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The role of party organization in the electoral success of anti-establishment parties: ANO in the Czech Republic

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The Role of Party Organization in the Electoral Success of Anti-establishment parties:
ANO in the Czech Republic

De Rol van de Partijorganisatie bij het Verkiezingssucces van Anti-establishment Partijen:
ANO in Tsjechië

Proefschrift

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Abstract

The majority of party systems in European democracies witness a relatively recent phenomenon of new anti-establishment parties electorally succeeding at the expense of their established counterparts. Many of such parties are formed and led by political entrepreneurs. This dissertation deals with the relationship between the electoral success of anti-establishment parties and their party organization. Currently, these parties successfully enter most party systems in Europe. The majority of these newcomers disintegrate quickly after their initial electoral breakthrough. However, some do not. The chief objective of this dissertation is to find the evidence demonstrating which party organizational features matter for the electoral success of these parties. To achieve this goal, firstly, a single case-study of new Czech anti-establishment party called ANO takes place, analysing three of its party organizational aspects (local party organization, party membership and the party elite). Secondly, a comparative analysis of ANO with three other parties – Austrian TS, Slovak OĽaNO and Italian FI takes place.

The findings indicate that party stability, cohesion and legitimacy (stemming from the controllable approach towards local party organization, party membership and the party elite) facilitate the electoral success of the considered anti-establishment parties. This strategy includes limiting the autonomy of local branches, implementing restrictions on traditional individual membership, and the recruitment of professionally-linked party elite. The above party organizational setup is achieved partially via the existence and operation of a corporate network of individuals professionally dependent on the party leader's business. The anti-establishment party built in the way suggested above seems to be better equipped to react to the scandals and to manage these scandals more effectively to avoid a negative impact on its public image. Such an ability to attain control over the three aspects of party organization seems to help these parties to avoid the negative consequences of their scandals. It translates into parties' positive public image as trustworthy and unified entities; a state that seems to be welcomed and rewarded by their voters in elections.

Keywords: anti-establishment party, political entrepreneurs, party organisation, party elite, party membership, local party organisation, electoral success

Abstract (Dutch)

De meeste partijsystemen in Europese democratieën zijn getuige van een relatief recent fenomeen van nieuwe anti-establishment partijen die electoraal succes hebben ten koste van hun gevestigde tegenhangers. Veel van dergelijke partijen worden gevormd en geleid door politieke ondernemers. Dit proefschrift behandelt de relatie tussen het electorale succes van anti-establishment partijen en hun partijorganisatie. Momenteel betreden deze partijen met succes de meeste partijsystemen in Europa. De meeste van deze nieuwkomers vallen snel uit elkaar na hun eerste electorale doorbraak. Sommigen doen dat echter niet. Het belangrijkste doel van dit proefschrift is om het bewijs te vinden dat aantoont welke organisatorische kenmerken van de partij van belang zijn voor het electorale succes van deze partijen. Om dit doel te bereiken, vindt ten eerste een enkele casestudie plaats van de nieuwe Tsjechische anti-establishment partij genaamd ANO, waarbij drie van haar partij organisatorische aspecten worden geanalyseerd (lokale partijorganisatie, partijlidmaatschap en de partijelite). Ten tweede vindt een vergelijkende analyse plaats van ANO met drie andere partijen - Oostenrijkse TS, Slowaakse OĽaNO en Italiaanse FI.

De bevindingen geven aan dat partijstabiliteit, cohesie en legitimiteit (voortkomend uit de controleerbare benadering van lokale partijorganisatie, partijlidmaatschap en de partijelite) het electorale succes van de beschouwde anti-establishment partijen vergemakkelijken. Deze strategie omvat het beperken van de autonomie van lokale afdelingen, het implementeren van beperkingen op traditioneel individueel lidmaatschap en het rekruteren van professioneel verbonden partijelite. De bovenstaande organisatorische opzet van de partij wordt gedeeltelijk bereikt door het bestaan en de werking van een bedrijfsnetwerk van personen die professioneel afhankelijk zijn van de zaken van de partijleider. De anti-establishment partij, gebouwd op de hierboven voorgestelde manier, lijkt beter toegerust om op de schandalen te reageren en deze schandalen effectiever te beheersen om een negatieve impact op haar publieke imago te voorkomen. Een dergelijk vermogen om controle te krijgen over de drie aspecten van de partijorganisatie lijkt deze partijen te helpen de negatieve gevolgen van hun schandalen te vermijden. Het vertaalt zich in het positieve publieke imago van partijen als betrouwbare en verenigde entiteiten; een staat die door zijn kiezers bij verkiezingen wordt verwelkomd en beloond.

Sleutelwoorden: anti-establishment partij, politieke ondernemers, partijorganisatie, partijelite, partijlidmaatschap, lokale partijorganisatie, electoraal succes

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Original Name	English Name
ANO	ANO2011	YES/YES2011
CZK	Česká Koruna	Czech Crown
ČSSD	Česká Strana Sociálně Demokratická	Czech Social Democratic Party
EU	European Union	European Union
EUR	Euro	Euro
FI	Forza Italia	Forward Italy
KDU-ČSL	Křesťanská a Demokratická Unie – Československá Strana Lidová	Christian Democratic Union -Czechoslovak People´s Party
KSČM	Komunistická Strana Čech a Moravy	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
ODA	Občanská demokratická aliance	Civic Democratic Alliance
ODS	Občanská Demokratická Strana	Civic Democratic Party
OĽaNO	Obyčajní Ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti	Ordinary People and Independent Personalities
Smer SD	Smer – sociálna demokracia	Direction – Social Democracy
SPD	Svoboda a přímá demokracie	Freedom and Direct Democracy
SPR-RSC	Sdružení pro Republiku - Republikánská strana Československa	Coalition for Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia
STAN	Starostové a nezávislí	Mayors and Independents
SZ	Strana Zelených	Green Party
TOP 09	Tradice Odpovědnost Prosperita	Tradition Responsibility Prosperity
TS	Team Stronach für Österreich	Team Stronach for Austria
US-DEU	Unie Svobody–Demokratická unie	Freedom Union–Democratic Union

VV	Věci Veřejné	Public Affairs

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

An increasing number of new anti-establishment parties succeed in elections at the expense of their established competitors. This relatively recent phenomenon occurs in the majority of European countries. However, a large proportion of these new parties vanish as quickly as they have emerged. Only some of them are here to stay. This dissertation explores the relationship between the party organization of anti-establishment parties and their electoral success. By investigating the relationship between party organizational features and electoral success, the favourable conditions that are likely to influence electoral results positively, are meant. By examining which aspects of party organization are likely to matter for the electoral success, those that have a bigger chance to make electoral success more likely. Anytime when referring to the relationship between the electoral success and the individual aspects of party organization in this dissertation, the above distinction is meant. The chief objective is to find evidence demonstrating which party organizational features are most likely to make the electoral success of such parties possible. In other words, I research which aspects of party organization mattered most strongly for their electoral success. Electoral success, for the purposes of this dissertation, is defined as a repeated electoral performance over the threshold of representation. Every time the term electoral success is mentioned throughout this dissertation, a repeated electoral success is meant. To be more specific, in regards to the main case, this electoral success takes place in different electoral arenas in several successive elections[1]. This research is devised in the following way. Firstly, a single case-study of new Czech anti-establishment party called ANO 2011/YES 2011 (ANO) takes place. Secondly, a comparative cross-country analysis with three other anti-establishment parties is conducted. The other parties selected for this comparison are Team Stronach für Österreich/ Team Stronach for Austria (TS) in Austria, Obyčaní ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti/ Ordinary people and independent personalities (OĽaNO) in Slovakia, and Forza Italia/Forward Italy (FI) in Italy.

The theoretical standpoint from which this research approaches anti-establishment parties is that gradually more of them make an electoral breakthrough into European party

[1] This research does not pay any empirical attention to the process of party emergence, i.e. the initial phase when party forms and decides to register to enter political competition, nor to the process of electoral breakthrough, i.e. the electoral performance at first elections, in which new party competes and gains political representation in form of seats (Eatwell 1998). The societal environment allowing both of these processes to take place is merely discussed in this introduction chapter to illustrate ANO´s origin.

systems. Such parties, positioned as critics of the entire political establishment, electorally succeed at the expense of their established counterparts. However, many of these newcomers do not outlive their initial electoral success. In the context of the increasingly expanding universe of new anti-establishment parties that achieve an electoral breakthrough, only a fraction preserves their ability to succeed in elections again. With this knowledge, this research investigates why some anti-establishment newbies manage to succeed at elections on a repeated basis, while the others do not. During the data collection phase of the research, it became evident that the majority of the anti-establishment newcomers are found by a single individual, so-called political entrepreneur. The contemporary literature refers to such parties based around one political entrepreneur as entrepreneurial parties. Chapter 5 refers to this distinction in more detail. The above-described phenomenon of new anti-establishment parties´ succeeding in elections takes place in the majority of party systems in the European Union (EU) countries; the Czech party system is one such case. This dissertation begins by discussing this recent surge of such often short-lived parties in the Czech context.

1.1. Failed Newcomers to Czech Party System

The Czech party system was for a long time known for its hostility towards new parties, and thus for its relative stability. As a result, several scholars referred to the Czech party system as institutionalized, having undergone a phase of consolidation (Cabada, Hloušek, Jurek 2014; Berglund and Dellenbrant 1991), well-established with a high level of programmatic crystallization (Kitschelt 1999), or robust, stable and not fragmented into many parties (Hanley 2008; Lewis 2000). These characteristics made the Czech party system an exception within the post-communist environment, only few other countries witnessed similar development (notably Slovenia and Hungary). Out of those parties that made an electoral breakthrough, only a minority managed to repeat their electoral success. The last quarter of the century in Czech politics was marked by the relative stability of the party system. The relatively predictable electoral performance of specific parties translated into the dominance of four major established parties and constant emergence of new small (mostly right-wing) parties. This trend ended with the announcement of the 2010 election results. For the first time in post-communist Czech history, numerous new parties´ electoral breakthrough translated into an electoral earthquake. This trend of new parties succeeding at the expense of their established counterparts not only continued but also strengthened in the 2013 elections. Czech party system

witnessed the electoral breakthrough of two new anti-establishment parties – ANO, and another smaller party – Dawn of Direct Democracy. The latest 2017 elections continued in this trend; three other new anti-establishment parties made entry to the lower house of Czech parliament – Pirate Party, Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD) and Mayors and Independents.

Table 1.1, with the overview of election results to the chamber of deputies, illustrates changes in parties' parliamentary presence since the Czech Republic became independent in 1992. It reflects new entries to the Czech party system in this entire period. Scholars focusing on Czech party system observe that all new parties with parliamentary presence share one aspect; the organization building and membership recruitment was never their priority (Van Biezen 2003; Kopecký 1995; 2001; 2007). These parties focused mainly on the preparations for the upcoming elections or on the responsibilities associated with holding the public office. New parties, having little time due to their involvement in high politics, restricted their organizations almost exclusively to parliament, often failing to establish an extra-parliamentary organizational structure (Van Biezen 2004). The only exceptions in regards to building extensive party organization (in terms of the number of traditional individual party members and the extensiveness of local branches' network), are KSČM and KDU-ČSL. These two parties are closest to the definition of a mass party in the Czech context, outweighing all other Czech parties concerning these two aspects of party organization (Van Biezen 2003). The trend in post-communist Czech political context is that the party membership as a percentage of the electorate stands at a low level in comparison to Western European democracies. Building extensive party organization in overall is regarded as unimportant to parties´ electoral success (Van Biezen 2003). This research aims to contribute to this discussion by conducting an empirical analysis of primary data on contemporary Czech parties. Chapter 3 includes a comparative perspective into the number of traditional individual members of all Czech parties with parliamentary presence.

The electoral data presented in Table 1.1 demonstrate the existence of two prevailing patterns related to parties' parliamentary presence. Firstly, the proportion of votes received by parties that can be referred to as established is constantly shrinking over time. Their competitors – new parties, achieve increasing electoral performance at their expense. The second prevailing pattern relates to the typology of the new parties. These constant new entries to the Czech party systems are always small centre or right-wing parties, such as Green Party (SZ), Dawn or Public Affairs (VV) that only stay represented for one term. The latter shares some aspects

with ANO, in particular the critical stance towards the established parties and the absence of coherent ideology. Hloušek (2012) refers to VV as to a business-firm party, characteristic for treating politics as being equal to business, perceiving parties as products and voters as consumers. Business-firm parties are a type of entrepreneurial party run by political entrepreneurs. The vast majority of anti-establishment parties in Europe are entrepreneurial parties like VV or ANO. As mentioned previously, Chapter 5 refers to this distinction between anti-establishment and entrepreneurial parties in greater detail.

Table 1.1 Chamber of Deputies Electoral Results since 1992

	1992	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2013	2017
Established Parties (electoral performance in %)								
ČSSD	6,5	26,4	32,3	30,2	32,3	22	20,5	7,27
ODS	29,7	29,6	27,7	24,5	35,4	20,2	7,7	11,32
KDU-ČSL	6,3	8	9	14,3	7,2	**	6,8	5,80
KSČM	14,1	10,3	11	18,5	12,8	11,3	15	7,76
ODA	5,9	6,4	*	**	*	*	*	**
Proportion of votes held by established parties	**62,5**	**80,7**	**80**	**87,5**	**87,7**	**53,5**	**50**	**32,15**
New Parties (electoral performance in %)								
US-DEU	*	*	8,6	*	**	*	*	*
SPR-RSC	5,9	8,1	**	*	*	*	*	*
SZ	*	*	**	**	6,3	**	**	**
TOP 09	*	*	*	*	*	16,7	12	5,31
VV	*	*	*	*	*	10,9	*	*
ÚSVIT	*	*	*	*	*	*	6,9	*
ANO	*	*	*	*	*	*	18,7	29,64
SPD	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	10,64
STAN	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	5,18
Pirates	*	*	*	*	*	**	**	10,79
Proportion of votes held by new parties	**5,9**	**8,1**	**8,6**	**0**	**6,3**	**27,6**	**37,6**	**61,56**

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

Source: www.volby.cz.

In a way, VV opened the door of the Czech party system for ANO. The way VV succeeded in 2010 elections demonstrated the availability of electoral space for new parties with anti-establishment rhetoric and 'the managerial approach to politics' (Hloušek 2012). However, VV failed to remain a viable political player, due to internal party conflicts and misuse of public office for private interests (Leschtina 2012). VV (and Dawn) was more fragile and prone to internal conflicts than ANO because of the lack of party cohesion stemming from the composition of its party elite (Cirhan and Kopecký 2017). I focus more on the role of party elites in the contrasting political fortunes of VV, Dawn and ANO in Chapter 4 related to the party elite. In contrast to VV, ANO has managed to build and expand on the anti-establishment and anti-corruption ideological stance. ANO designed even more electorally successful and long-lasting project. ANO 'occupied' a larger electoral space, even though it was a completely new party with no links to the established parties (Sikk 2012). The example of VV demonstrates that the electoral demand for new anti-establishment parties itself cannot solely explain their electoral success in the longer term. While providing the initial necessary electoral space to both VV and ANO, electoral demand on its own cannot help us understand why one disintegrated and the other continued to succeed in the next elections.

Similarly, another new anti-establishment party called Dawn made electoral breakthrough only to disintegrate shortly afterwards following scandals of its party elite. Recently, the Czech party system witnessed the emergence and electoral breakthrough of other new parties such as SPD or Pirate party. However, it remains uncertain at this point, which of these parties will survive and will manage to succeed again in elections. The electoral demand for new anti-establishment parties itself can only show why new parties emerge and partially indicate why these parties make an electoral breakthrough. However, it cannot explain why some of these newcomers electorally succeed repeatedly, and others do not.

There are certain roots in Czech society that can explain electoral demand for new anti-establishment parties. If one would attempt to capture the public´s perception of Czech political and societal post-communist development around the year 2010, the words that one would use would probably be disillusionment, dissatisfaction, frustration or apathy. The negative attitudes towards the political establishment are deeply rooted in the Czech society (Kunštát 2004; ČTK 2019; CVVM 2020) and closely associated with the significant political and economic changes that occurred since the Velvet Revolution. Numerous scandals took place during the transition period, including large-scale corruption (Appel 2001; Altshuler 2001; Schmidt 2007), careerist

politics and clientelism (Shabad and Slomczynski 2002), and neoliberal reforms (Domanski 1999; Horowitz and Petras 2003). Many Czech citizens felt disillusioned from the way politics was conducted, and from the established parties that were in the centre of these scandals in particular. When these long-felt frustrations combined with the dissatisfaction from the negative impacts of the ongoing global economic crisis at the time the discontent with the state of established politics culminated (Hanley 2009; Chithelen 2008; Onaran 2011; Lane 2012). The frustration of Czechs with the political establishment was perhaps best reflected in the fact that Czech parties are less trusted than other institutions (Kopecký 2007). This mistrust translates into weak ties and attachments between political parties and citizens. ANO was established precisely within such societal environment and successfully got on the wave of dissatisfaction with the entire political establishment. It utilised this protest vote against the political status quo and skilfully transferred it into its political gains.

