

Career backgrounds, professional network and party cohesion

The Success of ANO in the Czech Republic

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Abstract

The volatile and unstable party systems in East Central Europe are associated with the emergence new parties. However, some such new parties survive and become part of a party system they entered while other newcomers fade away even after they record major electoral success or gain government participation. How can we explain the contrasting fortunes of new parties? What explains their persistence and organizational survival? In this paper we try to find answer to these questions by linking organizational success of new parties to the composition of their elites. We suggest that the similarity in professional and career backgrounds contributes to parties' organizational success by increasing party cohesion, especially at the level of party leadership. We demonstrate our arguments on three new Czech parties - Public Affairs (VV), Dawn of Direct Democracy (Dawn) and ANO – with contrasting political and organizational fortunes. Using data on elites' career and political past we show that, unlike ANO, VV and Dawn have comparatively more heterogeneous elite circles which, we suggest, make them more vulnerable to internal conflicts.

Keywords: party unity, party cohesion, elite professional networks, career pathway analysis

I. Introduction

The chief concern of this paper is to explain a contrasting fortune of three political parties in the Czech Republic – Public Affairs (VV), Dawn of Direct Democracy (Dawn) and ANO (ANO in Czech stands for *Action of Dissatisfied Citizens*). There are a number of important similarities between these three parties: all three are anti-establishment, populist; most importantly, they can all be classified as genuinely new parties in the party system in which they (have) operate(d). However, while VV and Dawn failed in politics and disintegrated quickly after making an electoral breakthrough (i.e. achieving representation in parliament), ANO has managed to transform its initial electoral success into long(er)-term party organizational success. The party is since 2013 part of the Czech coalition government and its leader, Andrej Babis, the country's Finance Minister. In addition, ANO has won, in May 2014, elections to the European Parliament; the party repeated this success in October 2014 by also receiving the highest number of votes in the Senate and municipal elections.

This contrast in the political fate is an interesting phenomenon in itself worthy of explaining. However, ANO's success is also part of a wider phenomenon. New parties challenge established party systems in a number of European democracies. The Czech party system – long considered one of the most stable party systems in post-communist Europe - is one such case in which this phenomenon takes place. The newly-formed ANO party succeeded at expense of established parties. Studying this new successful party is not only of interest to those focusing on Czech politics. ANO, as a new anti-political movement that has, in an extremely short period of time, managed to dominate the entire political scene, represents a case with a wider relevance to the contemporary European politics. As a genuinely new openly anti-party project ANO fits into the wider phenomenon of anti-establishment parties (Hanley 2012), such as Party for Freedom, Syriza, Podemos, or Forza Italia, sharing some elements with these European cases, such as its newness, the rapid electoral success, anti-corruption and anti-political appeals, anti-party critique, political outsidership, certain populist elements, its presentation as solution to economic crisis and in particular the disruption of electoral behaviour and established party systems.

How can we explain the contrasting fortunes of the three new studied parties? What explains their failure or, alternatively, their persistence and organizational survival? We suggest that the answer to these questions can be found in similarity of professional and career backgrounds (or their absence thereof) of these parties. In other words, we link organizational success of new parties to the composition of their elites by arguing that elite homogeneity increases party cohesion and reduces the vulnerability of organization to internal conflicts. In the next section (II.) we provide a background to our paper by briefly introducing contrasting political fortunes of the three political parties. Drawing on the literature on party unity and cohesion, section III outlines our theoretical argument. In the empirical section IV, we present data on professional background of the elites of all three parties concerned to demonstrate that, in contrast to VV and Dawn, ANO resembles more a political firm than a party (see also Hlousek 2012 and Hopkin and Paolucci for the original formulation of political firm concept). While this feature might make ANO frequent subject of political controversy, it might also be seen as a factor contributing to its so far impressive resistance to internal conflicts and factionalism that so often plague new political parties at the critical phase of their development.

II. Czech Party System and Its Three Newcomers

New parties' entry is a recent phenomenon in Czech party system. A number of scholars referred to Czech party system as closed, stable, institutionalized (Cabada, Hlousek, Jurek 2014; Berglund and Dellenbrant 1991), well-established with high level of programmatic crystallization (Kitschelt 1999) and robust, not fragmented into many parties (Hanley 2008; Lewis 2000), making the Czech case unique in post-communist environment. In the last quarter of century Czech party system was marked by a dominance of four major political parties with constant parliamentary presence. In addition to these four parties - Civic Democrats (ODS), Social Democrats) CSSD, Christian Democrats (KDU-CSL) and Communists (KSCM), one can see a prevailing pattern of newcomers' occasional entries. The below table 1 illustrates two trends, firstly the shrinking electoral support for the four main established political parties, at the expense of new parties and, secondly, an occurrence of phenomenon being referred to as flash parties (Hanley 2008) that once gain parliamentary presence, but stay represented for one term failing to repeat their electoral success after marking a breakthrough due to disintegration. This trend affects all new parties, apart from ANO, as visible from the below table (TOP 09 is the only exception; however, it is not a genuinely new political subject, as it was found as split of Christian Democrats by former elites).

