálek 2010: 39–42).

The following work we have to mention is the work of K. Musilová. Her work is focused on post-material cleavage. However, in her work she also discusses the previous approaches to the research topic. She confirmed in her work the possibility of using the concept of cleavages on the local level. She applies the concept of cleavages on the post-material conflict from multilevel governance based on her work. Her work was raised from her previous diploma thesis, in which she analysed post material cleavages in the surrounding municipalities of Šumava National Park. Here she confirmed the possible use of the concept of cleavages (in the widespread meaning); however, she also mentions there is a need to find the specific approach for studying them on the local level (Musilová 2017: 68–70).

In international research, the term local cleavages is mainly used in connection with the sociological approach and the sociological meaning, as the part of the society – ethical or regional cleavage. The local cleavage is then geographically defined. As an example, we could mention the research focused on displacement during an election in the civil war in Columbia. Local cleavages are defined as local communities loyal to the regime, and thanks to this, they avoided displacement (Steele 2011: 424). In another research focused on political polarisation in Switzerland, local cleavages are defined as different geographical settlements – as different local populations (e.g., in large cities,

suburbs, remote areas, cosmopolitan villages or minority cultural regions (Koseki 2018: 28). In this research, local cleavages are not defined as cleavages on the local level (cleavages in the municipal (regional) political party system).

Another kind of use of the term cleavages on the local level is in the research of Schumaker and Burns (1988) *Gender cleavages and the Resolution of Local Policy Issues*. In their study, they tested gender cleavages and gender differences in the local community's decision-making. This text, unfortunately, does not define the term cleavage precisely. The authors only mentioned that cleavage means a big difference between men or women's decisions (Schumaker – Burns 1998: 1078). Based on this, we can see that this text also uses the term cleavage. And again, it does not reflect the previous conceptualisation of the term.

Based on the presented research, we could see that the term cleavage is used differently. The main problem in the Czech environment is, in some cases, the absence of institutional difference (conflict is not presented by one political party) or lack of structural difference. In our case, the referendum tool should treat the institutional difference, which provides a standardised way of civic activism and expression. Then in our research we will focus on the terminology used by Deegan-Krause. From our point of view, this typology enables the use of the idea of cleavages.

Direct democracy and civic activism

In the context of democracy and representative democracy, discussions on citizen participation in decision-making, citizen satisfaction with representative democracy, declining confidence in the government, declining voter turnout, etc., political science focuses on instruments representing a 'complement' alternative to classical representative democracy.

Democratic innovation takes many forms. The concept itself is primarily discussed. There is no clear definition of what democratic innovations are and which states belong here and which no longer do. G. Smith, in the book *Democratic Innovations – Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation*, ranks among the democratic innovations: participatory budgeting, e-democracy, direct democracy (referendums) and local public assembly. However, throughout his research, Smith has spoken of at least 57 kinds of democratic innovation. What are the benefits of direct democracy? Direct participation (e.g., through a referendum) 'has the potential to mobilize citizens to engage, thereby counteracting the current decline in political participation' (Dalton – Welzel 2014).

Our research will focus only on the tool referendum (the only tool of direct democracy with a legal background) and mainly on the connection to mobilise the citizens to set up the organisation and then the candidate in the election. Besides this function of the referendum, in the Czech context we deal with the trend of local representatives – organisation of the referendum to find out

citizens' opinions for controversial topics and topics with various political players (Smith 2007: 89). This trend could lead to the discussion on the deficit of representative democracy and democracy deficit (e.g., Čmejrek 2013) and other problems of small municipalities (e.g., lack of candidates, which lead to uncompetitive elections or unwillingness to run again in the next local election (Ryšavý – Šaradín: 2012)). In connection with our research on local political conflict, we will also discuss these findings.