Historically, in the Czech context, the discontent with the political establishment constitutes a fertile ground for movements with anti-establishment rhetoric and appeals. Strong anti-establishment sentiments against the political elites were expressed through two civic platforms in the late 1990s. They succeeded in mobilizing short-term protest voice-directed against the established political elites at the time. Still, they failed to turn themselves into a more conventional party format that would represent the anti-establishment position in the longer term (Dvořáková 2003). Although these appeals against the established parties (Civic Democrats - ODS and Social Democrats - ČSSD) failed to deliver any substantial changes in politics at the time, their ideas continued to resonate within the Czech society, and the distrust in the political establishment thrived over time. In such climate of discontent with established parties, the already mentioned VV party was formed and made an electoral breakthrough in 2010 elections (Kopeček and Svačinová 2015). VV was among the first parties running on the anti-establishment ticket utilising the frustration from corruption and misuse of power by the political elites. However, VV disintegrated shortly after it secured parliamentary presence (Hospodářské Noviny 2012). Although VV failed to succeed repeatedly due to the scandals of its elites (Štráfeldová 2011), its electoral breakthrough still clearly signalled that time for a new protest in the form of anti-establishment politics has come. ANO built on the same societal discontent with established parties. For the first time in Czech post-communist history, it managed to preserve this anti-establishment voice in the longer-term. The next section sheds light on the origins of ANO.

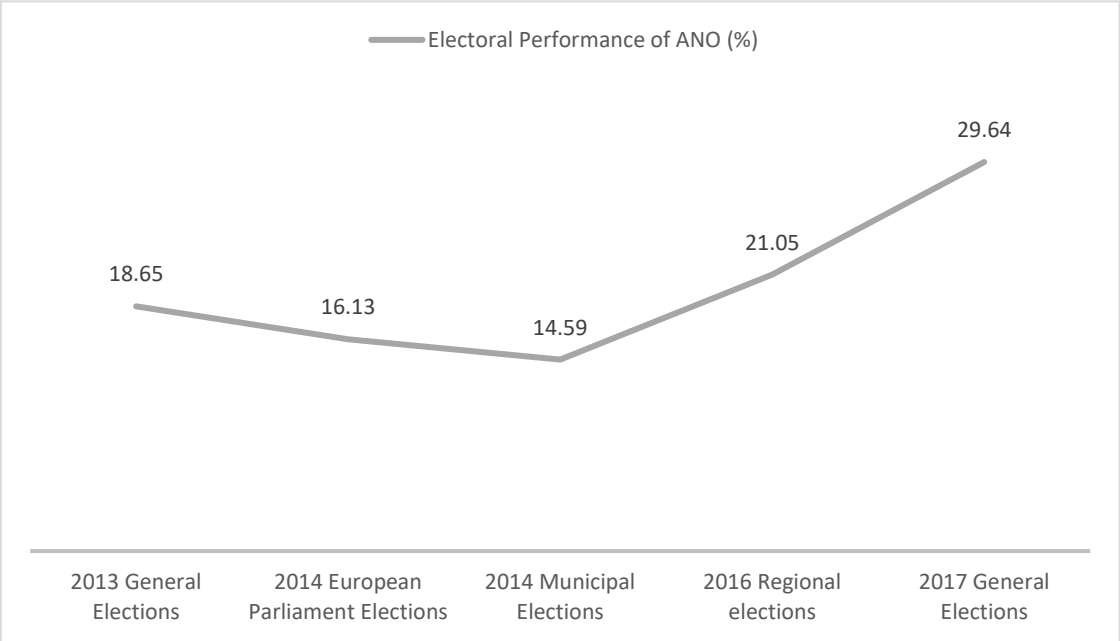
1.2. The Story of ANO´s Electoral Success

ANO (ANO 2011) emerged from a protest movement of the same name (initially the party name was an acronym of Akce Nespokojených Občanů/Action of Dissatisfied Citizens), claiming to represent the voice of ordinary citizens dissatisfied with the 'discredited' political establishment. It presented itself as the leading new alternative to the established parties that disappointed voters repeatedly after every election. To emphasise this stance, ANO even has this proclamation built into its name. ANO quickly received public attention that soon reflected in the electoral polls. The speed with which ANO became publicly known increased rapidly. In a society where politicians are established parties are amongst the least trusted institutions (Vlachová 2001; Mishler and Rose 2001; Čermák and Stachová 2010), a new anti-establishment movement became instantly popular. With the emergence of ANO, the long-prevailing anti-establishment sentiments rooted in Czech society (Dvořáková 2003), were pronounced using a political party platform, which ensured that its message would be heard in longer-term. It was a crucial step considering the weak influence of movement types of organizations in the country. In the Czech Republic, parties enjoy "monopoly of representation, alternative channels of representation such as social movements, trade unions or anti-party movements are either weak or non-existent" (Kopecký 2007, 127-128). ANO is, at the time of completing this dissertation, the most electorally successful political party in the Czech Republic. Currently the biggest party in the lower house of the Czech Parliament. It leads the national government and enjoys a significant representation at the regional and municipal levels of government as well. ANO´s journey towards accumulating such vast political power was short. In the course of a mere five years, the party established itself as the leading political player on every level of public office in the country.

Chronologically, ANO started with the formation of a civic movement in November 2011, called ANO 2011. The participation of citizens in this movement was motivated by their dissatisfaction with the state of politics and economy. In particular, with the high levels of political corruption and various scandals. This civic movement was formed on a spontaneous civic initiative, based on the public appeal made by Andrej Babiš, in autumn 2011. Until then, this second-richest Czech, a billionaire and owner of Agrofert business conglomerate, was a virtually unknown public figure. Babiš's public appeal consisted of a critique of the overall post-communist political and economic development, specifically of a high level of corruption, incompetence of the political elite and general disillusionment with the political establishment.

Initially, ANO formulated its proclamations closely on the cooperation with different NGOs, in particular with Rekonstrukce Státu (Rekonstrukce Státu 2020). At this time, ANO presented itself as the champion of anti-corruption. ANO 2011 movement incorporated this perspective into its communication with public and quickly gained thousands of supporters[2]. At first, ANO tried to build an image of the genuine grass-roots movement of ordinary people uniting to speak up about their dissatisfaction with politics, and discussing a political change. However, this ethos of ordinary peoples´ action did not last long. In May 2012, the ANO 2011 civic movement transformed into a political one. Babiš registered ANO as a political party and acts as the party leader since then. However, he still insists on referring to ANO as to political movement opposing the term of the political party completely (to distinguish it from its political competitors).

Figure 1.1 Electoral Performance of ANO



Source: www.volby.cz.

In terms of its electoral history, ANO has been highly electorally successful in several different electoral arenas in five successive elections (refer to Figure 1.1 for details). The first chance to demonstrate its electoral potential came in October 2013 in the early legislative election. Not

[2] Nineteen days after forming ANO 2011 civic movement, over ten thousand citizens signed its public proclamation supporting the movement (ANO 2019).

only that ANO has managed to make an electoral breakthrough, but it has also gained the historically highest number of votes that any new Czech party did in its first elections. ANO gained 18.65 per cent and secured 47 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, attaining second place behind ČSSD. At the time, Social Democrats were expected to win by a landslide, considering the major scandal hunting their main competitor (ODS), and their long time spent in opposition. In the 2014 European Parliament elections, ANO already defeated ČSSD. It won the elections, receiving the highest number of voters (16.13 per cent). The third elections (senate and municipal elections), in which ANO competed, took place in October 2014. In these elections, ANO also received the highest number of votes from all parties (14.59 per cent). After its first general elections in 2013, ANO formed a coalition government with Social Democrats (ČSSD) and Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL). ANO´s participation in the government translated into six ministerial posts and a position of Deputy Prime Minister for Andrej Babiš. Based on the results of these three elections, ANO became represented at all levels of public office. At the time, forty-seven MPs, four senators and four MEPs (and one European Commissioner) have been elected for ANO. Nine regional-capital city mayors, fifty-eight mayors, and eighty-five vice mayors/deputy mayors represented ANO, forming over two hundred municipal coalitions (ANO 2019a). In 2016, ANO again demonstrated to be an electorally successful, winning regional elections (with 21.04 per cent) (Echo24 2016). In the last elections that took place at the time of completing this dissertation, ANO received its largest share of votes to date. ANO won the 2017 general election (with 29.64 per cent). Babiš was able to form the national government, which passed the confidence vote in the chamber of deputies 264 days after the elections (Krumphanzl 2018).

The complicated negotiations that preceded this confidence vote lasted the longest time in the country´s modern history. Until then, the record was 230 days, which was the case after the 2006 elections, of the prime minister Mirek Topolánek from ODS (Pokorný 2018). By forming the minority coalition government with ČSSD relying on the support of KSČM, ANO showed political negotiating capabilities. In addition to being electorally successful, ANO proved to be a successful political actor keen to lead a national government. Within the Czech context, the majority of new anti-establishment parties fails and disintegrates shortly after making an electoral breakthrough. The way how ANO transformed itself into a party that has successfully performed in all successive elections (and proved immune to pressures of participating in two coalition governments, currently leading one of them) is puzzling. This

research aims to contribute to our understanding of ANO´s electoral success, and the role of party organization in this process.

1.3. ANO´s Electoral Success as Part of Wider Phenomenon

Different scholars explain new parties´ electoral success by associating it to various factors, such as party ideology (Harmel and Robertson 1985; Golosov 1998), party marketing (Kubánek 2016) or charismatic party leadership (Bittner 2011). This research adopts a different strategy to approach this complex phenomenon. This dissertation focuses on something that is a tradition in the research of political parties, and that is a party organization. The electoral success can indeed be explained by other factors, such as the anti-establishment appeal, presiding over a booming economy, high levels of resources and effective PR of the party. Although these and other factors may potentially play important role (perhaps even more influential one) in regards to helping to explain the electoral success, I have opted to explore the role party organization instead. One of the reasons is that the role of booming economy and ANO´s professionally made marketing are notoriously discussed in the media and by domestic academics as well (Indra 2015; Uhrová 2015; Kubánek 2016; Procházková 2020; Doležal 2020; Pečenková 2020). Less attention is however paid to the role of different party organizational features in supporting its chances for better electoral performance. This is the gap that this dissertation wants to fill with an original empirical analysis of primary data.

The previous discussion concerning the specific context of the Czech party system stumbled on the term party organizational extensiveness. It is crucial to make a conceptual distinction here between *extensive party organization* and a *strong party organization*. The extensiveness of party organization in the political science literature refers merely to the party organization´s size (in the sense of party organizational model from the era of mass parties). This conceptualisation entails solely numbers (i.e. dense local organizational presence, extensive party membership or large staff in the central party office). Although this research empirically analyses the extensiveness of ANO´s party organization as well, it is not the full picture of party organization it explores. The analysis of party organization in this dissertation goes beyond looking solely at the organizational extensiveness. It investigates general patterns between various party organizational features, such as the role and autonomy of local branches, rights and obligations fulfilled by different tiers of party membership, and the implications of the party elite´s backgrounds. The next section in this introduction chapter explains how should

these features, in theory, facilitate party cohesion, stability and legitimacy (that are all necessary components of the electoral success). For the purposes of this dissertation, it is the combination of these three aspects leads to the strength of party organization. Investigating of the causal relationship between various party organizational features allows me to test theoretical arguments made in the party organization literature. It helps to demonstrate which aspects of party organization matter for new anti-establishment parties´ electoral success. As such, when talking about the strength of the party organization, the discussion does not refer to its size. Strong party organization is one that bears signs of being a stable (centrally led, immune to splits, conflicts), cohesive (unified, sharing common values and attitudes) and legitimate entity (preserving the positive, trustworthy public image that is favoured by potential voters).

The goal of this dissertation is to find the evidence that will indicate which specific party organizational features, such as local party organization, party membership and the party elite, matter electorally. Electoral success is a complex process that has many explanations. It is not possible to explain its cause by analysing only certain factors (such as party organization). This research does not attempt to explain why anti-establishment parties succeed electorally. Rather than that it aims to determine which party organizational features are likely to facilitate electoral success. Many other aspects, such as charismatic party leadership, party marketing, availability of party financing or party ideology, may contribute to the electoral success. Therefore, it is not the aim here to find a complete explanation for such a complex phenomenon by merely analysing one factor (party organization). Instead, the chief objective is to gather and empirically analyse evidence that will demonstrate which party organizational features have an impact on the electoral outcomes and how.

Why ANO, what makes ANO´s case substantive, why should it be studied? Firstly, ANO made an electoral breakthrough into one of the most stable party systems in Central Eastern Europe, causing a major 'earthquake' on the Czech political scene at the time. Secondly, and more importantly, unlike it is often the case for new parties within the Czech context, ANO managed to transform its initial electoral success into a more long-term one. It also gained the historically highest percentage of votes as a new party in its first contested legislative election. However, the electoral performance of ANO is fairly compatible with that of the previous major governing parties (ODS and ČSSD) in the past (refer to Table 1.1). More importantly, as a new party, ANO managed to achieve electoral success in the majority of elections

following its electoral breakthrough (with notable exception of Senate elections). The vast majority of new anti-establishment parties that entered the Czech party system did not survive and fell apart shortly after making an electoral breakthrough. Given the odds, ANO should not have survived to succeed in elections repeatedly.

ANO belongs to a group of new electorally successful anti-establishment parties elsewhere. Exploring the causes of its electoral success should be of interest of scholars focusing on anti-establishment parties in other countries. The empirical findings presented in this dissertation simultaneously answer a broader question of the role of different party organizational features in new anti-establishment parties' electoral success in general. Therefore, studying this new electorally successful party is not only of interest to those focusing solely on Czech politics. ANO as a new anti-establishment party that has, in a short time, managed to become the leading political player at the Czech political scene, represents the case with wider relevance to the contemporary European party politics. For this purpose, Chapter 5 implements a comparative element into the analysis, comparing the findings on ANO with other cases of new anti-establishment parties in different European countries. ANO´s electoral success fits into the broader phenomenon of successful anti-establishment parties, such as Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain, or Five Star movement in Italy. They share several similarities like newness, rapid electoral success, anti-establishment appeals, political outsiderness or a 'purifier image' (Hanley 2012; Hanley and Sikk 2014).

1.4. Role of Party Organization in Electoral success

Party organization is said to matter for parties´ electoral success for many reasons. There is a vast body of literature that focuses on the relationship between different aspects of party organization and electoral success. The view on the importance of party organization in the electoral success of parties in the political science theory changes from crucial to irrelevant. Its role depends on the context of studies and the time when they were published. Several scholars mix up the previously distinguished terms of strength of party organization with its extensiveness and relate both to the electoral success. Tavits (2013) defines party organizational strength as a combination of organizational extensiveness (measured in the size of party membership and local organizational presence), activism, and professionalization of the central organization. Tavits (2013, 7) argues that "parties with strong organizations are more likely to be electorally successful and survive as significant players because such parties

can attract and mobilize voters more effectively than parties with weak organizations". Janda (1980) emphasises that a party with a strong organization is one, that is centrally directed, has stable leadership, stable interaction patterns within the party and permanent structures, which allows it to contact extensively with voters and positively affects its electoral performance.

According to Tavits (2013) and Janda (1980), the state they define as the strong party organization provides voters with the necessary information shaping their biases in the party's favour for two closely related reasons. Firstly, as a result of extensive local presence, membership size, and professional staff, organizationally strong parties have more immediate, organized and frequent contact with members of their electorate that helps their public image amongst them. Secondly, parties' extensively built permanent structures and personnel allow them to cope more successfully with environmental challenges, protecting them from falling apart and enabling them to credibly operate as stable entities (Tavits 2013; Janda 1980). Strong party organization is perceived as an essential element in delivering party legitimacy and party stability. Bolleyer (2013) adds party organization also matters for party cohesion, which affects legitimacy and stability. The primary sources of vulnerability that may lead to disintegration (and subsequent discrediting) of new parties lie in their elites' neglect of building party organization as well as the frequent exit of founding personnel that both negatively affect party cohesion (Bolleyer 2013). In theory, party organization provides parties with the ability to present themselves better publicly and to communicate with the electorate more effectively. Simultaneously, it enables parties to function in a stable, cohesive way, helping them to be more immune to internal conflicts. The effects of party organizational strength on electoral success via party stability and legitimacy are, according to Tavits (2013), more advantageous in newly democratized regimes. In such a context, voters lack experience with democratic elections, lack significant positive party identification and "may even be hostile toward parties" (Tavits 2013, 8). Direct, more effective vote mobilization efforts, made possible by strong organizations, are more advantageous for parties when voter availability combines with the weakness of ideological, interest-based and cleavage-based voting, especially in post-communist electoral context (Tavits 2013). The theoretical discussion will refer to the relationships between party stability, cohesion, legitimacy and electoral success in more detail later in this chapter.