Table 1: Results of elections to the Chamber of Deputies since Velvet Revolution

Election years		1992	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2013
Results		Votes (%)	Votes (%)	Votes (%)	Votes (%)	Votes (%)	Votes (%)	Votes (%)
main political parties	CSSD	6,5	26,4	32,3	30,2	32,3	22	20,5
	ODS	29,7	29,6	27,7	24,5	35,4	20,2	7,7
	KDU-CSL	6,3	8	9	14,3	7,2	**	6,8
	KSCM	14,1	10,3	11	18,5	12,8	11,3	15
	Main parties	56,6	74,3	80	87,5	87,7	53,5	50
	US	*	*	8,6	*	**	*	*
	ODA	5,9	6,4	*	**	*	*	*
	SPR-RSC	5,9	8,1	**	*	*	*	*
	SZ	*	*	**	**	6,3	**	**
	TOP 09	*	*	*	*	*	16,7	12
	VV	*	*	*	*	*	10,9	*
	USVIT	*	*	*	*	*	*	6,9
	ANO	*	*	*	*	*	*	18,7

*did not contest; ** did not receive elect. support over 5 per cent electoral threshold

statistical data in table derived from volby.cz

From the three studied parties, VV and Dawn disintegrated, while ANO proved to be organizationally stable party. Unlike ANO, Public Affairs and Dawn of Direct Democracy became victims of internal conflicts triggered by scandals of their politicians. In contrast to VV and Dawn, ANO managed to transform its initial electoral success into long-term party-organizational success by being immune to such scandals. The Table 2 illustrates when did the individual parties get into high politics, what representation did they attain and when did they fall apart.

Table 2: Fortunes of VV, Dawn and ANO

Party-related events	VV	Dawn	ANO
Electoral breakthrough	2010	2013	2013
Vote %	10.80	6.88	18.65
Number of MPs attained	25	14	47
Scandal & disintegration	April 2011	January 2015	none

Starting with VV, it was the relationships between party elites that were the core of its problems. VV started as a local party in Prague and got into high politics in 2010, but its success did not last even a year. VV's crisis started when the deputy leader of VV and three other MPs accused Vit Barta VV MP for giving them bribes on regular basis as an exchange for loyalty and secrecy in relation to the party financing (CeskaTelevize 2014a; Strafeldova 2011; CTK 2011). This attempt of Barta to control party elites to promote party loyalty and cohesiveness produced an exactly opposite outcome in reality. Although all the 'troublemakers' were subsequently expelled from the party and Barta was not found guilty of bribing (Hospodarske noviny 2012a), this scandal deeply divided what was left of the parliamentary party of VV (CeskaTelevize 2014a), as in the meantime, Karolina Peake, together with seven other VV MPs, formed a new political party LIDEM (HospodarskeNoviny 2012b), and VV de facto disappeared from the political system. Quite paradoxically a party, whose image was based on anti-corruption, disintegrated due to internal corruption (Leschtina 2012). The corruption case of Skarka and Barta marked the beginning of VV's end, because this public scandal demoralised and destabilised the party (Eurozpravy 2011), which quickly became to fall apart into smaller groups of MPs struggling to gain control over what was left of the party (Slonkova et al. 2011).

In the case of Dawn, this very small party of only nine members marked electoral breakthrough in the last parliamentary election, but within two years it fell apart, its fall was triggered by elites' disagreements over party financing and membership recruitment strategies. The party was divided on a number of issues, most crucially in relation to the closeness to new members, non-functioning of organizational structure and non-functioning of decision-making mechanisms (Holotova 2015). Party leader's authoritative approach to decision-making over the openness of Dawn to new members, together with the fact that the party run out of finances from public subsidies, led to the internal conflicts between Dawn's elites that led to a coup taking place within the leadership structure. The coup in the party had a preface, when on 19th January 2015 Marek Cernoch became a leader of Dawn's MPs' club, which started the division within party (Brozova 2011; Ucnova 2015). Shortly afterwards, on 10th February ten of the Dawn's MPs (of the total of 14 MPs) led by Cernoch announced their intentions to form a new political party called Dawn - National Coalition, independent on the leader of the original Dawn, Tomio Okamura (CTK 2015; CTK 2015a). Following this coup, two other MPs left what was then left from the original Dawn, and Okamura was compelled to form a new party called Party of direct democracy (CTK 2015a). Okamura was blamed by the majority of the Dawn's MPs for acting as an authoritative leader (Eurozpravy 2011), the main disagreements within Dawn, that were destabilizing the party's leadership, were in relation to his uncontrolled use of party finances and ban to recruit new members to protect his position as a leader, which paradoxically did not prevent the other very few members to organize a coup against him anyway (Kopecky 2015; Stuchlikova and Nova 2015; HospodarskeNoviny 2015).