Difference, divides and cleavages

For example, the cleavages study's difficulties are mentioned by Deegan-Krause (2006), who marks Mair and Bartolini's concept as full cleavage. Deegan-Krause, in his research, explains the new conditions in the political party research (and in political reality) in contrast with the former Lipset and Rokkan conditions. Based on this, he claims that full cleavage has to fulfil the definition of Mair and Bartolini. But the term cleavage is also used in other meanings ('less cleavages'). For these cases, he introduces his simplification and the term 'less cleavage' (Deegan-Krause, 2006: 539). To study less cleavages, based on his finding, we could use the following terms. Firstly, he uses the word '"difference' to explain the concept's cleavage element – a difference we can find inside the structure, attitude or institution. As the second term, he uses 'a divide'. The divide is used in cases where not all three categories (from Mair and Bartolini's definition – structure, attitude and institution) are fulfilled. A divide means the distinct sides of the conflict, and it differs from the concept of cleavages. There are three possible pairs of sides (three types of 'divides'):

- Structure plus Attitudes – 'position divide' – '*offers an alternative to various teleological notions such as "non-politicized cleavage" used to describe the alignment of structural and attitudinal difference without an accompanying political alignment. "Position" carries connotations both of structural location and of individual attitude*' (Deegan-Krause 2006: 539)
- Structure plus Institutions – 'census divide' – '*echoing Horowitz's "census elections" (1985), captures the alignment of group identity and political choice without attitudinal trappings'* (Deegan-Krause 2006: 539)
- Attitudes plus Institutions – 'issue divide' – '*The word "issues" emerges regularly in scholarship in this area and refers to the interplay between attitude and partisanship'* (Deegan-Krause 2006: 539).

Each division and also the full cleavage have their consequences. In the original research on cleavages, the effects were connected mainly with the study of democratisation. However, based on Deegan-Krause's other research, it is evident that it is also helpful for studying, e.g., institutional accountability (Deegan-Krause 2006b: 17).

Research design and methods

The research period will be framed by the referenda database from the Ministry of Interior, which has published the referendum results since 2006.[2] We will end our study in 2018 – the year of the last elections to local assemblies.

The sample of municipalities was based on two variables. Firstly, we selected only municipalities in which the referendum was held independently on the election. This selection is based on the argument that referenda not held during the election days are a referendum about significant (and potentially cleavage) topics. This argument is based on local referendums' experience in the Czech Republic (e.g., Smith 2007). Also, the Supreme Administrative Court's judgment decided that, if possible, local referendums should be held together with the elections to ensure higher participation (e.g., Judgement of the Supreme Administrative Court Ars 2/2012–43). It is evident that a referendum held independently on election should have an essential and immediate topic. In the next step, we selected the only referendum without a general and national topic (it means the division of the municipality, American anti-missile base, ban on gambling, the building of storage for nuclear waste, enlargement of Vodochody Airport, and referenda with very low participation (under 35 %)), because these topics could refer to national cleavage or issues. At least, we selected municipalities with topics directly connected with their local issues – municipality development in the way of the zoning plan, the building of the dam, the building of the sandpit and the building of the pressure sewer. None of these villages are in a vacuum; each of the themes mentioned has regional or national overlap – some more (e.g. Nové Heřminovy), some less. The differences between topics could then be analysed in our research.

Secondly, we examined two election periods in selected municipalities – before the referendum was held and after. Based on this, we found differences in the municipality party system. We decided only on municipalities with different party systems. We also eliminate the municipalities with a party system that shows a declining number of political parties. We claim that if the parties can disappear or merge themselves it shows that there is no conflict. There are some exceptions in municipalities, where the political party is connected with the referendum (e.g., Věrovany) or where local parties displace national parties. Based on this, we selected four municipalities with these two variables and more – their party system consists of one party, which directly in the name mentions the referendum's topic, signalising that the issue is crucial and mobilises citizens to action.

The party system's information, the referendum's impact and the local decision-making conditions were collected through semi-structured interviews

2 Law on the local referendum (no 22/2004) requiring local assemblies the duty to report the information about organising a local referendum. Unfortunately, this law does not provide sanctions for breaches.

with the municipality representatives. This type of interview is also called elite interviewing. It is defined in the meaning of the term target group, which is studied – an 'elite' of some kind and in the term of research technique used, which is called semi-structured interviewing. This technique is presented as 'the most effective way to obtain information about decision-makers and decision--making processes' (Burnham 2008: 231). What differentiates these techniques from, for example, survey interviewing is the kind of respondent. In the elite interviewing, 'some respondents may count more than others in terms of their influence on the decision-making process' (Burnham 2008: 231).

The method of elite interviewing is not standardised, which is also confirmed by the lack of literature about this technique (Burnham 2008: 232). Based on this, there is not a need to establish the whole work on this technique. To avoid this, elite interviewing is often used in research that follows the principle of triangulation. The criticism of the qualitative method is based on its unrepresentativeness and atypicality.