As mentioned earlier, two conceptually different terms – party organizational strength and party organizational extensiveness were differentiated at the beginning of this introductory

chapter. Although these two terms are closely associated, strong party organizations and extensive party organizations are not synonyms. Strong party organization may (depending on the context and the theory that deals with the concept) refer to a party organization that helps the party to pose as stable, cohesive and legitimate entity. It may also refer to the professionalisation of central party office or centralisation of party organization. Extensive party organization, on the other hand, is merely referring to the size of party organizational structure (most typically the size of party membership or the density of territorially based branches). Several scholars, especially those writing about the party formation in the context of post-communist democracies (Kopecký 1995; Lewis 1996; Mair 1997; Olson 1998; Perkins 1996; Szczerbiak 1999; Toole 2007; Van Biezen 2003; Römmele 2003) claim that building extensive party organization does not matter for parties' electoral success. These authors claim that parties´ formation in the post-communist context is driven by elite behaviour which is reflected in anti-party sentiments that are high; and loyalties among voters and elites that are low. As a result, having a visible charismatic leader, an expensive media electoral campaign, populist ideology and access to patronage are seen as a recipe for success in politics instead of extensively-built party organization. A number of those authors shares the described scepticism regarding the value of party organizational extensiveness in helping new parties to attain electoral success in the post-communist context. For instance, Kopecký (1995), Mair (1997) and Perkins (1996) agree that extensive party organizations are not necessary for new parties´ electoral success, because party linkages with society are weak, membership and local branches as of little importance, and territorial presence as limited. Because campaigns are personality-centred rather than ideological and are media-based, Kopecký (1995) predicted that elitist, personality-centred, slim party organizations would prevail in future. Although not extensively-built, such parties may still prove to be organisationally strong and electorally successful. The findings of this dissertation will contribute to this discussion concerning the two competing theoretical views on the relationship between the party organization extensiveness and electoral success.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the party organization is analysed as a combination of the following party organizational features: local party organization, party membership and party elite. All these aspects of party organization have a long-standing tradition in the scholarly research of political party organization. Study of local party structures and party members are often analysed in the party politics literature. With party elite on the other hand,

I have a hunch that this aspect of party organization could be important in case of ANO considering the business background of its party leader and the presentment of the party as a party of managers. There will be more discussion related to this distinction in the following chapters. These will include the empirical analysis focusing on the local organizational presence and local organizational autonomy, the size of party membership and restrictions on party membership, and career backgrounds and professional links of the party elite. Rather than attempting to look at the electoral success by associating it with the party organization together (as a combination of the three considered organizational features), this research aims to find evidence to demonstrate which of these individual aspects of party organization matter for parties electorally. Three different chapters explore these three individual party organizational features independently to investigate whether they matter for electoral success and how.

As outlined previously, to demonstrate which party organizational features matter for the electoral success, three intermediary concepts of party legitimacy, party stability and party cohesion are employed. These concepts underpin every theoretical discussion in this dissertation. It is foreseen that it is through them that different party organizational aspects matter for electoral success. These three concepts are included in this research because the majority of the reviewed literature dedicated to the individual party organizational features pointed out that these factors indirectly make a difference for the electoral outcomes of parties. The review of existing theory suggests that it is via these three aspects that the individual party organizational features can influence the electoral success of parties. The theoretical discussion concerning the role of these concepts in the electoral success of parties will be cover later throughout the dissertation.

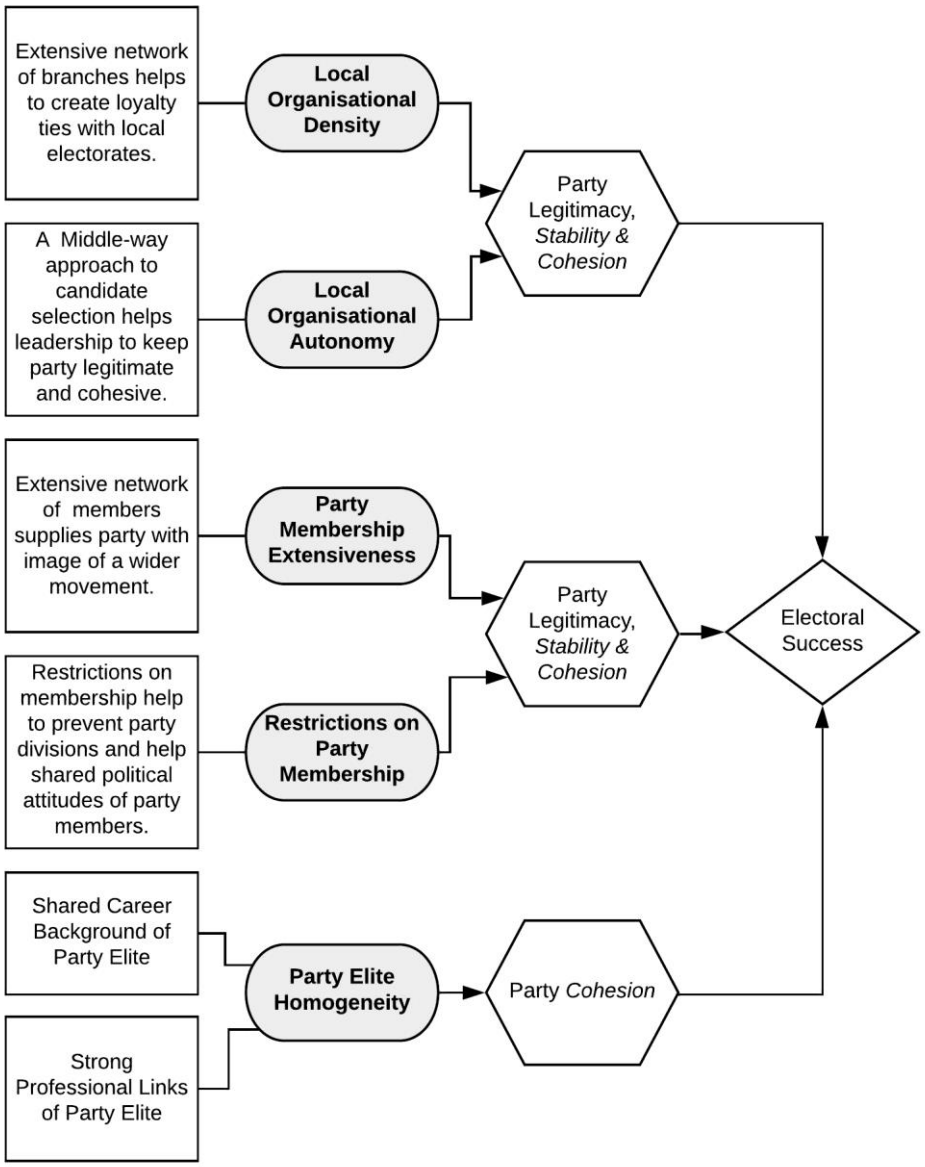
Because these concepts do not exist in a vacuum, they also matter to each other. Figure 1.2 illustrates the theoretical arguments related to the individual, organizational features and the relevance of intermediary concepts. This section focuses on the discussion concerning the relationships between the party organizational features and the three intermediary concepts, which result from the review of existing party organization theory. The literature itself, from which these theoretical arguments are drawn, is presented later in each chapter (in the theoretical framework sections of the actual relevant chapters). Before discussing the relationship between the organizational features and the electoral success of parties, the focus is on the concepts of party stability, party cohesion and party legitimacy. These concepts do not only underpin my understanding of the role party organizational features (i.e. local party

organizational structure, membership base and elite circle) in the electoral success but are also mutually connected to each other. The relationships between party legitimacy, party stability and party cohesion are discussed first.

Fort the purposes of this dissertation, *party stability* refers to a state, in which the party organizational structure is immune to divisions. Party stability is vital for electoral success for two reasons. It helps parties to prevent conflicts and scandals that could endanger its survival. As such, it allows parties to create and preserve a positive image as legitimate, stable entities in the eyes of potential voters (i.e. it supports party legitimacy). If the party does not fight, it is more likely to enjoy more support among the voters than the party that is in a permanent state of the fighting because it preserves the image of the trustworthy legitimate institution. Party stability mirrors in the party´s immunity to factionalism. Factionalism refers to the existence of factions. Factions are groups of party members that are allied together and can be in opposition to the party leadership. In the political science literature, party factions are associated with the conflicts within the party that may, in its extreme, lead to party's splits or even its disintegration. A party that achieves stability in this sense would thus be a party with non-existent or non-threatening factions. Such factions could potentially endanger the party´s organizational survival, as it would lead to the disintegration of the party organization (Spirova 2007, 26). The existence of factions in itself does not necessarily mean that the party will dissolve, the party just becomes an arena for leadership and internal power struggles that might be motivated either by ideological disagreements, disputes over party strategy or personality conflicts (Spirova 2007, 26). Similarly, Bos and Van Der Brug (2010, 779) states that party stability is crucial for electoral success because parties are generally more likely to experience electoral success if the internal dissent is minimal, party cohesion fostered.

Party cohesion is defined as a state, in which the party achieves consent in major political questions across the party. Party cohesion refers to the existence of shared attitudinal consensus within party resulting in an internal party unity, which is a crucial aspect of party stability (and in turn party legitimacy). Shared political attitudes are essential in preventing future party divisions. As such, any party organization depends on cohesion as a safeguard to conflicts, which may in turn negatively influence the public image of the party (i.e. party legitimacy). If the party elite shares political views, it is less likely to fight. If the party does not fight, it is more likely to enjoy more support among the voters than the party that is in a permanent state of the fighting because it appears more trustworthy.

Figure 1.2 Party Organizational Features and Electoral Success



Party legitimacy, on the other hand, is not primarily crucial for parties internally, but it is crucial for the positive public image of parties (Ignazi 2014). Party legitimacy is associated closely both with the concepts of party cohesion and party stability. Party legitimacy, by definition, is a state, in which party achieves positive public image preferable by the potential electorate. Legitimate parties are those that publicly appear to as stable and cohesive entities, successfully presenting themselves as trustworthy and competent institutions. Such legitimacy, in turn, provides them with a positive public image that attracts voters. Bos and van der Brug (2010, 779) define legitimate parties as merely those that do not pose a danger to the political system. When citizens think a particular party may pose a threat to democracy, it is not legitimate, which reflects in its electoral performance. Seen this way, legitimate parties represent people, rather than elites, are not radical or revolutionary against the political system. Such parties accept the system but propose reforms (Bos and van der Brug 2010). Legitimate parties have an image of competent and not fractious institutions (Scherlis 2014). Party legitimacy links back to party stability, as parties in a state of constant internal conflict, can hardly preserve an electorally viable public image. Because conflicts are often motivated by a lack of shared political attitudes within the party, it also links back to party cohesion.

But how are these concepts of party stability, cohesion and legitimacy related to the party organizational features and electoral success? As Figure 1.2 illustrates, three aspects of party organization are expected to matter for electoral success. Local party organization is likely to matter for electoral success on two levels, via affecting party legitimacy, stability and cohesion. Firstly, in terms of local organizational density, parties with more local branches are expected to more likely present themselves as legitimate entities in the eyes of voters. Denser local presence should improve parties´ ability to propagate themselves and help them to communicate with voters at the local level more effectively. Coleman (1996) argued that having more local branches helps parties to effectively communicate during campaigns. Tavits (2013) added that being more organizationally present helps parties to tune into voters´ local issues, who can in turn approach the party with their problems and ideas (Shin 2001). As a result, voters more likely attach long-term loyalty to such parties that are present and manifest more interest in their daily problems (Foster 1982). Several scholars also see value of having more local branches in the increased opportunities to organize various events for public (Frendreis, Gibson and Vertz 1990; Schlesinger 1966; 1991). As result of the above, local organizational density should enhance their public image as legitimate entities. Consequently,

such parties are more likely to be rewarded electorally. Secondly, controlling the autonomy of local branches in selecting candidates is a delicate matter. On the one hand, parties that provide local branches with the autonomy to select candidates locally benefit from their capacity of connecting with voters locally. Greater autonomy for local branches to select candidates facilitates party legitimacy. Locally selected candidates are known to their potential electorate and can better tune to its needs (Gherghina 2012; Ellinas and Lamprianou 2016). As such, voters find it easier to identify with them (Hennl 2014; Szczerbiak 1999; (Pennings and Hazan 2001). On the other hand, maintaining control over their autonomy helps the leadership to facilitate cohesion and stability. Providing local branches with autonomy represents a risk for party stability. When parties control autonomy of local branches, they can diffuse local scandals more efficiently, which helps parties to tackle the negative publicity (Katz 2014; Hanham 1956). Electorally successful parties should find an ideal balance between the two approaches to achieves the following. Local branches with limited autonomy are less likely to form an opposition against the national party leadership, and by selecting the locally embedded candidates at the constituency level, the party leadership can better connect with the local electorate. Therefore, by having some control over choosing local candidates, the national party leadership can still decide who will form the party elite after the election, but without breaking the connection with local voters. Such influence over the composition of party elite may support party cohesion as well as party legitimacy. Parties with a moderate approach towards the autonomy of local branches will more likely preserve the image of stable and cohesive entities that care about the local electorate, which will be likely rewarded electorally.

Party membership is expected to matter electorally on two levels too, influencing party legitimacy, stability and cohesion. On the one hand, an extensive network of members should support party legitimacy by helping to create the image of the party as a rooted wider movement of people, and supporting the party with volunteer labour helping it to communicate with the potential voters; mobilising votes more effectively. Having more members proofs to the potential electorate that the party has significant roots in society (Scherlis 2014). More members spread party message through their own contacts and social circles (Weldon 2006; Levitsky 2003; Scarrow 1996; Scarrow and Gezgor 2010; Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994; Hooghe and Dassoneville 2014). The personal links of many members in communities are irreplaceable by modern campaign techniques (Scarrow 1996; Whiteley and Seyd 1992; Whiteley 2011). More members mean more volunteer labour during campaign (Rohlfing 2015;

Scarrow 2015; Scarrow 1996; Whiteley 2009; Whiteley and Seyd 2002; Kolln 2014). On the other hand, implementing restrictions on party membership should help the party leadership in controlling the stability and cohesion, because preventing internal conflicts and party divisions (and keeping shared political attitudes) is more manageable in tighter organizations. In theory, having more members may also be a disadvantage in regards to party cohesion and stability. More members can reflect in greater potential for internal conflicts (Panebianco 1988; Sandri and Amjahad 2015). It is more difficult to attain shared political attitudes in larger parties (Bolleyer 2009; Volden and Bergman 2006). The party stability and cohesion resulting from this organizational strategy should prove advantageous electorally by preventing party conflicts and divisions, which is likely to resonate with voters positively.

The composition of the party elite circle is expected to matter for electoral success by positively affecting party cohesion. The homogeneity in the elite´s backgrounds is expected to facilitate party cohesion that helps the party to present itself publicly as a unified entity, which is welcomed by potential voters. The common career backgrounds and shared processional links of party elite should matter electorally via affecting party cohesion. When the party elite has shared career pasts and knows each other from the same professional setting outside of the party, they are more likely to hold common political attitudes. This resulting cohesion is important electorally because such a party is more likely immune to internal conflicts and negative publicity they entail. According to the existing theory, party elite share common backgrounds and professional links form social circles (Edinger and Searing 1967). Such party elite, having similar occupational socialization experiences will likely hold similar views (Mills 1956; Lodge 1969). This positively influences shared political attitudes and ideological orientations within the party (Moore 1979; Janowitz et al. 1956; Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008; Wellhofer 1974). Parties, whose elite hold similar political attitudes are less like to fall into internal conflicts. Especially at the times of scandals facing the party (or other pressures related to holding public office), the party cohesion gets tested the most. When the party is cohesive such scandals and pressures are less likely to trigger party divisions. Party with the homogenous elite is likely more cohesive and thus better equipped to withstand scandals as a united entity, which sends a positive message to the potential electorate. As such, it should positively resonate with voters, who are more likely to support the party in elections.

One chapter is devoted to the empirical analysis of each of the above party organizational features. Therefore, each chapter is de facto devised as an independent research

project with its own theoretical framework, expectations section and conclusions. Such research design allows me to demonstrate which party organizational feature matter for the electoral success of parties individually, and which do not. To generalize the findings, Chapter 5 introduces a comparative element into the analysis. Empirical evidence concerning the same three party organizational features of four different parties are discussed in a comparative perspective. This research depends on various types of data like electoral statistics, interviews conducted with ANO´s party elite, party statutes (and other internal party documents), party membership statistics, elite´s background profiles and others. This approach helps to identify which party organizational features help to facilitate the electoral success of new anti-establishment parties. A more detailed explanation of the data is provided in the actual chapters.

1.5. Plan of the Book

This dissertation is devised as a single case study whose validity is proved by a limited comparative analysis. After this introductory chapter, the dissertation continues with three empirical chapters that are all designed as independent studies, each analysing the impact of one specific party organizational feature on the electoral success of ANO. As a result of this design, each of the empirical chapters has its introduction and its own theoretical framework section. As such, each chapter presents its own review of the existing political science literature and forms its own theoretical argument to formulate expectations. Each chapter also includes its own methodology section discussing the selected research method and types of data used in the empirical analysis. The main empirical section in each chapter contains the actual analysis of the findings and the discussion of their implications. Finally, every chapter has its conclusions part, summarizing the findings and discuss them in the light of the reviewed literature and set expectations.