While scandals that took place in VV and Dawn had transformed into internal party conflicts that later led to their disintegration, in the case of ANO, which has also been confronted with scandals, these scandals had not translated into conflicts within the party that would endanger its organizational success. However, unlike VV and Dawn, ANO has not yet been faced with scandals or crises of the scale that would be critical to its organizational survival and that would directly endanger its stability and position at the political scene. Nevertheless, several events that have taken place are noteworthy in relation to ANO's involvement in high politics, such as the replacement of ministers, or alleged misuse of European Union Funds for building of the Stork's Nest Farm conference centre and pet zoo (Farma Capi Hnizdo in Czech) by the party leader.

Firstly, the past personal changes in ministries reflected their scandals (CTK 2011b), their incompetence or their own decisions to leave the post (Ceska Televize 2014b). However, the case

of the replacement of Minister of Justice Helena Valkova by ANO differs from this past practise, because she has been compelled to leave this post on short notice based on party's decision and has been instructed to inform public this was her own decision (CTK 2015c). She was compelled to step down as, according to ANO's leadership, Valkova was the expert in her field, but did not have the necessary managerial skills, in particular in relation to the personal management of the resort (Lidovsky 2015; Trachtova 2015; Idnes 2015; CTK 2015c); Ceska Televize 2015). Valkova's case signalled that, although this replacement was highly controversial, none of the other elites of ANO voiced any concerns about that fact that she was forced to step down, and that the support of party leader is the most crucial asset when building a career within ANO, which operates as highly authoritative organization, in which everyone even ministers are faced with a necessity to obey instructions from leadership.

The alleged misuse of European Union funding by party leader is the second test up to date of ANO's stability. This allegation of fraud taking place when receiving funding from European Union grant became publicly known in the beginning of 2015 in relation to ANO's leader conference centre called Stork's Nest Farm. Babis is being investigated both by Czech police and by The European Anti-Fraud Office for intentionally receiving grant for small and medium-sized firms (Neweurope 2016) for which his corporation is not eligible (Holub 2016) by hiding under anonymous stock shareholding. As hard to believe as it can be, this serious accusation did not have any actual negative impact on ANO. Interestingly, at a special meeting in Czech parliament for Babis to provide sufficient and full explanation, all ANO's MPs were applauding him once he finished the speech, demonstrating party unity and support (Novinky 2015a).

This reaction is very different to that of VV and Dawn on the crises that occurred in their parliamentary parties. While in these two parties, the scandals immediately transformed into splits and internal conflicts that endangered their organizational stability, in ANO this scandal did not lead to the creation of internal opposition or factions oriented against party leader. Such loyalty within the party has been demonstrated in other circumstances, for instance during the party congress leader's vote, when Babis received one hundred percent of votes (ALDE 2015) or when ANO's MP club dressed in same clothes in order to support Babis's new crucial tax policy draft for electronic record of sales (CTK 2015d; Novinky 2015b). The above examples clearly illustrate that unlike in VV and Dawn, in ANO, scandals did not endanger its stability.

III. Party Cohesion and Elite Professional Background

As the above cursory overview of the internal conflicts involving within some of the new Czech parties demonstrates, political parties are not unitary actors. Indeed, some scholars refer to parties as to 'self-evidently collective entities not sharing a single brain' (Giannetti and Laver 2005), 'loose confederations of sub-parties' (Suthanintr 1985) or "miniature political systems made up of rival party sub-units competing for political and decision-making power" (Sartori 1976 p.71). Or, as Boucek observes, political parties are not monolithic structures but rather "collective entities in which competition, divided opinions and dissent create internal pressures. In turn, these pressures often trigger the formation of factions that render the unitary actors" (Boucek 2009: 455-456). The problem of factionalism and disunity is especially pertinent to newly formed and newly governing parties, a case of all our three studied parties. For, as Deschouwer (2008) argues, for new parties that are organizationally young, "moving from principled opposition to coalition potential, and then from this potential to being in power, creates a number of pressures, some of whose can be fatal to new parties' organizational longevity. These pressures include: need to hold the party together, communicate and coordinate between the central party organization and the party in public office, managing internal conflicts and relations within organization as well as with coalition partners" (Deschouwer 2008 p.7).

At the same time, party unity (or the lack of it) quite clearly also matters for the newly created parties. Political parties that show unity are more likely to be seen as legitimate by the electorate which, in turn, positively impacts their electoral performance. Party unity translates into more attractive public image and better electoral chances and is thus an extremely important factor influencing parties' fortunes in politics. At the same time, party unity is also crucial for party's organizational survival as even electorally very successful parties can split due to internal party conflicts. Indeed, organizational longevity - the persistence and stability of party organization associated with the absence of internal factions – is generally considered one of the key indicators of individual party and party system performance (Tavits 2013; 2014).