Based on the fact that we want to study a topic that is not covered by previous research and want to study the municipalities' topics deeply, we chose this technique. We reached the representatives by contacts on the websites of the municipalities. Then we reached them by phone. We reached out to all representatives who were elected for the election period 2018–2022. However, in most cases, they did not want to cooperate. For this paper, we collected six in-depth semi-structured interviews. The question and the answers will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Finally, we analysed the answers from the interviews by the concept of cleavages by Deegan-Krause.

Case study: when a referendum start a new political party system

This paragraph will introduce four municipalities in which political parties' change was based on a referendum. In these four municipalities, the referendum topic led to different party system changes. From this point of view, it is possible to confirm the rise of a fundamental cleavage.

Moravany u Brna

Moravany u Brna is a municipality with 2513 inhabitants and 664 hectares (Moravany u Brna 2021). In the Czech municipality context, it is one of the bigger municipalities. To better understand referendum topics and divide in the municipality, it is necessary to mention that Moravany u Brna, as the name suggests, is a municipality close to Brno (the second biggest city in the Czech Republic).

In our research period, the party system of the municipality registered a huge change. In 2006, except for traditional national parties (ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, KSČM,

ODS), there were two other lists of candidates (independent candidates). In 2010[3] there were eleven lists of candidates; in 2014, ten list of candidates; and in 2018, twelve of them. Also, in the Czech local election context, the number of lists of candidates is exceptional. What's more, in 2010 for the first time we can register a list of candidates called Referendum Moravany. Based on the interview, we discovered that the candidate list was created for the purpose of the referendum and construction topic (i.e. New urban development of the municipality (construction of the new municipality part)).

In 2012 there was a hold referendum, the question was: '*Do you agree that the Moravany municipal council, within the spatial planning process, by all legal means to promote the development of the territory according to "Variant A" described in the "Territorial study of long-term development of Moravany u Brna" from September 2011. Fixel & Pech?*'[4] Based on the interview, we could describe it as the referendum in which inhabitants should vote for urban development – change of ordinary plots to buildings plots. Based on the interview, the referendum topic was and still is essential. One of the respondents described that there were two opinion groups, one owned land and wanted building plots (mostly new owners), the other group (more old settlers) did not have land, so they blocked the development. The first group was for more significant development and construction of housing in the village. Another interview also confirmed the same opinion division.

The result of the referendum was: turnout 49.2 %, 89.8 % inhabitants vote YES. The referendum was valid and binding.

In this case, the referendum meant establishing a new party. In the last election, the party was still active and ran together with Majors and Independents (*Starostové a nezávislí*, STAN).

The topic of urban development is still alive.

Nové Heřminovy

There are 375 inhabitants living in Nové Heřminovy (MVCR 2021) in the area of 11.03 km^2. The municipality is located in the Bruntál district in the Moravian-Silesian Region. In the Czech context, it is a small municipality (however, this municipality size is the most common). Despite the municipality's size, it is known due to the intention to build a water dam instead of the municipality (nowadays only instead of one part). This intention is really old (based on the

3 The year 2010 we can call the year of a political earthquake on the national level (Hanley 2012). Two highly successful parties entered in the national party system – Public Affairs (Věci veřejné, VV) and TOP 09. These parties also took part in the local election.

4 In the original: Souhlasíte s tím, aby zastupitelstvo obce Moravany v rámci procesu územního plánování prosazovalo všemi právními prostředky rozvoj území podle "Varianty A" popsané v "Územní studii možností dlouhodobého rozvoje obce Moravany u Brna" ze září 2011, jejímž zhotovitelem je "Ateliér ERA, sdružení architektů Fixel & Pech"?

municipality chronicle it is dated to the beginning of the 20th century) and till nowadays there is still no decision and solution. In the past, the water dam should have been built to produce more drinking water for the Moravian-Silesian region, mainly for the biggest cities. In the last years, with climate change, the purpose was changed for the intention of flood-barriers (Nové Heřminovy 2021). This topic is mediated and encroaches on a higher level of decision-making (regional and national).

In 2008 a referendum was held with the question: *Do you agree that the municipality of Nové Heřminovy will actively use all legal means and other legitimate instruments to prevent the demolition of buildings in the municipality in connection with the planned intention of a dam in the village of Nové Heřminovy, especially that municipality Nové Heřminovy will always oppose the realization of the dam's plan will in all administrative or judicial proceedings related to permitting the dam in the municipality?*[5] The referendum results were: turnout 35 %, and the YES answer was chosen by 71.4 % of voters. The referendum was valid and binding.