Chapter 2 deals with the local party organization. Two aspects of local party organization are analysed – local organizational density and local organizational autonomy. Local organizational density comprises of the analysis of the number of local branches by region and the electoral performance by region. Local organizational autonomy is measured in the local branches´ rights concerning the process of candidate selection. Chapter 3 analyses ANO´s approach towards party membership. In particular, the impact of the number of party members and restrictions on party membership on the electoral success are subject of the analysis. Chapter 4 deals with the party elite; it focuses on two aspects of elites´ background –

their career pasts and potential professional links between them. This chapter examines if the background of ANO´s party elite has any impact on party cohesion and in turn on the electoral success.

Following the three empirical chapters, space is devoted to the comparative analysis. In Chapter 5, the findings and observations on ANO are discussed in the light of findings on three other anti-establishment parties, TS, OĽaNO and FI. The identical aspects of party organization (local party organization, party membership and party elite) are used as means of comparison between the cases. This chapter is followed by Chapter 6, the conclusions chapter, where the findings and observations are summarized. This concluding chapter also discusses the significance of ANO for Czech politics. After returning to the theoretical arguments made in the literature and to intermediary concepts of party stability, cohesion and legitimacy, the findings are presented together. The conclusion also focuses on the theoretical discussion, commenting on how the relationship between party organization and electoral fills in the existing theory.

CHAPTER 2 Local party organization

2.1. Introduction

This chapter investigates what goes on at the local level of ANO´s party organization to understand whether this party organizational feature helps the party electorally. First, the literature is reviewed, and the main general theoretical concepts in the area are discussed. Then, the chapter continues with the debate about methodology and finally, with the analysis of the empirical evidence. The previous introducing Chapter 1 revealed that this dissertation investigates the role of three aspects of party organization in the electoral success of ANO. This chapter explores what the role of one of these aspects - the local branches is. There are various aspects of the local party organization. However, for the purposes of this research, a local party organization is defined as a combination of two factors – *local organizational density* and *local organizational autonomy* (refer to Figure 2.1 for their conceptualisation). Density refers to the extensiveness of the party´s presence, that is the size of the local party organization. This variable is operationalized by mapping the number of local branches by region, to conduct a comparable regional analysis. Local organizational autonomy refers to the rights of local branches to make decisions at their constituency level. The more autonomous the local organization, the more decisions it can make itself. Autonomy is operationalised by looking at the local branches´ rights concerning the process of candidate selection. Both of these aspects of local party organization are treated theoretically and empirically in separate sub-sections.

Scholars´ views on the role of local party organization (in particular its density) in facilitating the electoral success are divided across the discipline, despite the continuous debate in the political science literature. Several authors, such as Katz (2002) or Szczerbiak (1999), perceive the role of densely-built local party organization in facilitating better electoral outcomes as insignificant. This view is in contrast with Frendreis, Gibson and Vertz (1990), Pimlott (1973), Hopkin and Paolucci (1999), Norris and Lovenduski (1995), Coleman (1996) or Tavits (2013). These authors believe that densely-built local party organizational structure matters for the electoral success of parties because it provides parties with the capacity to mobilise voters in the long-term better. The first group of scholars, such as Szczerbiak (1999), studying parties in post-communist countries, noted that the impact of local organizations´ density on the electoral success of parties is minimal. Because of that, a low priority is said to

be assigned by parties to building local structures, and a centralized pattern of decision-making and a high level of autonomy over local decisions is given to the national party leadership as a result. On the contrary, for the latter authors, the densely-built local party organization is seen as electorally beneficial, due to its ability to forge connections with the local electorate. The density of the local organizational network is seen as being associated with parties´ capacity to create more meaningful ties locally via conducting active local campaigns and events, which is likely to reflect positively in their long-term electoral success (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999; Coleman 1996; Tavits 2013; Scarrow 2007). According to these authors, parties invest in their local organizational presence to create such closer connections with the potential electorate at the local level. This chapter explores which of these theoretical views on the local branches´ role in the electoral success is more relevant for ANO. The next section discusses both of the above-mentioned theoretical views in more detail.

2.2. The Role of Local Party Organization in the Electoral Success

Refer to Figure 2.1, which illustrates the theoretical relationships between density and autonomy of local branches and electoral success. This section starts with the two mentioned theoretical views concerning the electoral role of local organizational density. The first view sees densely-built local presence as insignificant in the process of achieving electoral success, which is said to explain the low motivation of new parties to invest in its cultivation. According to Szczerbiak (1999), it leads to a situation, where new parties in the post-communist region are more likely to develop along the lines of the catch-all party (Kirchheimer 1966), the electoral-professional party (Panebianco 1988; Mair and van Biezen 2001) or the cartel party (Katz and Mair 1992; 1994; 1995). Such party organizational models do not, in theory, emphasise the importance of densely-built local organizational structure. In these types of parties, the dense local party organization is not perceived necessarily as an electoral resource, nor are such parties investing in its cultivation. Such a strategy is even regarded as an organizational burden by these parties because local organizational network built that way is not easily controllable by parties. The mass parties with large locally spread party organization have been gradually replaced by the types of parties mentioned above, that are intentionally built only to fulfil one function - to succeed in elections. It transforms them into so-called ‘public utilities’ (Van Biezen 2003). Such parties have no roots in society and only focus on campaigning or holding of public office.

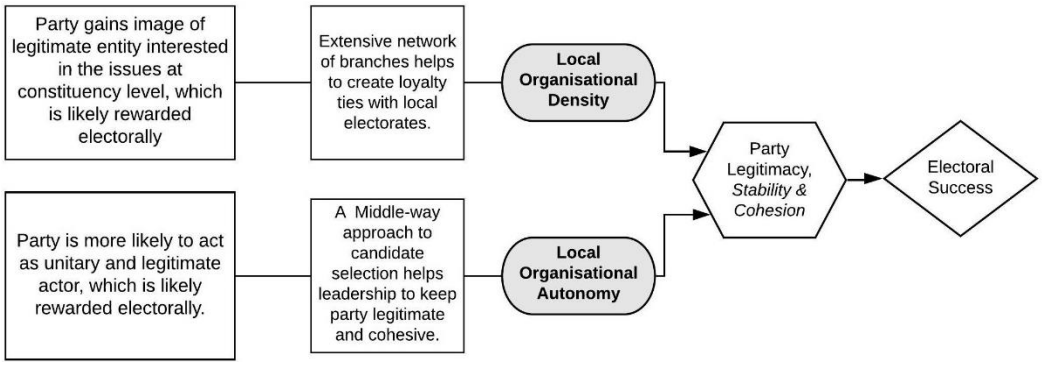
The importance of local party organization for parties is also said to diminish over time. It is the case due to "anti-party trends, such as declining partisanship of the electorate, popularization of candidate selection, the appearance of amateurism among party activists, and the separation of candidate campaigns from local organizations" (Gibson, Cotter and Bibby 1983, 217). These authors perceived that the modern approach to campaigning, especially the growing use of mass media and internet technologies have taken over the functions previously fulfilled by the network of local branches. These included responsibilities like the provision of information to potential voters and setting up communication channels locally between the party and the electorate, which could forge voter loyalty (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002). The changes mentioned above, both internal and external, are seen to alternate the role that local branches may serve in helping to facilitate electoral success. The above authors downplay the role that densely-built local branches may play in achieving electoral success. The question is if parties themselves also downplay their role and do not build them. Investigating the development of local party organizational presence of ANO since the establishment of the party will help to answer this question.

Although the above theory suggests that parties do not necessarily need densely-built local party organization, there are also many scholars, who argue the opposite. These authors empirically support the view that parties care about local branches´ cultivation (Spirova 2007) and local branches matter electorally (Gherghina 2012). Local branches are said to still matter in the contemporary online-dominated world, because they remain relevant in democratic politics as a space connecting localities with political processes (Sadioglu and Dede 2016; Loughlin, Hendriks and Lidström 2012; Baldersheim 2018; Kostelecký 2002; Ram 2003). This line of thought sees the density of local party organizational structure as an electorally beneficial asset for parties because it should provide the resources locally to connect with voters more effectively during elections. Local branches are said to function as effective communicators of the party's central organization's campaign message (Coleman 1996). The local organizational density should also increase the local visibility of the party, sending a message to the local electorate, that the party exists in their area and cares about them and their local issues (Tavits 2013). In this way, as explained in greater detail in the introductory Chapter 1, the density of local party organization is said to boost party legitimacy. A densely-built network of local branches should allow local voters to approach the party with their problems and ideas (Shin 2001), and help parties to get involved in local politics. As such, it allows them

to test out new campaign tactics, work with coalition partners and train new candidates for national elections without risking more costly failures from incompetence and coalition debacles in high-stake national politics (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Tavits 2013). Being more densely organizationally present at the local level enhances the party´s visibility and legitimacy. As a reward, voters are said to attach long-term loyalty to those parties that show more consideration of their daily problems at the local level. Local organizational density, in theory, relates to the electoral success, because the strong and consistent ties with voters at local level allow parties to rely on stable shares of votes irrespective of changes at the national level. The locally densely-spread parties with numerous branches should take advantage of having their personal connections with local knowledge and contacts in the area, using them to mobilise voters more effectively than parties lacking such a local network. Parties with densely-built local presence should electorally benefit from local branches organizing independent electorally-relevant activities, and party-themed events, such as locally-based rallies or party meetings for the public (Frendreis, Gibson and Vertz 1990; Schlesinger 1966; 1991). The mere density of local organization mirrors in the increased opportunities for such locally-based activities (Foster 1982).

As the above-reviewed literature yields, there are two theoretical views on the role of local branches´ density in facilitating electoral gains. However, there are authors sceptical about the electoral relevance of densely-built local party organizational structure, the research community by large continues to conduct empirical studies focusing on the relationship between these classic indicators, which is the case of this research as well. It is expected that the local organizational density should support the electoral performance of the party by increasing visibility, enhancing its communicational capabilities, and should help to forge ties with the local electorate. Being more connected with the local voters is crucial for the image of the party as a legitimate entity. As mentioned in the introducing Chapter 1, party´s ability to present itself as a legitimate entity has, in turn, positive impact on electoral outcomes, because voters are more likely to support a party that is visible and known to them, and communicates to them locally.

Figure 2.1 Local Party Organization and Electoral Success



The second aspect of local party organization discussed theoretically in this section is local organizational autonomy. The distribution of power within parties is not a permanent state; it changes over time. It depends on changes in the party statutes, personal relations between party elites, electoral outcomes of the party, and other factors. The balance of power and autonomy of different organizational levels within the party may continuously shift over time between the national party and locally-based organizations (Hanham 1956). Local organizational autonomy may be demonstrated on many factors. Local branches may struggle to exercise control over various aspects of the party´s operation. These may include the decisions related to the recruitment of new members, selecting candidates before elections, campaign strategies, party program, coalition agreements, party financing, or personnel and leadership choices. The empirical analysis in this chapter will focus solely on the process of candidate selection because it is most closely relatable to the electoral performance of parties. The freedom to select candidates is one of the most contested and most publicly visible aspects, in which local branches may have the autonomy to make their own decisions (Szczerbiak 1999). It sends a message to voters that their problems are addressed by local candidates recruited among them in their local area, with whom they may identify (Hennl 2014). Apart from selecting candidates, voters do not necessarily need to have any interest in the degree of local branches´ autonomy. Such internal party affairs may be visible to party activists, but far less to the voters. When referring to local branches´ autonomy, the process of candidate selection is chiefly meant. Like in the case of local organizational density, the theoretical views on the role of local branches´ autonomy in facilitating electoral success also differ. The role of local organizational autonomy in the electoral outcomes of parties can be viewed as double-edged. There is a thin line when

it comes to providing or limiting the autonomy of local branches by parties, that is between de-centralisation or centralisation of decision-making within the party. There are two major views on these two processes. The former may negatively affect the capabilities of local branches to connect with local voters, while the latter may negatively impact the cohesion within the party and thus endangers its organizational stability. As a result, parties should ideally strive for a balance between the two, as explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Regarding the first view, some scholars associate greater autonomy in the hands of local branches with the electoral success of parties positively (Gherghina 2012; Ellinas and Lamprianou 2016). The locally managed candidate selection should help parties electorally because the local electorate is more likely to be familiar with candidates nominated at the constituency level. Local candidates are also expected to know the issues facing the local voters more personally and have a similar experience as their potential voters. Only autonomous local branches can mirror citizens' day-to-day issues into policy issues because their locally selected candidates know them. As such, the autonomy of local organizations should help parties to reach relevant decisions locally, which should provide the basis for a strong connection with the local electorate. Directly associated with this, the electoral importance of autonomous local organizations is based on these parties' actual local activities both the range and scope of activities the party undertakes at the local level and their ability to do so autonomously (Ellinas and Lamprianou 2016). The more freedom the local and regional branches have, the more activities they can get involved in, and the more likely they should succeed in mobilizing voters via their contacts and networks. Locally-known figures with their networks, having a free hand over managing their activities, should be better equipped to get the sympathy of the locals. Any step towards centralizing decision-making processes could diminish the work of locally-based organizations; it can potentially harm parties electorally by leading to dealignment of citizens from such parties as a result (Ellinas and Lamprianou 2016). To live up to their full potential local branches need political power in the form of autonomy. Availability of autonomy helps them to create a linkage with the current and potential electorate (Gherghina 2012). Freedom to make decisions locally allows branches to establish and maintain tighter relations with voters. Any strategy made by parties to bring the candidate selection closer to the voters should be rewarded in elections. Locally-known individuals are expected to show that they care about their voters' issues more authentically, and thus more likely to form connections striving their re-election (Pennings and Hazan 2001). Parties granting rights to the local branches to select

candidates locally are said to send message to voters that they care about their concerns as local candidates are more familiar with the specific local issues (Gherghina 2012).

However, keeping autonomous local branches is not only associated with the operation of parties in a positive way but as it often stands, no benefit comes without costs. Katz (2014) and (Hanham 1956) emphasise that the maintenance of autonomous local branches may represent a risk for party stability. Local organizational autonomy can trigger internal conflicts. Such conflicts can potentially lead to party divisions and medialised scandals which could prevent parties from being able to achieve electoral success by losing legitimacy. The logic here is the following – too much autonomy of local branches can lead to factionalism within the party and the associated risk of losing control over the territorial structure (Hanham 1956). Having some form of influence over the candidate selection by the national party office may represent one of the tools of achieving control over local branches´ autonomy. It should, in theory, help the national leadership to keep local branches in check. When local elites rely on their positions on the national party office´ decisions, they can be expected to be more loyal to them and not form internal opposition. Only stable cohesive, tightly organized and highly disciplined parties are likely to electorally succeed in the long run, because they can effectively manage internal conflicts and scandals (Katz 2014). Such parties can act as unitary actors in elections and coalition negotiations, and send homogenous messages to voters to persuade them to acknowledge the party's capacity to represent their interests. Parties that have mechanisms in place to control the autonomy of local branches should be more successful in dealing with the internal opposition and issues at the local level that can endanger their public image. Having influence over candidate selection should equip parties with the capacity to handle internal opposition (as well as the scandals at the local level) more efficiently, which helps parties to tackle the negative publicity. It is thus expected that electorally successful parties find an ideal in the form of a middle way when it comes to the autonomy of the local branches. The compromise between centralization and decentralization of decision-making is meant. An electorally successful party should find a balance between these two strategies. Doing so, parties should benefit from having local branches capable of connecting with voters locally, whilst maintaining control over the cohesion and stability of the party. Such balance can be achieved by selecting candidates locally but preserving control over their selection by other means, for instance, by having a veto right at the national level. Following such strategy, ANO

would respect the choices made locally, but keep overriding powers at its disposal when concerns would arise or when facing organizational crises.

2.3. Methodological Approach

The above theoretical overview yields that parties with more densely-built local presence should be better equipped to communicate and connect with voters at the local level, which is likely to enhance their public image as legitimate entities. Secondly, finding a balance in regards to the autonomy of local branches in selecting candidates should boost party´ ability to connect with local electorate without risking party stability by preventing branches from forming an opposition against the party leadership. Party organized in such way should be visible locally and capable of efficiently managing local conflicts and scandals, and as such should be rewarded electorally.