How exactly is party unity achieved? In general, party unity is a result of two processes. The first of these processes is the application of *party discipline*; the second is commonly referred to as *party cohesion* (see e.g. Andeweg and Thomassen 2010). The process of party discipline achieves party unity by the use or threat of sanctions, for example the leadership 'whipping' the party MPs

by threatening their re-nomination. The use of such sticks or disciplinary measures need not be limited to MPs and parliamentary parties but can be applied to other party subunits, for example by the party executive bodies threatening dissolution of local chapters. The exact opposite of various sticks are of course carrots – an offer of various selective incentives (Panebianco 1988), for example party patronage and other perks of the office that are aimed at achieving party unity. When party unity is achieved by *party cohesion*, it refers to a host of processes by which party elite and members come to share political attitudes and policy preferences, resulting in a high degree of their ideological homogeneity. In contrast to party discipline, where party unity is to a large degree enforced and manufactured by party leadership, party cohesion stems from commonly shared collective identities, based for example on social and career backgrounds of party elites and members.

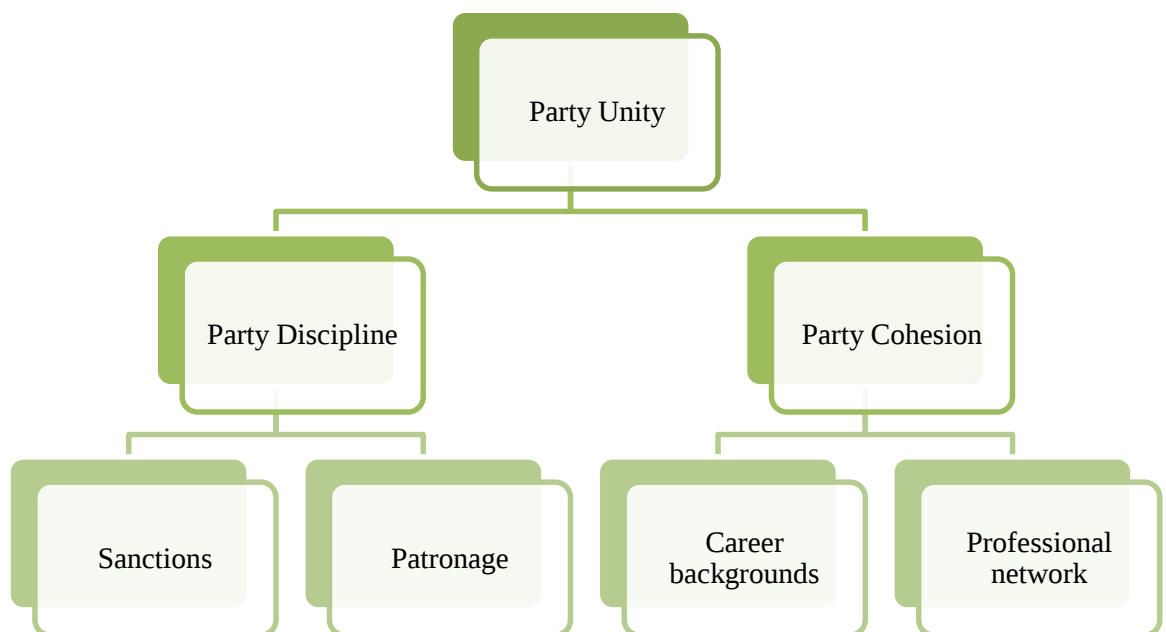
Empirically, the two processes can often be observed simultaneously in internal life of political parties. The European communist parties, for example, were known for a high degree of both party discipline and party cohesion among their party elites and party members. The organizational troubles, especially typical for political parties that are organizationally young and immature, usually emerge when party unity is attempted to be achieved by disciplinary and other punitive measures in the absence of party elites and/or members sharing common political attitudes. For example, as Kopecky (2000) showed, analysing new Czech parliamentary elites in the early 1990s, the enforcement of party discipline as a means to achieve high party unity has limited effectiveness usually leading to party fragmentation (see also Heidar and Koole 2000). Ideally, the best way to avoid internal party conflicts is to forge common collective and ideological identities, especially among the party elites that are bestowed with the task of initially building and later routinizing and stabilizing the emerging party organization. Indeed, like a large a large number of scholars before us, we in this paper link party unity with the party elites' homogeneity of their social backgrounds, and their career patterns in particular (e.g. Andeweg and Thomassen 2010; Eldersveld 1964; Suthanintr 1985; Namenwirth and Lasswell 1970; Searing 1971; Edinger and Searing 1967; Farazmand 1999; Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008; Kim and Patterson 1988; Eldersveld and Siemieniska 1989; Putnam 1973; Higley 1981; Higley et al. 1991; Wellhofer 1974; Janowitz 1956; Lazer 2011; Lodge 1969; Mills 1956; Eldersveld 1964; Knoke 1993).

In theory, the extent of elite cohesion is dependent on a number of different politicians' social background factors, such as educational attainment, occupational past and social origins. We do in this article focus chiefly on two conceptually distinct but empirically related variables: *common occupational backgrounds*, and *common professional links*. Regarding the former, common occupational backgrounds facilitate ties between political leadership by creating "shared dominant values forging allied elite-elite relationships" (Suthanintr 1985: 26). Indeed, as Edinger and Searing (1967) show political elites with common previous occupational backgrounds form 'social circles' whose members, having similar occupational socialization experiences, hold similar political attitudes (see also Mill 1956, Lodge 1969, Farazmand 1999). Such social circles members' common social background obtained from professional and educational past, positively influences attitudinal consensus – i.e. the degree to which leaders share views on specific public policies and broad ideological orientations" (Moore 1979 p.674) - which in turn affects party cohesion. In the absence of common occupational backgrounds, as Searing (1971) argues, members of different professions are more likely to be attitudinally divergent from one another and thus the agreement among elites on the major values, which is essential for effective operation of parties, is harder to achieve.