This case referendum topic also meant establishing the new party – SNK *Zdravý rozum proti přehradě* (Coalition of independent candidates – Common sense against the dam). The party firstly ran in the election in 2006. Until that year, the party system was stable (there were three parties – KSČM and two lists of independent candidates). In 2006, there were new parties – the national KDU-ČSL, and instead of lists of independent candidates, there was SNK *Zdravý rozum proti přehradě*. In the next two elections, the party again ran under SNK 1, SNK 2 –> lists of independent candidates. However, in 2018 the name SNK *Zdravý rozum proti přehradě* was again used. Based on the interview, the theme of the dam in the village persists, in 2010 and 2014 it was not necessary to name the topic; there was unity against the original mayor (from 2008). In 2018, however, the mayor from 2008 ran again, which meant the sharpening of opinions again.

Věrovany

There are 1398 inhabitants living in Věrovany, which is located in the Olomouc district. It is one of the bigger municipalities in the Olomoucký kraj. The municipality is not unusual, according to our interview with council members: 'In my opinion, this is an electorally typical Moravian municipality, as evidenced by the results in parliamentary, presidential, senate, etc., which do not differ in many ways from the results of other similar municipalities in Moravia (in the Czech Republic).'

5 In the original: Souhlasíte s tím, aby obec Nové Heřminovy aktivně využila všech zákonných prostředků a dalších legitimních nástrojů, aby zabránila bourání budov na území obce v souvislosti s plánovaným záměrem přehrady v obci Nové Heřminovy, zejména aby ve všech správních či soudních řízeních souvisejících s povolováním přehrady v obci Nové Heřminovy vystupovala vždy proti realizaci záměru přehrady?

During our research period there was a stable party system. Since 2006 there have been four candidates listed – national parties ODS, ČSSD (since 2010), KDU-ČSL (which did not participate in the 2010 election), and KSČM (which participated only in the 2006 election) and the party of independent candidates. However, in 2010 in connection with the referendum topic, the independent candidates named the party Civic Association Lives without the Sandpit (*Občanské sdružení Život bez pískovny*). According to the interview, the primary motive (to set up the civic association) was to prevent the establishment of a sandpit; the secondary motive was to use this topic as a reason for a change in the village's council. After 2014, he topic of the sandpit disappeared.

Based on the interviews, the only problem or division in the municipality was connected with the construction of the sandpit. The referendum was held in 2009. The question was: 'Do you agree that the council of Věrovany should support the construction of a sandpit in the cadastral territory of Věrovany, including a change in the zoning plan, which would enable the extraction of sand in this area?'[6] The turnout was 61.3 %, the answer NO was chosen by 91.7 % of voters, which means that the referendum was valid and binding. The referendum's initiator was the coalition of opposition parties, which received the most votes in the next election. The council from the period 2006–2010 did not succeed in the next election.

Trstěnice

Also, Trstěnice is a small municipality in the district Svitavy in the Pardubice Region However, with 532 inhabitants, it is one of the most average and common types of municipalities in the Czech Republic. Similarly, as in the case of Nové Heřminovy, the surrounding space of the municipality suggests its problems and conflicts. The municipality is laid in a valley and is in the direct way of the river Loučná to the nearby big city of Litomyšl. The connection of this location and the typical problem of Czech municipalities – sewerage and drainage – created a big divide between surrounding municipalities and the village and within the village.

In our research period, there was a stable party system. The number of the candidate list was three, and in last election two, when the candidates of the Green Party did not participate.

The referendum topic was associated with the case of a pressure sewer. The question was: *Do you agree with constructing a pressure sewer in the village of Trstěnice?*[7] The referendum was valid and binding – turnout was 69.8 %, and

6 In the original: Souhlasíte s tím, aby zastupitelstvo obce Věrovany podporovalo vybudování pískovny na katastrálním území obce Věrovany včetně změny územního plánu, která by umožnila těžbu písku na tomto území?