How is the relevance of these theoretical arguments tested? In regards to the local organizational density, a cross-regional comparison is conducted, correlating the electoral outcomes of ANO by region with the local party organizational data available for the same period (number of local branches per region). Density is measured at the organizational level of local branches, which is the smallest organizational unit type that party registers. The reason behind this choice is pragmatic. It proved pointless to empirically analyse the number of area organizations or regional organizations. ANO is fully organizationally represented at these two levels of the organization, with a party structure fully covering seventy-six former districts and fourteen regions on the Czech Republic. Attaining party organizational representation at the area (district) and regional levels is thus not a challenge for ANO (nor it is challenging for the vast majority of parties in the country for that matter). It makes far more sense to study the number of local organizations, where the party´s representation is not complete and is highly unequally spread across the country. This comparative method demonstrates whether there is any relationship between the local organizational density and electoral performance. The empirical analysis is set up in three layers. First, the relationship is empirically captured per region, then per number of municipalities in the region, and finally, per number of eligible voters in the region. These are compared vis-a-vis the attained electoral performance of ANO per region. The investigation set up in this way brings more accuracy to the analysis because Czech regions differ significantly in terms of their population and territorial size. Refer to Appendix 20 that includes a map of regions of the Czech Republic with their names.

Concerning the local organizational autonomy, the process of candidate selection is analysed. The formal situation in the statutes is investigated first (ANO 2013; 2015; 2017), then the aggregate patterns in quantitative data of candidates´ backgrounds are explored. This approach allows demonstrating the national party´s influence over candidate selection. The analysis of backgrounds of candidates from two general elections enables to identify the proportion of locally selected candidates and candidates´ renomination. The list of candidates differentiates between two kinds of candidates - either people are candidates in their constituency where they live (registered as permanent residents), or they are candidates parachuted from other parts of the country to fill in the candidate list. It should demonstrate how the national party office can potentially meddle into selecting of candidates before elections, identifying the degree of autonomy of local branches. What kind of data is used? Electoral statistics, as well as the data mapping number of local branches by region, are collected, together with basic demographic data of registered eligible voters. In regards to local organizational autonomy, party statutes and candidates´ backgrounds are used. Party statutes allow presenting the formal rights and obligations that local party branches officially have. Full candidates´ lists from two elections with their backgrounds, in particular, home addresses are analysed to demonstrate the level of renomination. Interviews with ANO´s politicians are used to support the findings of both analyses. Interviews were conducted with ANO´s party elite in September 2016 and in June 2017. The actual identity of interviewees was anonymised. The interviews were conducted with party representatives that included party leader, the first deputy party leader, several ministers appointed by the party, regional party leaders and local party leaders. Such a varied sample covers members of the party elite with different experience and perspectives. The analysis of quantitative data (local organizational data, electoral statistics, party statutes and candidate backgrounds) will test the existence of general patterns that will demonstrate relationships between density/autonomy and electoral performance. The stories shared during the interviews will be included to set the findings into the context and help to formulate the argument.

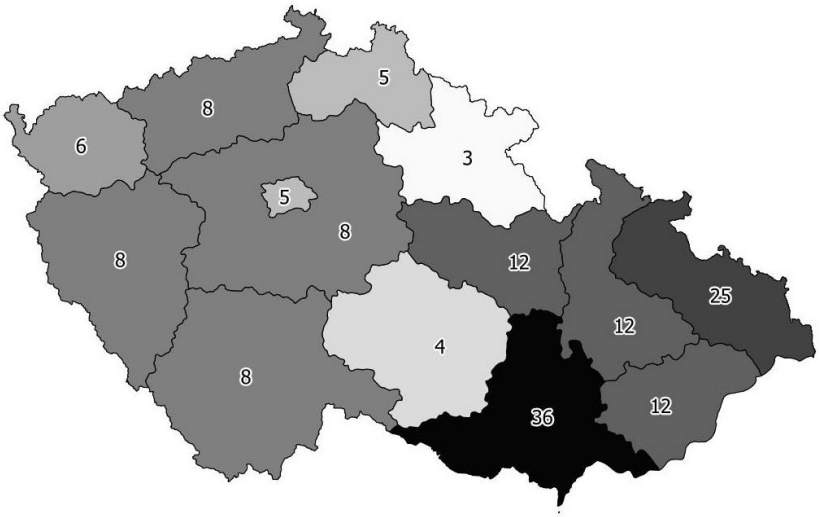
2.4. Empirical Analysis

2.4.1. Local Organizational Density

In regards to the local organizational density, it is noteworthy that in the Czech context, cultivating densely-built local party structures was never seen as a priority by the majority of

political parties. It has been the case for most parties except for KDU-ČSL and KSČM, which come closest to the definition of the mass party (Hanley 2004; 2008; 2012; Kopecký 1995). Other scholars, who focused on the party organizational structure of Czech parties, claim that the reason for this lack of attention lies in the fact that Czech parties focused mainly on preparations for the upcoming elections or, when elected, on the responsibilities associated with holding public office (Van Biezen 2004; 2003). New parties have restricted building their organizations to parliament almost exclusively (in particular due to little time caused by their involvement in high politics) and failed to establish an extra-parliamentary organizational structure (Van Biezen 2004). Therefore, mapping the development and density of local organizational structure of the new electorally successful party is in itself of scholarly interest.

Figure 2.2 Local party organization network, March 2015

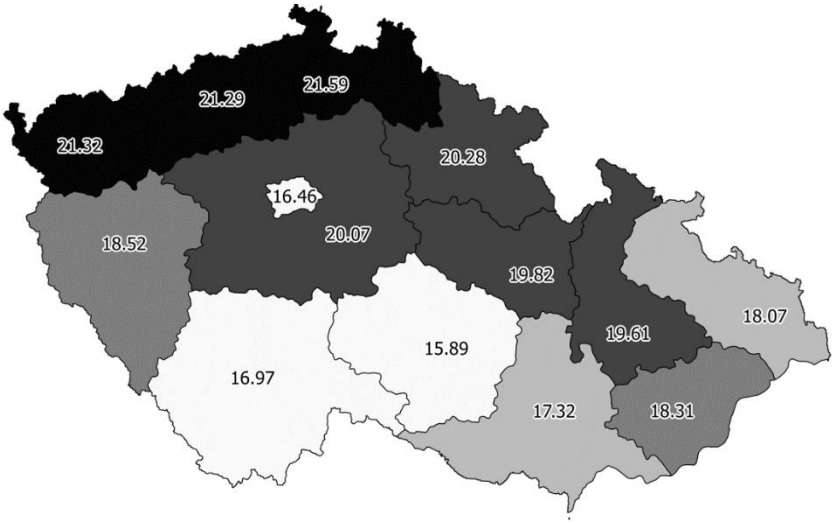


Source: ANO.

The four figures included in this section present data mapping the number of ANO´s local branches by region collected two years apart to show how it developed over time. This graphical presentation is just a basic overview of the data that are later expanded using more detailed analysis. Figure 2.2 shows the number of ANO´s local organizations in 2015 by region (the contrast of shading of colours refers to the number of local branches in the region). The data indicate that there is a high imbalance in terms of the number of local branches across regions. ANO´s local party organization is by far most densely-built in Jihomoravský region with thirty-six local branches, followed by Moravskoslezský region with its twenty-five local branches. On the other hand, in Královéhradecký and Vysočina regions, the party only

managed to established three and four local branches respectively. Altogether the data show a highly unequal local organizational distribution in different regions. The unequal distribution may be associated partially with the newness of the party or its inability to build its organization at a similar speed in every region. Later in this chapter, more focus is paid to the Jihomoravský region, where ANO is the most organizationally present. The view of the party leader from this region is shared later to shed light on the organizational strategies implemented by the party staff in this region, and to explain why is ANO so densely-built in this area. More attention will also be paid to the Královéhradecký region, where ANO has one of the lowest local organizational presence. Information gathered during the interview with a regional politician responsible for this region are also included. This interview focused on the reasons behind the lower local organizational density of ANO in this region and on the strategies of the regional party leadership aimed at increasing the number of branches there.

Figure 2.3 ANO´s Electoral results, 2013 General elections



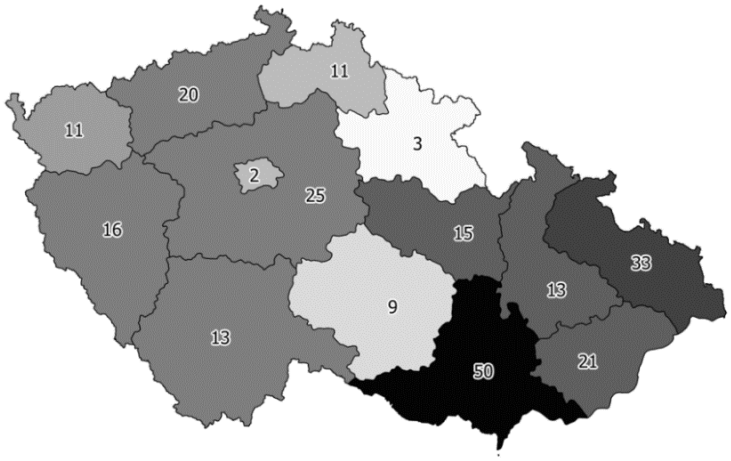
Source: ANO.

Figure 2.3 presents the electoral performance of ANO in 2013 general elections. The data indicate several insights. Notably, one can see that the electoral performance of ANO is more or less stable across the entire country, around nineteen per cent of votes. The lowest electoral result was acquired in the Vysočina region with just nearly sixteen per cent of votes. Interestingly, the regions of Karlovarský, Ústecký, Liberecký and Královéhradecký (all situated in North Bohemia), became ANO´s strongholds, even though ANO has the nearly lowest organizational presence in these regions. On the other hand, in Jihomoravský region,

where ANO has the highest local organizational density, it attained the fourth weakest electoral result. This ANO´s main region (when it comes to the density of its local party organization) should be this party´s stronghold, but it is one of its worst electorally performing regions. As such, it suggests that on the first sight, there is no significant linkage between local organizational density and electoral outcomes in case of ANO.

In Figure 2.4, data mapping number of ANO´s local organizations in 2017 is presented to show the progress of building local branches in time. The data illustrate that a similar trend in the regional density variation as in 2015 prevails. The highest density can be seen in Jihomoravský and Moravskoslezský regions. Královéhradecký region remains the region with the lowest number of local organizations. It is the only region with the same number of local organizations in the two-year comparison – three local branches. On the other hand, the other regions with weak organizational presence, such as the Vysočina region or Ústecký region more than doubled their number of local branches in the studied two-years period. Unlike it has been suggested in the existing theory (Van Biezen 2004; 2003; Hanley 2004; 2008), ANO invests resources and establishes more branches over time. Some of the scholars (Kirchheimer 1966; Panebianco 1988; Katz and Mair 1992; Mair and Van Biezen 2001) pointed out that nowadays parties are more likely to downplay the role of densely-built local party organization and do not care about its cultivation. However, ANO seems to care about its territorial organizational presence and invests into its development over time.

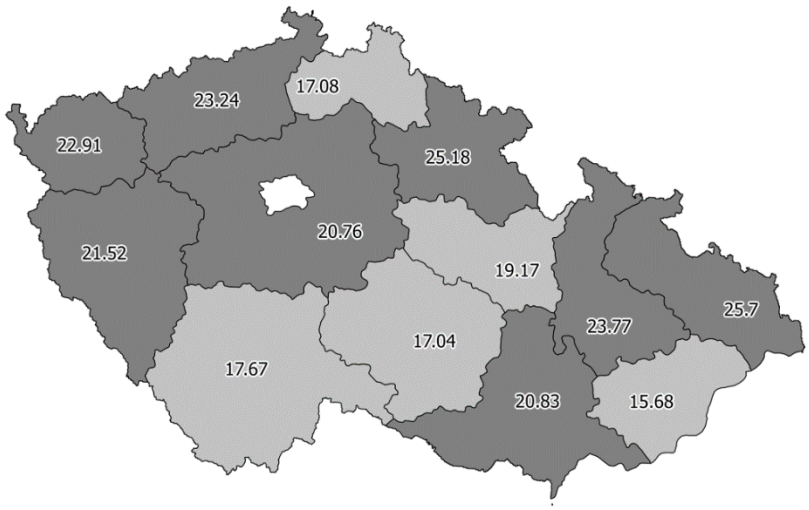
Figure 2.4 Local party organization network, March 2017



Source: ANO.

Figure 2.5 illustrates how the electoral performance of ANO varied across regions of the country in the 2016 regional elections. The electoral support of ANO is relatively stable across all the regions, around twenty per cent of votes. Only in five regions of the country – Vysočina, Pardubický, Liberecký, Jihočeský and Zlinský ANO performed below twenty per cent of votes, where (except for Liberecký and Vysočina regions) the party is strongly organizationally present. For instance, in Zlínský region - a traditional stronghold of Christian Democrats, where ANO has a relatively strong organizational presence it only attained over fifteen per cent of votes.

Figure 2.5 ANO´s Electoral results, 2016 Regional elections



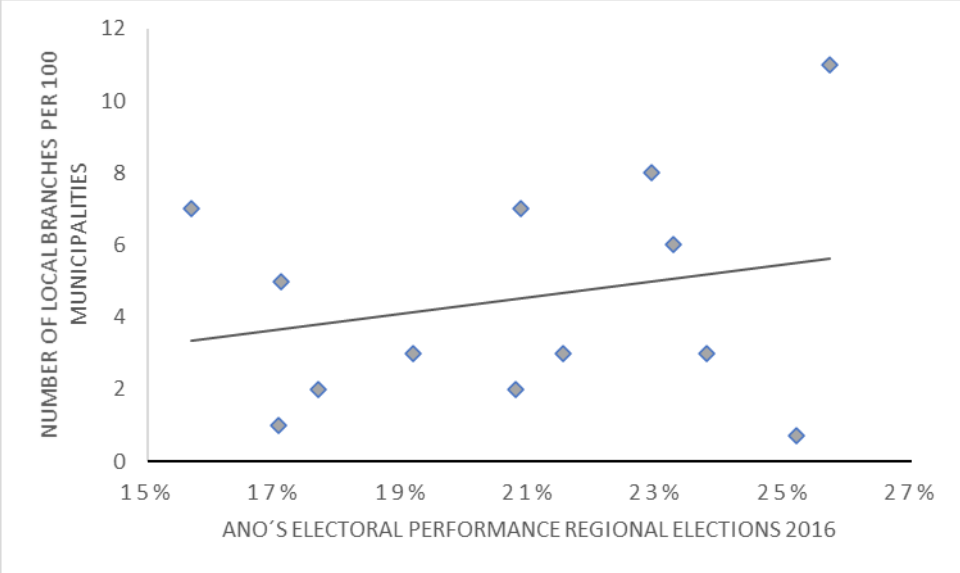
Source: ANO.

On the other hand, ANO was most electorally successful in Královéhradecký region (where it attained over twenty-five per cent of votes), although its organizational presence is the weakest in this region (only three local branches were established there). In the case of ANO, the density of local organizational structure, at least at its current stage of building the territorial organizational presence, does not seem to have a substantial impact on the electoral performance. The theory suggested that the more densely-built the local organizational structure, the more likely the party is to succeed electorally. The findings so far suggest otherwise – the local organizational density does not seem to facilitate better electoral outcomes for ANO. As the above figures with data mapping number of local branches demonstrate, there does not seem to be a strong link between the number of local branches per region and attained electoral performance.

2.4.2. Local Organizational Density by Municipalities

As mentioned previously in the methodological section of this chapter, another layer of empirical analysis concerning the local organizational density is incorporated here to provide more accuracy. Previous analysis per region has its limitations because the regions of the Czech Republic differ significantly in terms of their territorial and populational size. Other layers of analysis are integrated to illustrate the relationship between the local organizational density and the electoral performance more accurately. The analysis starts with exploring the relationship between the density and electoral outcomes of ANO at the level of municipalities. In Appendix 1, the following data are included: number of local branches per region, number of municipalities per region, local organizational density measured in the number local branches per 100 municipalities, and ANO´s electoral performance per region. Correlation is conducted between the two latter indicators. This approach allows me to determine whether a general pattern that would demonstrate the relationship between local organizational density (measured by the number of local branches per one hundred municipalities in different regions) and the electoral outcomes of ANO per region (in 2016 Regional Elections) exists. See Figure 2.6 that graphically illustrates how are the two above indicators related.

Figure 2.6 Local organizational density by municipalities



Source: ANO, refer to Appendix 1.