Regarding the latter, common professional links refers to the existence or absence of shared experience within a particular type of organization, for example: university, company, ministry or a political movement. When party elites display high levels of shared professional links, they have usually worked within the same organization in the past albeit perhaps in very different occupational roles. In theory, the highest levels of party cohesion are likely to be obtained when both occupational background and professional links of party elites concur. Indeed, some scholars studying elite cohesion refer to such situation as a dual hierarchy within party organization (e.g. Janowitz 1956; Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008): when party elites not only belong to the same occupation, but also have common professional links outside of the political party, they are likely to form an informal network within the party structure that is similar to friendship. Janowitz (1956), studying career patterns and elite unity, refers to this phenomenon as to 'the overlap of affiliations of elite members', where "elites hold key posts simultaneously and/or successively in many types of organizations, as they can coordinate diverse activities, create an affinity and common sharing of interests" (p.36-40). In such situations, we are likely to obtain what Putnam (1973) calls 'consensually integrated elite', Wellhofer (1974) refers to as 'communities of fate', or Farazmand (1999) labels as 'interlocking networks'.

To conclude, figure 1 summarizes the basic analytical approach to the question of party unity, outlining key variables and their relationship. Our chief empirical concern in the following is to establish whether ANO, a relatively successful and organizationally stable new political party in the Czech Republic has a party elite which is more homogenous in terms of party elite occupational and professional background than the party elites of both Dawn and VV, which have experienced major organizational upheavals and, ultimately, party disintegration despite sharing initial electoral breakthrough.

Figure 1: Theoretical concepts/variables



IV. Empirical evidence

Before we focus on the empirical data analysis itself, it is crucial to define some of the terms we deal with in this paper. Firstly, in terms of the actual party elites, we focus on two different types of elites, differentiating between elites in 'the party in public office' and elites in 'the party in central office' as coined by Mair and Katz (1993). While the former encompasses those party elites elected into parliament or government, the latter refers to the national leadership of the party organization, consisting of two frequently overlapping groups of the national executive committee and the central party staff (Mair and Katz 1993). Building on this theory of different faces of party organization, we study background of ANO's party in public office and in the party in central office. As a part of the first group, we look at ANO's MPs, ministers and mayors, while in the second group we analyse backgrounds of party presidium members, regional leaders and central party staff.

In relation to the elite sample of the other two studied parties, VV and Dawn, we analyze background of their party in public office, specifically their MPs. In total, we look at the background profiles of ninety-two ANO's elites, twenty-five VV's elites and fourteen Dawn' elites. In terms of the methods used, the background data of elites have been gathered conducting elites' profile research on the Czech parliament website, for parties' MPs, and on the websites of the respective political parties, for the other party elites. In terms of the studied variables - career patterns and political experience, we treat these empirically in two separate sub-sections below.

Elite career backgrounds

The table 3 illustrates what proportion of elites across the three studied parties constitutes a homogenous bloc in relation to their career past. No professional background, other than managerial or entrepreneurial, appeared to play such a role.

Table 3: career background of party elites

Career background		
Party elites	% managers	% other occupations
ANO	67%	33%
VV	24%	76%
Dawn	36%	64%

The highest percentage of elites with common managerial past (sixty-seven percent) is part of ANO's elite profile. In terms of ANO's party in public office, out of forty-seven ANO's MPs, twenty-seven are former managers or entrepreneurs (from various business industries and at different levels of seniority), six out of their seven mayors have managerial career past, while four out of six ANO's ministers have been previously employed in managerial positions. Furthermore, ANO's party in central office replicates the same phenomenon of 'managers' infiltration' into ANO's party elite structure. Nine out of twelve members of ANO's party presidium have common managerial career background, while twelve out of the total of fourteen ANO's regional leaders have managerial career background, representing the highest proportion of ANO's elites with common career background out of all elite categories analysed. Four out of six of ANO's employees in party secretariat have former managerial career past.

In case of VV, as demonstrated in table 3, managers do not constitute as career-homogenous bloc within the party's elite network as in the case of ANO, only twenty-four percent of VV's elites share a managerial career past. Other VV's MPs' former careers encompass a wide array of occupations from various fields, ranging from lawyers, teachers, policemen, architects, surgeons and well-known journalists to students or former mayors. In relation to Dawn's elites' career background, Dawn replicates VV in this respect. Although Dawn's elite sample saw more managers and entrepreneurs involved - thirty-six percent (five out of fourteen studied MPs), in overall Dawn's elites' backgrounds are also rather heterogenous, ranging from pilots, teachers, librarians, nurses, hockey players, diplomats to doctors. Indeed, Tables 4 to 11, attached in appendix, contain detailed data with the specific career background of all studied party elites. They quite clearly indicate that ANO's elites have by far the highest level of common occupational background of its elites. In contrast, the composition of VV's and Dawn's elites' career background displays a far larger degree of occupational heterogeneity.