7 In the origin: Souhlasím, aby byla vybudovaná v obci Trstěnice tlaková kanalizace?

the answer NO was chosen by 71.3 % of voters. The initiator of the referendum was partly from the Green Party. Based on the interviews, we can confirm that the topic meant a big divide in the village and the council. In 2014, due to the referendum, many people in the council quit and the entire council was replaced. As we mentioned in the previous section, in 2018 the Green Party, despite the referendum's success, did not put up a candidate. Nowadays, the situation in the village could be described in the interviewer's words: 'The result of the referendum – construction stopped (although promised subsidies, etc.) and currently complicates life. Since then, it is not possible to find a solution... The Green Party in 2018 did not run a candidate, so there is no division.'

Application of Deegan-Krause model

Full cleavage

According to the cleavage definition, it has to contain all three structural, attitudinal and institutional differences.

Structural difference

These difference will be analysed by the respondent's answers. Mainly, by the answer to the question: *In your opinion, is there a topic which produces conflicts and differences between inhabitants and the councilman, in your municipality?*[8]

In the Moravany case the answer was: mainly municipality development (extension of building land) and secondly new construction of a sports hall (only by one interviewee). In the Nové Heřminovy case: only the topic of the dam. In the Věrovany case: there was the topic of the sandpit in the past, nowadays there is sometimes a difference in the interests of the local voluntary associations. In the Trstěnice case: in the past, the topic of the pressure sewer, nowadays, the anti-erosion measures. The answers were mainly connected with the name of the conflict so if the respondents were asked if there are two different opinion groups associated with these topics, the answers were: Moravany – there is a difference between old settlers and new young inhabitants, between landowners and others; Nové Heřminovy – opposition is against the ex-mayor; however, people are mainly against the dam. There are more inhabitants against outside influence. In Věrovany – the 'we' and 'they' situation was also specified – which is connected with the history of the municipality (an amalgamation of three municipalities). In the Trstěnice case, there was no stable difference.

8 In the original: Je, dle Vašeho názoru, v obci téma (problém), který obyvatele obce, případně zastupitele rozděluje?

Attitudinal difference

According to the Deegan-Krause model, 'Assessments of attitudinal difference almost always depend on a survey of public attitudes, using Likert scales of semantic differentials, though occasionally attitudes are derived from other types of question or coding of open-ended responses' (Deegan-Krause 2006b: 15). In our case, the other differences are also evaluated according to the respondent's answer; however, mainly in this difference, we have no other option. In the Czech context, there is no public survey of public attitudes connected with the local level. There was no one specific question on this difference. Our interviews were semi-structured, so there was space to ask more deeply about the questions connected with values, attitudes and beliefs. In Moravany, similarly to the structural difference, there is a difference between people who want to develop the municipality (in connection with another building land) and those against them. These opinions are connected with the difference between old settlers and new inhabitants, and with the socio-economic dimension, as one of the interviewees mentioned: '(left (more social) and right (more pragmatic)'. In the case of Nové Heřminovy and Trstěnice, there is no attitudinal difference in the respondents. In the case of Věrovany – there are two groups connected with the local association; however. it does not cover all inhabitants.

Institutional difference

We asked our respondents: *What does the decision-making process of the council usually look like? Does the topic* (from the structural difference) *involve local politics (e.g., council decision-making, establishing a local coalition, etc.)?*[9]

In the Moravany case they answered: '*Coalition and opposition – both in terms of division in the council and the opinion (on the conflict topics)'.* In the Nové Heřminovy case there are two sides of the conflict, and the subject of the dam is still alive. Watmore, according to the interviewee: '(the topic of the dam)… is a motive to engage in politics'. In the Věrovany case connected with the referendum topic, there was stable opposition; however, it is not alive anymore. In connecting with the local association's interest, there is also conflict and division in the council. There was also a new candidate list in the last election, which reflected one side of the conflict. And in our last case, Trstěnice, our interviewee said: 'There is no stable differentiation, no significant divisions. Everyone always presents their opinion, for and against, and then we vote. We're on the same ship. Decision-making is very individual. For those significant cases – there is a suitable referendum.'

9 In the original: Projevuje se toto téma v místní politice (např. rozhodování zastupitelstva, tvoření místních koalic)? A Jak obvykle vypadá rozhodovací proces v zastupitelstvu?

Table 1: Result of the case studies

	Structural difference	Attitudinal difference	Institutional difference	result
Moravany u Brna	✓	✓	✓	cleavage
Nové Heřminovy	✓	✘	✓	Census divide
Věrovany	✓	✘	✓ (in 2010)	Census divide
Trstěnice	✘	✘	✘	✘

Source: research data

However, according to Deegan-Krause's research, it's not only cleavages that play an important role in the party system. In his model, he put forward division, which could also play a vital role in the party system. These terms will be tested on the rest of our cases.