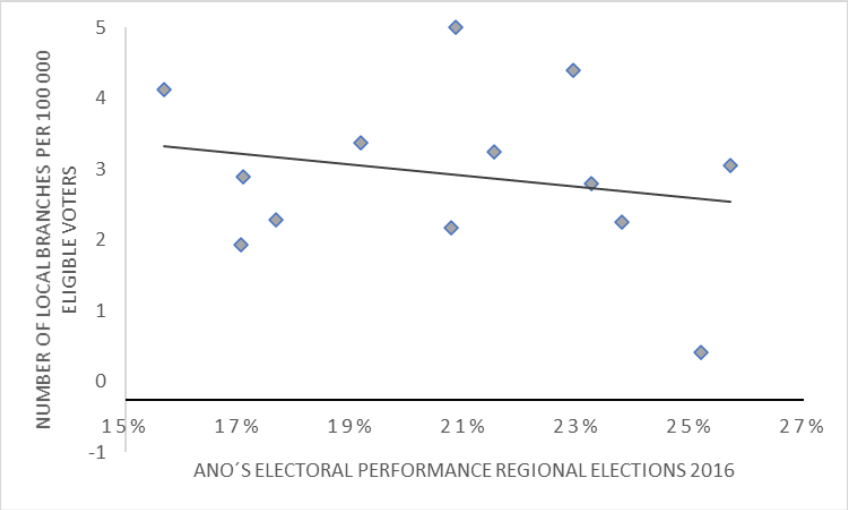
There is a weak positive correlation (the correlation coefficient 0.238) between the local organizational density per number of municipalities in different regions and electoral performance of ANO per region. This finding indicates that there is no statistically significant

linear relationship between these two variables. The local organizational density measured per number of municipalities in the region does not seem to have a substantial effect on the electoral outcomes of ANO. When referring to Appendix 1, the more detailed overview demonstrates that Královéhradecký region has the lowest organizational density (the lowest number of organizations per municipality) and Moravskoslezský region has the highest organizational density (highest number of organizations per municipality). However, although the Moravskoslezský region has more than ten times denser organization than Královéhradecký region, the electoral performance of the party is nearly identical in these regions. In both regions, ANO attained 25 per cent of the vote, and the difference is only in decimals.

2.4.3. Local Organizational Density per Number of Eligible Voters

In addition to investigating the relationship between the local organizational density and electoral performance of ANO per number of municipalities, another layer of analysis per number of voters is conducted to provide even more accuracy. Municipalities do differ in population size, geographical distances between municipalities also differ by region, which can affect the impact of territorial organizational coverage of parties. The following data are included in Appendix 2: ANO´s electoral performance per region, number of local party organizational branches by region, number of total registered voters by region, and the number of ANO´s local branches per 100 000 eligible voters. The 2016 Regional Elections have been selected pragmatically based on the availability of data on the number of local branches for the same year, making the outcome of analysis more precise. The chosen approach allows me to demonstrate how many potential voters per one local organization live in each region of the country, and whether more branches per voter translate into higher electoral outcomes. Figure 2.7 illustrates the relationship between ANO´s local organizational density (measured in the number of local branches per voter) and the electoral performance of ANO per region.

Figure 2.7 Local organizational density by number of voters



Source: ANO, refer to Appendix 2.

There is a weak negative correlation (the correlation coefficient -0.216) between the number of ANO´s local branches per 100 000 eligible voters in different regions and the electoral performance of ANO per region (in 2016 Regional Elections). This finding indicates that there is no statistically significant linear relationship between these two variables. The density measured per number of voters does not seem to have a strong effect on the electoral outcomes of ANO. A closer look into the data in Appendix 2 indicates that by far the lowest organizational density (the highest number of eligible voters per one local organization) is in the Královéhradecký region (nearly 150 000 voters for one local organization). On the other hand, the highest local organizational density (the lowest number of eligible voters per local organization) is in Jihomoravský region, where one local organization 'serves' only 19 000 potential voters. The theory proposed that higher local organizational density should translate into better electoral performance. The findings seem to suggest otherwise. ANO is more electorally successful in the regions where the party is not very well organizationally-implanted. Specifically, in Královéhradecký region (where ANO has the lowest density by far), it attained not only higher electoral outcome than in Jihomoravský region (with the most densely-built coverage), but the party also acquired the second highest electoral result from all regions in the country (over twenty-five per cent). This finding, combined with the previous findings, strengthens the perception that the local organizational density does not seem to have a very strong impact on the electoral outcomes of ANO.

Two interviews were conducted with regional party representatives from the two regions mentioned above (with most extreme local organizational presence) to probe this observation further. The party representative from the Jihomoravský region (with the most robust organizational presence) shared that high local organizational density is a result of a proactive approach and precise planning designed to establish more and more local branches. The increased build-up of local organizational presence in this region mirrors the aspiration of regional leaders to gain a stronger position for their region within the party at the national level (Interviewee 8). It has been shared that the average electoral performance in this region (despite party´s extensive regional presence there) is attributed to the strong position of the other parties, especially ČSSD and KDU-ČSL in the smaller towns and villages. In contrast, the representative from the Královéhradecký region (with the lowest organizational density) shared a different view. The role of organizational density was downplayed, not giving the mere quantity of local organizations too much emphasis; stating that in terms of sheer numbers of local branches, they prefer quality over quantity. The influence of organizational presence on the electoral outcomes was said to questionable because having local branches somewhere does not have to reflect in the volume, quality and impact of members´ and sympathisers´ activities. It has been emphasised that their electoral outcomes in the region are related to the activity of their activists rather than the number of branches (Interviewee 9). This experience of regional party leader highlights that the local activism of 'the party on the ground' may matter electorally, rather than the number of local branches (a view that the previous findings support too). This however, is just a subjective account of several regional politicians, and should only be considered as such. This subjective view however shows that the activism of locally-based party members may still make the local branches relevant electorally; it is just a different aspect than what we usually study as their indicator of electoral influence.

Building on above politicians´ experience, other members of ANO´s national party elite were interviewed to share their views too. During these interviews, ANO´s politicians from other regions have also emphasised that the electoral success of the party is not related to the density of local branches, but the authentic zeal of activists working for the party locally. It has been shared that although having some branches present locally is advantageous because under them activists can meet with locals to gather information and provide this as useful feedback to the party (Interviewee 3; 7; 8; 9), it is not about branches´ quantity at all. It is about the party activists with the local knowledge of the terrain and real issues, who are the real asset that is

valuable for the central party office that does not know the local issues facing the potential electorate (Interviewee 5; 9). Because regions in the Czech Republic are spread to many small towns and villages, local branches´ activities are crucial in regards to the party´s contact with voters. Under the umbrella of local branches, party activists are responsible for many activities. These include chairing discussions and meetings with the public, overseeing the distribution of leaflets and other materials, organizing local events (rallies, farmers´ markets, kids' days, garden parties and other party themed events), and especially managing direct contact campaigns (Interviewee 2; 3; 6; 8). Outside the official party events, local activists, using their contacts in the area, help to support the positive image of the party among potential voters in daily life situations (Interviewee 2; 3; 5; 8; 9). It has been emphasised that the personal contacts and activists' enthusiasm are the key to connect with local voters. According to ANO´s politicians, it is through the authentic and individual work of local activists, that loyal connections and relationships get forged between the voters and the party (not through the density of local branches´ network). The above views of ANO´s politicians are only subjective experience and merely illustrate that the electoral success of this party amongst voters from local communities could potentially be attributed to the actual work of local activists. Based on these subjective accounts of ANO´s politicians, it seems to be the activism over the numbers, or 'quality over quantity', in regards to local branches´ influence on the electoral performance of ANO.

The above experiences of ANO´s party elite may remind us of the so-called subcultural party, a term coined by Enyedi (1996). This type of party is known for being strongly embedded within local communities via various authentic activities organized by local activists. A wide array of mainly non-political party events, such as communal lectures, dancing classes and other meetings aimed at "strengthening the party's 'social presence' image" were organized by the subcultural Christian Democrats in Hungary (Enyedi 1996; 392). Although in case of the Hungarian Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP), the nature of their party events was closely associated with the religious subculture of Christian Catholic church and its satellite organizations, this party´ strategy can in many respects be compared to that employed by ANO. Like in that case, ANO also seems to rely on the mostly non-political activities organized by its local activists 'on the ground' to find its way into the heart of local communities. In the smaller towns, when the party gets renowned locally for its events, people should more likely identify with it. It is especially the case when local citizens identify with the party activists with

whom they are likely to know each other from various circles (workplaces, sport and other pastime networks). The Hungarian example has shown that when the locals know the party activists, they are more likely to identify with the party itself and are likely to reward such identification in elections as a result (Enyedi 1996). This similarity in the way local activists approach their communities does not mean that ANO relies on the same network of civil society organisations as KDNP did in the past. The analogy between ANO and KDNP ends with the similar strategy to approach local communities with mainly non-politically themed party events. The next section focuses on the analysis of the role of local organizational autonomy in the electoral success of ANO.

2.4.4. Local Organizational Autonomy

According to the official party statutes, ANO distinguishes between three types of party organizations – local, area and regional. Listing them accordingly to the internal hierarchy, fourteen regional organizations oversee the operation of area organizations at the level of former districts, which manage local organizations below them. Each party organizational level has its chairman, executive board/committee, assembly and treasurer, and is represented in the party hierarchy by its leader (chairman of the local, area or regional executive board/committee). The local, area and regional levels of party organisation are all represented by their assemblies, executive boards/committees, control and revision commissions and treasuries at their constituency level. The party bodies on the central national level are the Congress, Executive Committee (předsednictvo strany in Czech) – sometimes also referred to as a National Executive Committee (NEC), and Control and Revision Commission and Appeals Committee. The members of Executive Committee are elected at the Congress that takes place at least once in every two years. The Executive Committee solely decides over the establishment, merging or dissolution of the regional, area and local organizations. All three types of territorial organizational levels of the party are also bound financially. The distribution of entrusted resources is decided solely by the national party within the approved budget. Also, in case of any conflict, scandal or disagreement, the party board has a right to dissolve the entire organizational unit in question.

In regards to responsibilities of selecting candidates, special attention was paid to the roles of local branches and national party board in regards to who is the selectorate and who approves selected candidates (see Hazan and Rahat 2010). In ANO, local branches only fulfil

the selectorate role, while national party leadership has sole responsibility for the approval of candidate lists (but can delegate these obligations onto the regional leadership). Unlike in the established parties in the country, such as ODS or ČSSD (where the selectorate at the constituency level is also responsible for candidates´ approval), in ANO it is the Executive Committee that approves candidates selected by local branches at all constituency levels. ANO´s regional, area and local branches only function as selectorates, who draw-up drafts of candidate lists for the Executive Committee to approve the names and position of candidates. This rule may function as a universal veto right for the party leadership in any type of election.

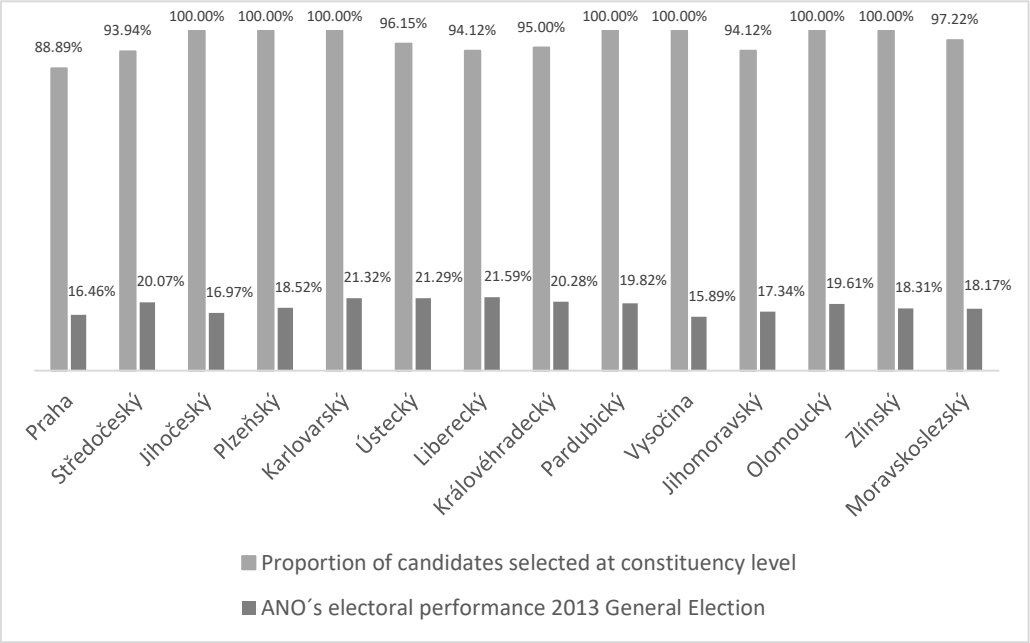
In 2017, after the party congress, ANO implemented changes in party statutes that further limit the autonomy of local branches. Apart from ANO´s national party board having full control over the members´ recruitment (which will be discussed in Chapter 3 focusing on the party membership), in regards to the candidate selection, national party leadership´s rights also strengthened. ANO´s leader himself has a sole veto right to change the order and presence of individuals on any candidate list of the party in any type of election, even after Executive Committee approved the candidate lists. Such a measure is highly unusual in Czech party politics. No other party in the country has such a clause in their statutes. It alters the power of party leadership (and party leader in particular) considerably in its favour and gives them another chance to influence decisions of local branches. Party statutes clearly show that the national party leadership severely compromises local organizational autonomy. In particular by the party leader, who can overwrite their decision related to the selection of candidate at any point. This restriction of local branches´ autonomy supports ANO´s ability to control and oversee the operation of its territorial organizational structure. These formal rules were raised during interviews with ANO´s party elite to probe this finding further. It has been confirmed that local branches de facto do not select candidates, at least not entirely. They only suggest names of potential candidates, which need to get approved in the strict top-down fashion by the national party board (Interviewee 2, 3, 6). As a last resort, the national party board, respectively the party leader, has a right to step in whenever candidates are somehow unacceptable to delete their name of the list and to expel them from the party too (Interviewee 6). The above experience of ANO´s politicians illustrates that the formal rules altering the distribution of power within the party are indeed enforced in real-life situations. ANO leadership exercises power embedded in the party statutes at the expense of local branches´ autonomy.

In regards to candidates´ backgrounds, this analysis looks at the aggregate patterns, which allow demonstrating the national party´s influence over candidate selection (at the expense of local branches´ autonomy). The analysis of candidates´ backgrounds from two general elections will help to determine the proportion of locally selected candidates and candidates´ renomination. Both of these findings will demonstrate the potential meddling of national party office into selecting candidates (identifying the degree of local branches´ autonomy in the process of candidate selection). Complete candidate lists of ANO in the national elections in 2013 and 2017 serve as the source of data in this analysis. The less autonomous the local branches are in selecting candidates, the more likely the party can achieve and preserve party stability and cohesion. Weaker local party organization in terms of its autonomy, the less likely an opposition will be formed that could cause conflicts within the party leading to factionalism. Simultaneously, the more control the national party leadership has over the selection of candidates, the more likely it can decide, who will become elected as MP after the elections, and thus will form the future party elite. Influence over the composition of the elite circle is crucial, as it may facilitate party cohesion. When party leaders and his close allies can handpick the future MPs, they can effectively minimise party dissent and mute internal opposition. This analysis uses full candidate lists of ANO and investigates two aspects - whether candidates are selected locally within their region, and whether same individuals appear on the candidate lists in two successive elections. Both analyses allow me to shed light on how ANO approaches the selection of candidates and if the national party office influences creation of candidate lists and to what degree.

Concerning the selection of candidates, candidate lists are explored by region. The analysis divides candidates into two groups – locally selected (those whose candidateship takes place within the region, where they have a permanent residence), and not locally selected (those who have been placed on the candidate lists in a region where they do not reside). The logic behind this division is to map the proportion of candidates, who have been placed on the lists outside of their place of residence. It should suggest that the national party office has appointed these individuals from above. One´s place of residence is a variable determining the existence of his/her links to the region, where the candidateship takes place. The higher the proportion of candidates, who have not been selected locally, the higher the potential that the national party office meddled into the candidate's selection at the cost of local branches´ autonomy.

Appendices 3-7 summarize the following information – total number of candidates[3] by region, number of locally selected candidates by region, number of nationally selected candidates by region, the percentual proportion of locally selected candidates by region, and the electoral performance of ANO by region in the respective elections.

Figure 2.8 2013 General Election Locally Selected Candidates



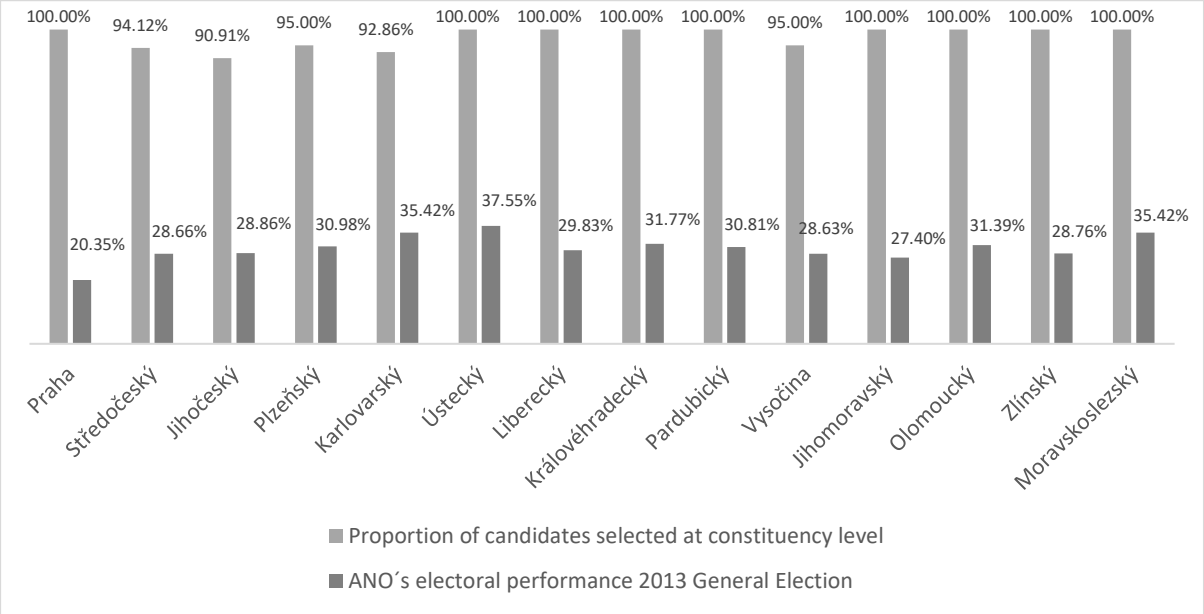
Source: ANO, refer to Appendix 3.