Professional network

The second variable theoretically contributing to the party cohesion, which in turn influences the unity of parties, is the existence of professional links between party elites. In addition to the existence of the shared career past, professionally linked party elites are said to further contribute to the cohesion of parties, as individuals, who have relations with each other from outside of their party, are more likely to hold together and to cooperate in united manner at times of pressures being put on party organizations. In addition to the career pasts, we have studied potential professional links between VV's and Dawn's elites and found out that in terms of VV and Dawn, no professional networks existed to contribute to these parties' cohesion. The only exception are two VV's MPs, who were formerly employed at the same security agency firm (see Tables 4 to 11 in appendix for more details on elites' specific professions). For Dawn, no former professional networks between their elites have been identified in our elite profile data analysis.

However, in regards to ANO, the situation is rather different, as a number of ANO's elites had been in the past appointed to, or currently still hold, a managerial position within Agrofert business conglomerate of ANO's leader Andrej Babis. To be specific, seventeen percent of the studied ninety-two elites¹ have former or current professional links to Agrofert. The fact that nearly a fifth of ANO's leadership held, or still holds, an employment in Babis's firm(s) means that at least a portion of ANO's elites form a part of an unofficial chain of command within ANO. Babis, being a party leader, while simultaneously for some of the elites, either a former or current employer, creates a chain of dependence, which has an impact on the division of power within the party, decision-making process and position of the party leader. This is reflected in the way how the party operates and alters party elites' relationships, which in turn influences how the party

¹ It is crucial to note that a number of individuals replicate in the studied elite sample, as they hold multiple posts in the party, for instance Andrej Babis is simultaneously MP, minister and a member of party presidium. Thus, the seventeen percent refers more to a number of party posts associated with Agrofert.

operates, how party elites vote in internal decision-making, and mainly how is the party cohesive, and in turn united².

In addition, the data from the elite career profiles' analysis not only indicates that managers from Babis's business are infiltrated into ANO's leadership structure, but that they also occupy crucial party posts that have influence on the functioning of the party. For instance, the party communicator and recruiter post is held by former Agrofert Human Resources manager, who oversees both recruitment and training of new members, and candidates. The perhaps most crucial post in relation to the party cohesion – the post of the leader of ANO's MPs is in the hands of the current member of Agrofert's board of directors. The fact that all ANO's MPs as well as all new applicants for party membership have to account to the individuals professionally dependent on Agrofert illustrates that the party unity is indeed closely related to the existence of professional Agrofert network within ANO that help its elites to keep the party cohesive.

Based on this impact of professional network on the operation of ANO, one could argue that it is no longer a party of the classic definition but more a political firm. Indeed, some aspects of ANO's operation are similar to political firm parties that have been defined on the basis of their approach to political competition and campaigning or ideology (Hlousek 2012; Hopkin and Paolucci 1999). In particular, the rise of professionalization in campaign management (such as the reliance on marketing experts), the opening of politics to models and practices from the business world, populist ideological catch-all strategy or the critique of political establishment were associated with the characteristics of the business-firm parties (Hlousek 2012; Hopkin and Paolucci 1999), all also apply to ANO.

However, there are also some important differences. In contemporary literature on the topic, the concept of political firms, or so-called 'business-firm parties', describes parties found by political entrepreneurs as instruments of their private interests in politics, designed to help the political entrepreneur to chiefly gain preferential position to support his business activities (e.g. Klima 2015). In contrast, ANO seem to be using the corporate network of Agrofert (both in terms of

²For instance at the party congress in February 2015 Babis receive one hundred percent of the vote for the position of party leader, while all of the candidates he recommended for their respective positions have also been successful in their vote (ALDE 2015).

personnel as argued in this paper, but also in terms of marketing and party financing) to support its political activities and not vice-versa. Indeed, we suggest that ANO operates as a political firm mainly because of the personnel ‘corporate-party’ intersection in its leadership. This overlap in leadership aids the party cohesion, and in turn keeps it united and less immune to the pressures and shocks of professional politics, which were organizationally fatal to the other new studied parties. The party cohesion results from the existence of professional Agrofert network in ANO because the party elites are managers professionally linked to the party leader, which leads to firm-like relationships within the party. In other words, the common professional Agrofert past of ANO's elites at crucial party posts alters the relationships between the party elites and party leader and creates loyal relations forged by former professional links translating into a firm-like hierarchy and dependencies that result in party cohesion, which mitigates internal conflicts that could transform into crises with potential to endanger the organizational unity.

V. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to shed light on the political fortunes of three new political parties in the Czech Republic and tried to find answer to their somewhat puzzling contrast in organizational stability. We have adopted an approach emphasizing the importance of party cohesion as the chief source of party unity and performed empirical analysis of party elite occupational background and professional links in all three parties. Unlike ANO, Public Affairs and Dawn became victims of internal conflicts triggered by scandals of bribing or party financing, because their party leaderships were not united. It was the lack of common career background and non-existence of professional networks within VV's and Dawn's elites' circles that, at the time when pressures have been put on parties as a result of their crises over corruption and struggle over party finances or political power, contributed to the destabilization of their parliamentary parties. The fact that these parties recruited and appointed elites with different career backgrounds and no previous professional links did, when the first ‘hard times’ came, prove to be fatal to them, because without the party cohesion, parties were highly disunited and their elites, instead of acting together as a single entity, split and acted on behalf of themselves or small factions of MPs that they have created. Disagreements between these factions over the actions addressing the scandals transformed into arguments and quickly escalated into internal party conflicts, which contributed to these parties' disintegration.

In contrast to VV and Dawn, ANO managed to transform its initial electoral success into long-term party-organizational success by being immune to such scandals. We suggest that this organizational unity obtains from the cohesion of its elite network, in itself the result of career homogeneity and the existence of professional network within its elite circle. To be sure, we do not argue that career background and professional networks are the only explanatory factors of new parties' organizational unity and in turn survival. Elites backgrounds themselves cannot solely explain why new parties survive or disintegrate. Rather, we see them as contributing factors in these processes. ANO's origins within a business network of its leader, and its continuous reliance on various resources of Agrofert, are frequently criticized by political observers and ANO's political opponents. However, it is exactly this collusion between a political organization and private business that might make ANO survive a critical phase of its development and become a longer-term part of the Czech party system.

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VII. Appendix

Table 4 ANO's MPs³

Name of MP	Career background
Andrej Babis	Manager, owner of Agrofert
Helena Valkova	Laywer, lecturer
Jiri Zlatuska	Politician at municipal level, Senator
Jiri Holecek	Entrepreneur - real estate agency business industry
Matej Fichtner	Analyst
Milos Babis	Manager, owner of car showroom chain
Jaroslava Jermanova	Manager in company Aksamite
Kristyna Zelienkova	Manager and owner of Czech Hotel Consulting
Stanislav Berkovec	Journalist
Pavel Cihak	Manager in department of transport
Ivana Dobesova	Manager of two secondary schools, former teacher
Radka Maxova	Manager (Agrofert)
Roman Kubicek	Manager in multinational company
Josef Vozdecky	Manager in Wine industry, former General Manager at Bohemia Sekt
Jan Volny	Business Manager of HOPI, co-owner of Vypex and JJV99
Pavel Sramek	Manager and co-owner of Milknatur and Active Immuno Systems s.r.o.
Roman Prochazka	Director of museum in Cheb
Zdenek Soukup	Czech TV reporter and moderator
Richard Brabec	Manager (Agrofert)
Vlastimil Vozka	Mayor of Most, manager in energy companies
Bronislav Schwarz	Director of municipal police in Most
Stanislav Pflieger	Entrepreneur in construction industry
Martin Komarek	Journalist
Jana Pastuchova	Nurse, conference manager
Pavel Plzak	Surgeon
Ivan Pilny	Former General manager of Microsoft CR, President of Tuesday Business Network
Martina Berdychova	Entrepreneur in drink industry (Fruitstrue)
David Kasal	Manager in hospital in Chrudim
Martin Kolovratnik	Manager in Czech Radio, journalist
Josef Kott	Product Manager (Agrofert)

³ Data in table derived from ANO webstie - www.anobudelip.cz

Zuzana Sanova	Lecturer at University Hradec Kralove
Martin Stropnický	Actor, Stage actor, diplomat
Roztislav Vyzula	Professor Masaryk University
Karel Rais	Rector VUT Brno
Bohuslav Chalupa	Tax office clerk
Miloslav Janulík	Director of hospital, Vicepresident of pediatric society
Milan Brazdil	Manager of regional Ambulance service
Jaroslav Faltýnek	Manager (Agrofert)
Ladislav Oklestek	Entrepreneur (transport industry) Mayor of Vysovice
Radek Vondracek	Lawyer
Margita Balastikova	Manager
Pavel Vojcik	Neurologist
Jana Lorencova	Journalist
Josef Hajek	Various positions in mining industry
Jan Sedlacek	Business Manager
Martin Sedlar	Entrepreneur - Natura Data
Igor Nykl	Cardiologist

Table 5 ANO's Mayors⁴

ANO Mayor	Name	Career background
Prague	Adriana Krnacova	Manager of Czech Amnesty International
Brno	Petr Vokral	Manager of A.S.A for central and eastern Europe
Ostrava	Tomas Macura	Financial and General manager of Walmark, economist
Pardubice	Martin Charvat	Manager, construction business
Liberec	Tibor Batthyany	Project manager in IT
Opava	Martin Vitecek	Manager in architecture and in packaging industry
Decin	Marie Blazkova	Social worker