In our examples, only one conflict could be merged as the cleavage. Interestingly, in connection with the previous research (e.g. Bubeníček – Kubálek 2010), also in our case, the topic of spatial development produces conflict, which could be in our research be explained as the cleavage. On the contrary, the Trstěnice case does not fulfil any of the differences. The Trstěnice case is a widespread example of the municipality, where representatives act in agreement and where citizens decide the difficult topics by the tools of direct democracy (referendum or petition). The two municipalities – Nové Heřminovy and Věrovany – are interesting cases. In this case, and based on the analysed differences, we could say that they fulfil the census divide definition. The census divide combines structural and institutional differences. Due to the Deegan-Krause concept, *if the group can agree on questions of identity and formulate corresponding demands, this divide could develop in full cleavage* (Deegan-Krause 2006b: 17). In the case of Nové Heřminovy, the attitudinal difference could be fulfilled in the context of 'we' and 'they' (we – citizens, they – state, the Odra river basin[10]). However, this relationship does not enter the local party-political system. In connection with the regional and national elections – in the last elections in Nové Heřminovy no candidate of any political party ran with this topic. In the Věrovany case, the civic association's ambition to mobilise citizens and agree on the common attitude is unreal. Moreover, in this case, based on the interviews, we have to point out that we discovered that the two opinion groups do not cover all inhabitants. In this case, the census divide marking is very controversial. In this case, we also see that the institutional difference was fulfilled only in 2010, and nowadays the party does not follow up the fundamental motives.

10 In the original: Povodí řeky Odry.

Results and further ways ahead for the research

To sum up, our research presents one of the possibilities for future local cleavage research. Based on our research, we have confirmed that the concept of Deegan-Krause is acceptable at the local level. We have included the part of the civic activism due to the orientation on municipalities with the referendum experiences. Based on our research, we have to point out this significant part of the local political system. Our study discussed this part only briefly because of the lack of information (there is no public survey of public attitudes connected with the local policy level). In our research, we supplemented this lack of information with the data from the interviews. Mainly in this part, our approach and method of the research show possible ways to study cleavages. Our research also shows the variety of the topic 'difference'. Previous research is oriented mainly on the subject of spatial planning. Also, in our case, we confirmed that this topic fulfils the definition of a cleavage. However, we also presented the case of Nové Heřminovy, where the conflict has the ambition and assumptions for the cleavage.

Besides the cleavage research, based on the interviews, we could confirm the tendency of local representatives to use the referendum tool for controversial topics and use referendum results as the argument for further political decision making (e.g., Trstěnice: 'For those big cases – there is a suitable referendum'), moreover, in connection with one of the big issues of Czech local politics – unwillingness to run for local councils. We have discovered that in these municipalities, the presence of controversial topics and topics with the potential of full cleavage (e.g., dam topic) is the main factor for candidates in the election.

We also have to point out the weaknesses of this research. The research is conceived as a case study. However, our cases could show the way for further analysis. The second weakness could be seen in the method of the interview. An interview, as every method, has its limits. In our research, we are aware of this limit. However, this was a valid tool because of the lack of public surveys of public attitudes on the local level. Also, for the attitudinal questions, the interview could be one of the best tools.

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Barbora Šenkýřová *is a student in doctoral degree program at Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science, Masaryk University. She specializes in the local politics and referendum topic. Author of publications on the topic of local referendum in Czech republic. In addition, she also participated in research of new online propaganda tools (e.g. Challenging Online Propaganda and Disinformation in the 21st Century/Palgrave Macmillan, 2021/) email: 414711@mail.muni.cz; ORCiDs: 0000-0003-2101-9141.*

Stanislav Balík *is political scientist and historian, professor of political science at the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno/Czech Republic. He specializes in the local politics, the modern Czech politics and the state-church relations. Author and co-author of a number of monographs published in prestigious international publishing houses (e.g. Czech Democracy in the New Millennium /Routledge 2020/, Czech Politics: From West to East and Back Again /Barbara Budrich Publishers 2017/, Der tschechische Antiklerikalismus /LIT Verlag, 2016/, Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil und die böhmischen Länder /Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014/). Email: balik@fss.muni.cz; ORCID 0000-0002-0384-4888.*