Candidates´ backgrounds of 2013 general election are attached in Appendix 3. There, one can observe that the majority of candidates (96,49 per cent), is selected locally. The region with the lowest proportion of local selected candidates is Prague (however this finding is questionable because Prague is administratively considered a region, but its non-local candidates are from Středočeský region surrounding the capital). In all the other regions, over ninety per cent of candidates are locally selected from their region. Figure 2.8 graphically illustrates the data from Appendix 3, demonstrating the relationship between two indicators - the proportion of locally selected candidates by region in the 2013 election and electoral performance of ANO by region in that election.

[3] The complete data on regional variation of locally selected candidates are attached as Appendices 3 and 4.

Figure 2.8 shows that the vast majority of candidates in all regions are selected locally. Although ANO´s electoral performance differs across regions, the proportion of locally selected candidates is around ninety per cent in all regions. This finding suggests that ANO selects the vast majority of its candidates locally, local branches seem to have a word in selecting their candidates at the constituency level.

Figure 2.9 2017 General election locally selected candidates

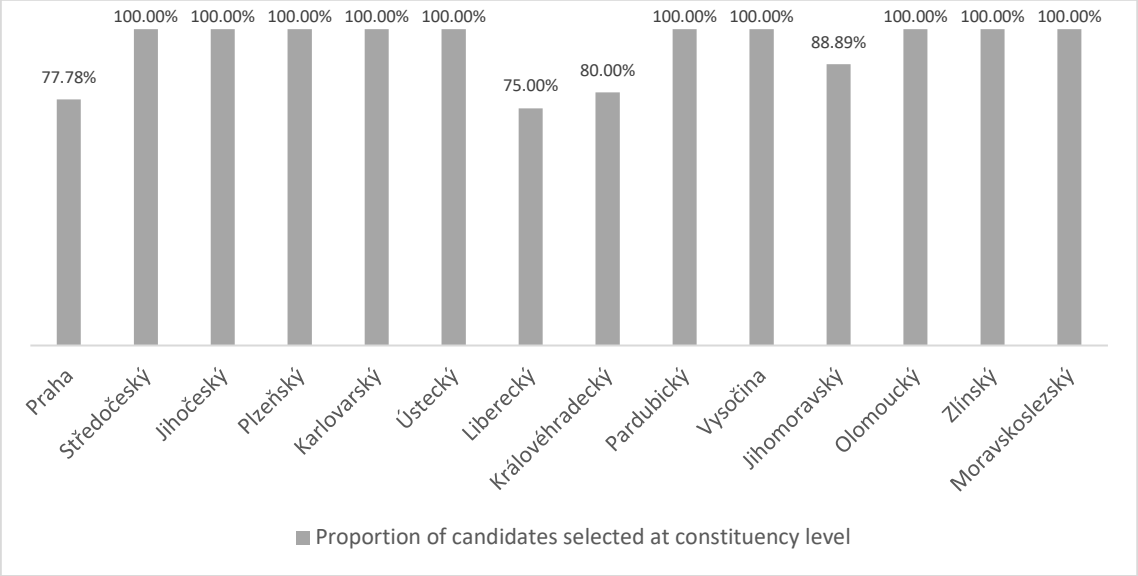


Source: ANO, refer to Appendix 4.

Data in Appendix 4 relate to the candidates of ANO in the latest general election taking place in 2017. The data indicate that in the majority of regions (ten out of fourteen), 100 per cent of candidates were selected locally. In the case of the other four regions, on average, only 5,75 per cent of candidates were not selected locally. In overall from all regions, only a mere five candidates were not selected locally from their region (which translates to only 1,46 per cent of candidates, who were not locally selected). This finding again demonstrates that a vast majority of ANO´s candidates are selected from their home regions, which suggests that ANO allows local branches to exercise right to create candidate lists locally without intervention from above. Refer to Figure 2.9 that presents two indicators - the proportion of locally selected candidates and the electoral outcomes of the party per region, for more details.

The scope of analysis has been reduced from looking at the complete lists of candidates to the top twenty-five per cent of candidates on candidate lists in each region to provide a more detailed perspective into the candidate selection. The motivation behind this step is to explore what proportion of candidates at the positions, which are likely electable, are selected locally or nationally. When considering only the top twenty-five per cent of candidates on candidate lists for 2013 election (presented in Appendix 5), we can see that still a vast majority of candidates (94,38 per cent) were selected locally. It is a very similar value as when analysing the entire candidate list for this election. Figure 2.10 illustrates how the proportion of candidates selected at the constituency level differs regionally.

Figure 2.10 2013 General election locally selected (top 25% candidates)

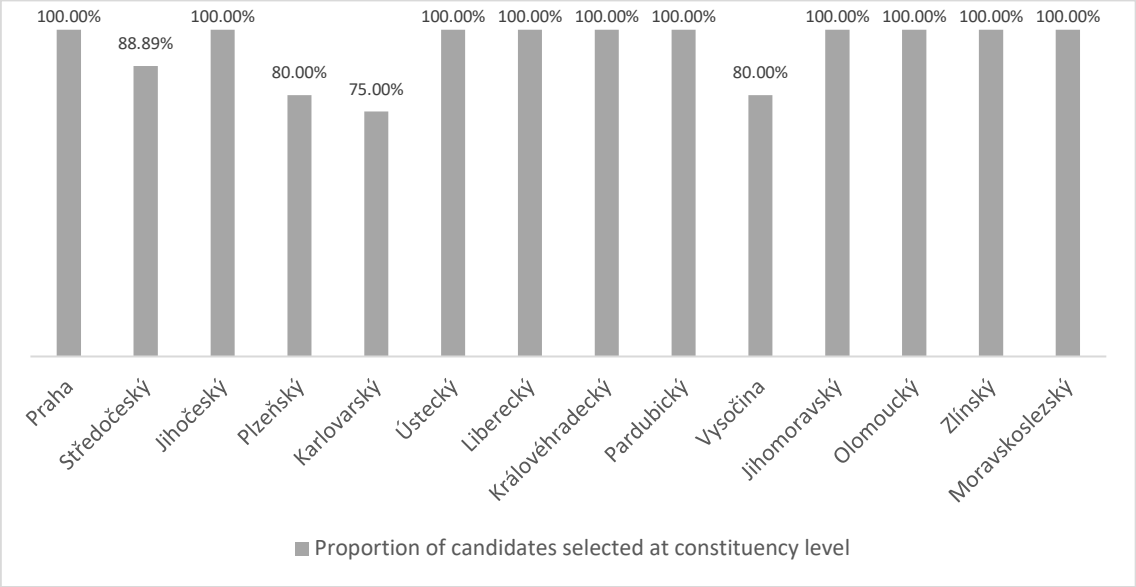


Source: ANO, refer to Appendix 5.

When taking a closer look at the data in Appendices 5 and 6, in most cases, the candidate list leader is the individual appointed nationally. For instance in Jihomoravský region, one of the prominent faces of the party, Martin Stropnický, led the candidate list, although being resident of Prague (to support the party electorally in its first election). However, the fact that the majority of top list candidates were selected locally demonstrates that this so-called 'parachute strategy' (Roniger and Gunes-Ayata 1994; Koop and Bittner 2011) was not used extensively by ANO. Such parachuting took place even less in the more recent 2017 election, which may signal several things. Firstly, that within four years, ANO managed to build some local organizational structure, which generated local and regional elites that took up the preferential

places on candidate lists. Secondly, that ANO´s national party office realised that locally based candidates might stand a better chance to attract voters than individuals, who are not associated with the region and are appointed by the national party office from Prague. Concerning the latest 2017 election, refer to Appendix 6 presenting data of the top twenty-five per cent of candidates on candidate lists. Here, again the data indicate that a vast majority of candidates (95,51 per cent) were selected locally (only four out of the total of eighty-nine candidates were not selected locally). Still, a majority of candidates were selected locally, a similar finding as to when analysing the entire candidate list for this mentioned election (refer to Figure 2.11 for the graphical illustration of the regional variation of candidate selection and electoral performance of the party).

Figure 2.11 2017 General election locally selected (top 25% candidates)



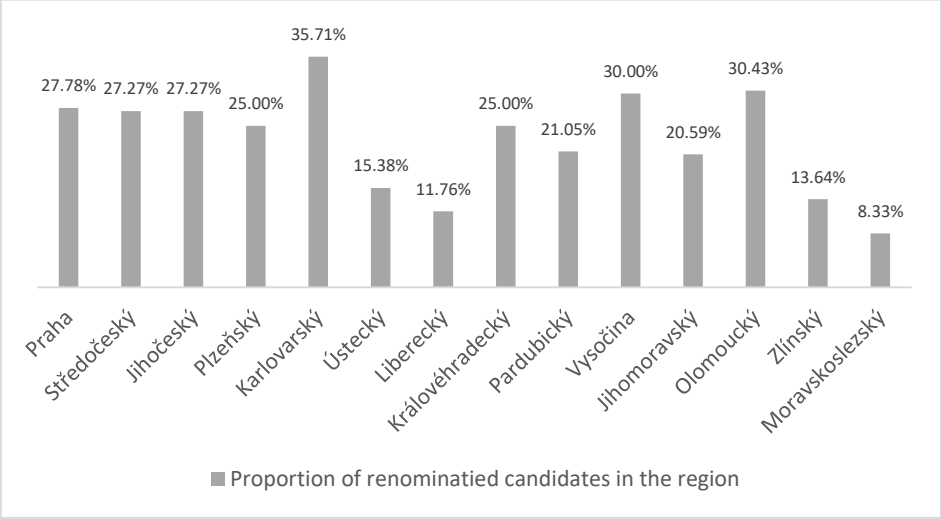
Source: ANO, refer to Appendix 6.

The analysis of locally selected nominations revealed that there had been some parachuting at the top level of candidate lists, but very limited. The vast majority candidates in both general elections were selected locally from the region where they reside. What does this entail? Although all the candidates in ANO are endorsed nationally (considering this party´s statutes, where national leadership, in particular the party leader, approve all candidate lists), these candidates are locally embedded. Therefore, even though ANO´s national leadership has the rights and capacity to select all the candidates nationally, the candidates are locals. The party has complete control over the candidate selection, but selects, by the vast majority, locally embedded candidates. By this strategy, ANO achieves two things. Firstly, the locally-known

candidates help the party to connect with the local electorate, boosting its legitimacy. Secondly, the capacity to control the candidate selection from above assures the party can preserve its stability. The party leadership allows local branches to nominate locally-embedded candidates that will more likely tune to the voters´ needs. However, it still maintains the veto right to override their decisions if any scandals would arise with candidates.

In addition to the above candidate selection analysis, renomination of ANO´s candidates between elections is also analysed. Appendix 7 presents data that illustrate how many candidates of ANO that were placed on candidate lists in the 2013 general election, appeared on the list for the 2017 general election as well. The motivation behind this analysis of repeated candidateship is to demonstrate whether any pressures exist to replace candidates between elections and to what degree. The findings indicate that only twenty-two per cent of candidates appeared on candidate lists in the two successive elections. Nearly eighty per cent of candidates have been replaced between the two elections (refer to Figure 2.12 for the variation of renomination across the regions).

Figure 2.12 2013 – 2017 Elections re-nomination



Source: ANO, refer to Appendix 7.

The findings presented in Figure 2.12 shows that there is a considerable regional variation in regards to the renomination of candidates between general elections. Media articles focusing on the municipal and regional politics have been explored, looking for the coverage of local events, attempting to find sources of such these trends. Because of the local nature of these examples of local branches´ issues, mostly local media outlets served as the source of information. The national newspapers and other media outlets rarely focus on local issues. The

situation in seven regions, where ANO replaced most candidates, was closely followed to find clues. The collected evidence revealed that incidentally, the party faced major organizational issues in those regions. These included party splits, local party coups, factionalism or breakups of municipal council coalitions. These events often led to the dissolutions of local branches, and in some cases of entire area organizations.

This investigation has exposed that ANO´s renomination is the lowest in those regions, where its local organizational structure faced the most significant hardships. Real-life examples demonstrate that the replacement of candidates between elections is closely related to the conflicts and scandals taking place at the local, district and regional levels of party organization. In those regions, where the local branches experienced the most dramatic turmoil, the party leadership closely observed the events and reacted accordingly. The party adopted a strategy that included dissolving entire branches, terminating membership statuses of all members, and replacing candidates for more loyal individuals, learning from these negative experiences.

Perhaps the most dramatic situation occurred in the South-Bohemian region. There were major conflicts and discontent between party members reacting angrily to some of their colleagues, who were awarded party posts for their servility and loyalty and not for their skills and activism. It led to the dissolution of the entire area organization in Prachatice district (Kopřiva 2016). Many party members left local branches in České Budějovice, Dačice, Jinřichův Hradec, Český Krumlov and Vimperk as a reaction to this widespread exchange of 'trafikas' (an exchange of posts to reward loyalty, a form of party patronage - see Kopecký 2012). The organizational crisis was not helped by the lack of transparency in decisions made by the regional leader, which escalated the situation further and led to the dissolvement of the local branch in Strakonice (Kopřiva 2016).

In Karlovy Vary region, the local organizational structure also fell victim to conflicts between party members. In particular, between those who were newer and more loyal to the party leadership, and the more senior party members who initially established local branches (Novinky 2016). The local party organization in the regional capital Karlovy Vary itself was dissolved. The long-serving party activists disagreed with the national party recruiting many new members (to outnumber them for internal voting purposes) and complained about lack of transparency concerning new members´ recruitment (Novinky 2016). In the South-Moravian region, the situation did not escalate so dramatically. However, ANO also faced significant

issues there. It dissolved two local organizations in this region, one in Brno-North (Echo24 2017) and one in Hodonín (ČTK 2015a). In Brno-North, the operation of the local branch was discontinued because of members´ arguments and the inability to elect a local leader (Echo24 2017). In the case of Hodonín, the local organization disintegrated because two opposing fractions quarrelled together slipped to unethical behaviour, and could not reach a joint agreement (ČTK 2015a). The national leadership decided to step in to save the party from the negative publicity.

Similarly, the Moravian-Silesian region experienced crises at the local level, when the national party board had to look into a power struggle between two factions in the local branch in Opava. Their dispute caused the dissolution of the local branch. Subsequently, it led to the annulment of party membership for all involved (including the mayor of the city at the time). It also resulted in the breakup of the municipal coalition government (Akuálně 2015). Issues also escalated in Frýdek-Místek, where the local branch was dissolved following the coup of the majority of its city councillors leaving the party due to internal disputes (Deník 2017). In Olomouc region, in the city of Prostějov, the disagreements over the voting behaviour in city coalition did not lead to the dissolution of the local organization. Still, they resulted in twelve out of the total of thirty-eight members leaving the party, which demonstrated how disunited was the local organization (Forum 24 2016). Like in other cases, the national party leadership immediately stripped the involved individuals of all posts and party membership status.

Continuous disagreements and conflicts also affected local branches in the Liberec region, where the local organization in Frýdlant and in Liberec itself fell victim to scandals (Deník 2016). Both the local and regional leaders were caught by surprise when the national party board dissolved their branches (Deník 2016). They have not even been invited to Prague to discuss the matter. The decision was based on accusations of local branches being privatised by these individuals and not recruiting new members to protect and control their position (Idnes 2016). As a result, the mayor of Liberec, as well as other council members both in Liberec and in Frýdlant had their membership annulled, and the municipal council coalitions were under threat as a result too (Idnes 2016). Ústí nad Labem region also witnessed scandals in its regional capital´s organizational structure, where ANO did not only dissolve the local branch in the city but the entire area organization as well. It happened in reaction to continuous disputes and accusations of wrong-doing between party members. These conflicts culminated into a coup at the municipal council level against the mayor elected for ANO (Deník Referendum 2015).