⁴ Data derived from ANO webstie - www.anobudelip.cz

Table 6 ANO's Ministers⁵

ANO Minister	Name	Career background
Finances	Andrej Babis	Manager, owner of Agrofert
Defence	Martin Stropnický	Actor, Stage actor, diplomat
Environment	Richard Brabec	Manager (Agrofert)
Local development	Karla Slechtová	Manager of EU fund department
Transport	Dan Tok	Manager in construction industry
Justice	Robert Pelikan	Lawyer, academic career

Table 7 ANO Party Presidium⁶

Party presidium	Name	Career background
Leader of party	Andrej Babis	Manager, owner of Agrofert
First deputy leader	Jaroslav Faltynek	Manager (Agrofert)
Deputy leader	Petr Vokral	Manager of A.S.A for central and eastern Europe
Deputy leader	Jaroslava Jermanová	Manager in company Aksamite
Deputy leader	Jan Volný	Manager in logistics
Deputy leader	Radmila Kleslová	Lawyer, regional politician
Member of Presidium	Margita Balastiková	Manager of Hřebcín Napajedla a.s.
Member of Presidium	Richard Brabec	Manager (Agrofert)
Member of Presidium	Martin Stropnický	Actor, Stage actor, diplomat
Member of Presidium	Martin Komárek	Journalist
Member of Presidium	Radek Hlousek	Manager
Member of Presidium	Radek Popelka	Manager, entrepreneur

⁵ Data derived from ANO webstie - www.anobudelip.cz

⁶ Data derived from ANO webstie - www.anobudelip.cz

Table 8 ANO Regional Leaders⁷

Region	Name	Career background
Prague	RadmilaKleslova	Lawyer, regional politician
Central Bohemia	Frantisek Petrtyl	Entrepreneur in construction industry
Pilsen	Jan Volny	Manager in logistics
Karlovy Vary	Martin Hurajcik	Commercial manager in PENAM (Agrofert)
Usti nad Labem	Pavel Elias	Manager and entrepreneur (meat processing plant)
Liberec	Tibor Batthyany	Project manager in IT
Hradec Kralove	Pavel Plzak	Surgeon
Pardubice	Jan Rehounek	Manager in banking and insurance industry
South Bohemia	RadkaMaxova	Manager (Agrofert)
Olomouc	LadislavOklestek	Entrepreneur (transport industry) Mayor of Vysovice
Moravia-Silesia	Josef Belica	Entrepreneur
Zlin	Pavel Pustejovsky	Manager DEZA (Agrofert)
South Moravia	Marek Janicek	Entrepreneur
Vysocina	Josef Kott	Product Manager (Agrofert)

Table 9 ANO Central Party Staff⁸

Division/department	Name	Career background
Analysis	DarekKysela	Management (Agrofert)
Regional support	BozenaHazova	Journalist, consultant at PR Essential Communication
Communication	Vladimir Vorechovsky	PR and Marketing Manager (Agrofert)
Central manager of party	Erika Duchanova	Manager (UniCredit Leasing, Tatra Trucks)
Regional management	Tomas Kratky	Manager (UROCONT)
New media	Marek Prchal	Digital director, Idea maker, Campaign manager

⁷ Data derived from ANO webstie - www.anobudelip.cz

⁸ Data derived from ANO webstie - www.anobudelip.cz

Table 10 VV MPs

Name	Career background
Andrýsová Lenka	Student
Babák Michal	Entrepreneur
Bárta Vít	Entrepreneur, security agency ABL
Dobeš Josef	Psychologist
Drastichová Jana	Primary school teacher
Fraňková Štěpánka	Surgeon
Chaloupka Otto	Entrepreneur
John Radek	Publicist, Journalist, Moderator
Kádner David	ABL Security agency employee (VitBarta's company)
Klasnová Kateřina	Student, Journalist
Navrátilová Dagmar	Grammar school teacher
Novotný Josef	Alderman, mayor, senator
Paggio Viktor	Civic activist
Peake Karolína	Laywer, Translator
Rusnok Jiří	Economist in personal agency
Skokan Petr	Entrepreneur
Suchá Jana	Laywer
Štětina Jiří	Doctor
Šťovíček Milan	Zoologist, Primary school teacher
Vacek Martin	Entrepreneur
Koci Kristýna	Consultant
Huml Stanislav	Policeman, Journalist TV Nova
Petran Miroslav	Architect
Škárka Jaroslav	Entrepreneur
Vysloužil Radim	Economist, HR clerk

Table 11 Dawn MPs

Name	Career background
Tomio Okamura	Businessman in gastronomy, tourism, writer and translator
Marek Cernoch	Pilot, Singer
Petr Adam	Manager construction company
Augustin Karel AndrieSylor	Teacher
RadimFiala	Entrepreneur security agency
Karel Fiedler	Entrepreneur construction and online retail
Olga Havlova	Accountant, Librarian
Jana Hnykova	Nurse
Jaroslav Holik	Owner of motorcycle manufacturing company
David Kadner	ABL Security agency employee (VitBarta's company)
Martin Lank	Teacher, Radio reporter
Karel Prazak	Hockey Player
Milan Sarapatka	Displomat, ambassador
Jiri Stetina	Doctor