Across the entire country, many local and area branches were dissolved by the national party leadership, and several party activists left or were compelled to leave the party. These events even led to the creation of a new nationally-spread movement of many former ANO members called PRO 2016 (Hlídací Pes 2016). The impulse to establish a new party out of ANO´s expelled members came from the South-Bohemian region, where the organizational conflict was among the highest in the party. ANO´s former party activists complained mainly about the centralistic leadership of the party and a ban on the communication with other party members across regions. Disrespect of local level in the creation of candidate lists, and a complete lack and filtering of party communication, which was only led one-way in top-down fashion were also emphasised as reasons for their discontent (Hlídací Pes 2016).

How do the renomination levels relate to the organizational crises experienced by ANO? In Moravskoslezský region (8,33 per cent renomination), two large local organizations dissolved (Opava and Frýdek-Místek). In Ústecký region (15,38 per cent re-nomination), dissolution of entire area organization in the regional capital of Ústí nad Labem took place. In Liberecký region (11,76 per cent renomination), two main local branches dissolved (Frýdlant and Liberec). There is a link between the party´s negative experience with local branches´ scandals and organizational issues and higher replacement of candidates between elections. In those regions, where local party structure fell victim to conflicts and subsequent branches´ dissolvements, ANO meddled more into local affairs replacing more candidates on the lists for new individuals. It can only be speculated that these changes were motivated by the loyalty of new candidates to the party leadership. The obedience of local activists and candidates is crucial for the party leadership to control the regions. It is especially the case for the regions, where the party failed to address scandals in the past. ANO´s elite was questioned about the struggle of local branches and the party´s response to it during interviews. Interviewees 2 and 3 have previously shared their experience of party leadership meddling into the creation of candidate lists. More attention was paid to other possible internal mechanisms enabling control of local branches´ operation considering the low renomination linked to the scandals across the regions.

One of the interviewees shared interesting insights into the practices within ANO´s local branches that reflected his/her experience in the party. This Interviewee 4 pointed out that the autonomy of local branches is compromised by the operation of the corporate network (a group of individuals professionally associated with the party leader and his business), that

controls the operation of local branches. The interviewee mentioned that there are three 'layers of control' over the regions. These include regional leaders, regional managers and the control and revision committee. It has been shared that the party staff at the posts mentioned above is professionally associated with the party leader´s business and thus loyal to him. Simultaneously, regional leaders appointed to the national party board were said to be offered leading positions on the candidate lists in return for their loyalty. They are often women who were said to be controlled and influenced more easily. When there is a conflict at the regional level, local and area leaders within that region were said to be offered positions on candidate lists in exchange for their support to the regional leader. The interview shared that party activists are compelled to play by the rules of the regional leaders, who are unquestionably loyal to national party leadership.

Similarly, the regional managers responsible for overseeing the operation of the whole territorial organizational structure of the party are selected based on personal loyalty to the party leader. It has been pointed out in this interview that the party leader used the corporate structure of his business company Agrofert and built the initial regional organizational structure on the existing network of his business firm. His employees were responsible for finding people with political experience to establish new area and local branches. The very first thing Babiš did, according to this interviewee, was to recruit twelve loyal regional managers, who were professionally associated with his Agrofert company or otherwise linked to himself. Allegedly, these individuals oversaw the building of local and area organizational structure, and the recruitment of local party activists into these new branches. The interviewee also shared that concerning the resolution of potential conflicts or scandals within the party, the chairman of control and revision commission is HR Director of Agrofert as well. This party body which decides the dissolvements of local organizations (and about members´ expulsions) was said to be in the hands of the individual, whose career is associated with the corporate empire of party leader.

Based on the insights from this interview, additional information has been gathered to examine whether these alleged links exist. The professional backgrounds of all ANO´s regional leaders and regional managers were analysed (refer to Appendices 13 and 14 for details). The data included in the appendices indicate that a proportion of both regional leaders and regional managers is indeed professionally associated with the party leader´s business (as former or current employees of Agrofert). Four out of fourteen regional leaders have direct professional

links with the leader´s business (and one other regional party leader is an owner of Agrofert´s affiliate company). At the same time, three out of fourteen regional managers also have business links with Agrofert. The coordinator of regional managers (the recruitment position of all regional managers within the party), Kateřina Reiblová is professionally associated with Agrofert as well, providing insurance to the conglomerate. All regional managers are responsible to the general party manager Pavel Pustějovský, a Production Manager of DEZA, a subsidiary of Agrofert. The chairman of control and revision commission in ANO is Daniel Rubeš, HR Director of Agrofert. The above evidence points out that crucial posts within ANO´s party organization are indeed infiltrated by individuals professionally associated with party leader´s business. Such organizational setup based on party-business overlap creates dependencies between the party leader and part of the party elite. This strategy is advantageous for the party leader when it comes to controlling the local party organization and resolving internal conflicts and scandals. When the party leader´s business pays some of the regional leaders and regional managers, they can be expected to be more loyal to him in exchange. The loyalties based on financial dependencies of these party leaders´ employees translate into their obedience. In turn, these trusted associates, who are reliant on the party leader with their careers, can be expected to help him to keep the entire party organization in line.

The control of local branches by a group of obedient associates of party leader aids with the resolution of internal conflicts and scandals. If a party activist does not hold the party line and misbehaves in any way, he/she can easily be replaced from the top. As demonstrated previously on the scandals of the whole local or area branches, same goes for them. When faced with scandals or conflicts, the party does not hesitate to dissolve entire branches. When the local branches and their members rely on the party leader and his loyal allies with their position within the party, they are more likely to manifest loyalty too. But how can these internal party affairs reflect on ANO electorally?

Controlling the local branches´ autonomy via the formal rules and reliant loyal personnel embedded into the local organizational structure helps the party to resolve local scandals decisively. The fast and efficient resolution of scandals and conflicts can help ANO´s electoral success because it diffuses negative publicity. Unlike its established counterparts in the past (in particular ODS and ČSSD), ANO, using the organizational setup described above, manages to ‘put out the fire before it spreads’. In the Czech context, such scandals, often of corruption and criminal nature, were the plague of the major parties (for party-captures by

mafia-like groups and clientelist networks see Klíma 2015). Numerous widely infamous scandals of the above two parties that started at the local level but scaled up nationally, negatively affected their public image (party legitimacy). The lack of transparency and firmness in resolving these scandals negatively affected the legitimacy of these parties in the long term. It ultimately cost them political points in the years to come. Very often the incompetence and indecision of national leaders in ODS and ČSSD to persecute culprits were caused by the strong position of regional party elite (with allies throughout the entire party organizational structure of these parties).

The following paragraphs focus on the scandals of ČSSD and ODS to provide some out of the countless available examples. In ODS, the widely medialised fraud scandals in public companies of Ivan Langer from Olomouc region negatively influenced the image of the entire party for many years (Slonková and Holecová 2018); and the party did not manage to part with him anyway. In the end, it was the voters who cast him away, not the party leadership of ODS (ČTK 2015c; Hrbáček 2019; 2020). In ČSSD, the fraud and manipulation of public procurement contracts also gained media and public attention, which negatively influenced this party´s legitimacy. Like Langer in ODS, ČSSD´s Jiří Zimola from South-Bohemian region was also involved in a serious scandal regarding public spending projects, but the party did not react in time either (Euro.cz 2017; Přibyl and Tröster 2020). Due to his strong position within the party, this scandal only cost him his position at the candidate list, and he later resigned himself (Palička 2017). The strong position of regional branches in ČSSD manifested itself immediately after the 2013 General Elections, when a faction around regional party leaders in Brno, the second biggest Czech city, organized an attempted leadership coup against the party leader Bohuslav Sobotka (Perknerová 2013; Kopp, Neprašová and Kouřímský 2013). The conflict between the two factions took weeks to resolve. It severely weakened the position of Sobotka within the party, as well as the position of ČSSD in the newly-forming coalition government with ANO (Ovčáček 2013).

Both major parties became to be notoriously known for covering their party members that were involved in any scandal, which cost them much in the long run. While ODS and ČSSD managed to squander their public image by decades of inaction and incompetence to tackle the corruption and other scandals of their politicians, not the same can be said about ANO. Where the other parties failed to address these scandals to protect their public image, ANO did not manifest any hesitation in parting with individuals accused of any wrongdoing.

The only exceptions to this approach are few 'V.I.P.' party members like the leader of the party Andrej Babiš, and his close associate Jaroslav Faltýnek, the first deputy party leader, chairman of ANO´s MP club and Babiš´s long-standing ally from Agrofert (Mach 2019; Zíta 2019; Tománek 2019). I focus on Babiš´s major scandal and how it resonated amongst ANO´s party elite in greater detail in Chapter 4 related to the party elite. In the following discussions I focus only on local examples of ANO handling its scandals. It is noteworthy here, that when focusing on ANO´s ability to handle scandals regionally, my design of empirical analysis omits the potential influence of Babiš´s owned media outlets. As such, I do not pay attention to their role in supporting the party (and himself) during these scandals. Similarly, I do not empirically explore the potential role of ANO´s PR machinery in this regard. Both of these aspects can indeed support ANO´s ability to manage the regional corruption (and other) scandals of the party. This is an avenue for additional research of ANO in the future.

Nevertheless, how does ANO´s efficiency in handling scandals at the local level look like in real life? Typically, as soon as any accusations of malpractice or offence arise, the individual in question is requested to come to Prague to the party headquarters for questioning by the national party board (Interviewee 2). Party follows the moral codex, signed by every member, in case of any accusation of a criminal offence, the membership status is suspended, the presumption of innocence does not apply (Interviewee 7). For instance, in Varnsdorf, Stanislav Horáček, the mayor elected for ANO was immediately expelled from the party in the reaction of being taken to the custody for alleged participation in the fraudulent contract for the provider of road radars (Zavoral 2019; ČTK 2019a; ČTK 2019b). In this case, the party leader shared that the decision to act had to be quick because the good name of the party was at stake and the damage of ANO´s reputation in the region was imminent (Právo 2019). Another local politician, Tomáš Kratochvíl from Brno lost his position at the municipality council, as well his party membership status for undermining the positive image of the party locally (EuroZprávy.cz 2015). Four years later in Brno, following the corruption scandal that was exposed publicly in 2019, ANO did not hesitate to take quick action. Two of its highly-ranked local politicians Švachula and Liškutin were immediately dismissed as party members (Euro.cz 2019; ČTK 2019c). Both were expelled from their posts in the municipal council as well. The regional leader Petr Vokřál emphasised that the situation was handled correctly and swiftly to send a clear signal that ANO does not tolerate and hide corruption and other scandals (ČTK 2019d). The scandal was blamed to the personal failure those involved, and the party offered

full cooperation to the relevant authorities, stressing that such excesses should not be let to damage the good name of the party (Echo24 2019). In Ostrava, Vladislav Koval, a member of the city council, was expelled from the party immediately following the accusation of requesting a bribe (Právo 2015). In České Budějovice, three municipal councillors, Eliška Richtrová, Filip Šmaus and Pavel Matoušek, were quickly stripped of their membership status for disobedience, following a coup against the mayor appointed by ANO (Vácha and Orholz 2015). Their dismissal was supported unanimously by the national party board (ČTK 2015a; ČTK 2015b; Profant 2015). The above examples of ANO´s decisiveness in handling local scandals fast are in great contrast to the practice of the established parties.

2.5. Discussion and Conclusions

The first part of this chapter focused on the role of the density of local branches in facilitating electoral success. Tavits (2013), Pimlott (1973) or Janda (1980) saw the density of local party organization as an instrument helping parties to attract and mobilize voters more effectively, which supports electoral performance. Other scholars (Coleman 1996; Kopecký 1995; Mair 1997; Perkins 1996; Szczerbiak 1999) were more sceptical of the role of densely-built local party organization in delivering electoral gains. The findings presented in this chapter indicate that local party organizational density in itself does not seem to have a significant impact on the electoral success of ANO. The more densely-built local party organization does not seem to facilitate better electoral results for this particular party. However, the structure of local branches still seems to play a positive role in supporting the electoral success of ANO differently. Specifically, the nature and extent of activities organized under the umbrella of these local branches may play a role in regards to the electoral performance. The examples of the local media mapping the activities of local activists, supported by the subjective views of ANO´s politicians show that the activism of local branches may play its role. Public discussions, informal meetings with local citizens and various events, especially those that are not politically-themed helped the party to spread the good name amongst the public in smaller municipalities or more remote areas of the country (Interviewee 2; 3; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9). The fact that the party does not limit local branches in organizing these events helps to make them look authentic. All the gatherings such as farmers´ markets, kids´ days, charity runs or public barbecues are organized without any interference from the party headquarters (Interviewee 2; 3; 5). The national party only provides the general visual background for leaflets, billboards

and slogans (Interviewee 5). The campaign materials are synchronized to keep the party message homogenous nationally, and the local topics are decided regionally by the area and local branches to tune to the needs of the local electorate (Interviewee 3). Their activities are not limited, as long as they stick to the official party visuals to propagate party in a unified manner. This strategy seems to be electorally advantageous for two reasons. The authenticity stemming from the locally selected topics helps potential voters to identify with the message because the topics are more relatable to them. On the other hand, the unified party branding allows the party to present its message unitary. It helps members of the public to recognise the party when it stands for elections at the national level. Notably, many of these party-themed events are financed or co-organized by party leader´s companies. They provide catering, transport and other services at the locations (Břešťan 2017). It illustrates how strongly are the two worlds of ANO´s party politics and Agrofert´s business entangled.

The second part of this chapter was devoted to the autonomy of local branches in selecting candidates and their impact on the electoral outcomes. Exploring the formal rules in party statutes, as well as the practices within the party unveiled several facts. On the one hand, ANO is a party that, by the vast majority, allows local branches to select candidates at the constituency level, which helps the party to connect with local voters. But because ANO´s party leadership has the veto right at its disposal (to make changes to the candidate lists), it maintains control over the local branches. Therefore, ANO´s candidates are nationally endorsed but locally embedded individuals. Locally-known candidates selected from the same region are more likely to connect with the local electorate and better tailor the party message to them. When these locally embedded candidates organize the party events, they can also choose the type of event that matches the locality because they are more likely familiar with the local needs and expectations of the public there. This finding is thus closely associated with the previous findings related to the benefits of locally-based activities of local branches helping the party electorally.

On the other hand, the strict rules in party statutes concerning the candidate selection, combined with the low renomination of candidates between elections showed that the national party leadership preserves control over the candidate selection. These findings have been supported by the experience shared by Interviewee 4, who described how Agrofert´s corporate network controls the autonomy of local branches. Many individuals with Agrofert past at crucial party posts have been identified. The control of local branches by a group of obedient

associates of party leader aids with the resolution of internal conflicts and scandals. Activists, who do not hold the party line or misbehave are replaced. Disobeying branches are dissolved from the top. In such environment, party activists spread across different regions are more likely to manifest loyalty. Those, who are not loyal or cause scandals are parted with. All of the above helps ANO to avoid negative consequences on the public image, something that haunted the established parties in the past.

To conclude this chapter, firstly the findings collected in this chapter indicate that in this particular case, the nature and extend of locally-based activities seem to help ANO electorally. Organizing various party-themed events locally (with the support of party leader´s businesses) seems to strengthen the role of local branches in making the party visible, connecting with local voters. Local party activists know the most-pressing issues citizens face in their cities, towns and villages (specific infrastructure projects, lack of kindergartens or dentists, outdated facilities in local hospitals among those mentioned during interviews). Local branches tailor the topics of their campaign message around these issues. This locally-tailored party communication is produced under the standardised party branding, and Agrofert supplies catering to events where this message gets delivered to potential voters, boosting party legitimacy. Secondly, allowed by the setup of formal rules, as well as by the corporate network of financially dependent employees in crucial party posts, ANO´s leadership has the capacity to control the autonomy of local branches, but only uses it when necessary to diffuse negative publicity. In regards to selecting candidates, ANO allows local branches to select them at the constituency level but keeps the right of veto. As a result of this practise, nationally endorsed, but locally embedded candidates are selected. These individuals connect with local voters more successfully. On the other hand, the strict rules (as well as the corporate structure of loyal individuals at the party posts with influence) help the leadership to tackle conflicts and internal opposition at the local level effectively. The ability to take action on scandals quickly and efficiently is crucial for protecting the positive image of the party. It is crucial, especially when considering this party´s roots and rhetoric. ANO was built on the strongly pronounced anti-establishment promise of ‘draining the swamp of corruption and clientelism’ (referring to the corrupted political system maintained with the help of established parties). For a party running on an anti-corruption ticket (targeting its established counterparts as culprits of the corrupted system), the incompetence in addressing its own party members´ scandals and corruption would be fatal to its public image. The other parties in the country used to cover for the scandals

of their politicians. Such practise became de facto a norm and resonated very negatively with the public. The inability of established parties to tackle corruption was one of the main triggers behind voters´ frustration with the political establishment, as discussed in introducing Chapter 1. Such disillusionment brought new anti-establishment parties into high politics. ANO learned from the mistakes of the established parties and is 'well-managed' and responsive in this respect. ANO´s national party leadership does not think twice or compromise in breaking any ties with party activists who committed any malpractice with potential negative public consequences. Voters are more likely to support a party that is visible and connects to them locally via locally-based activities organized by locally-embedded candidates. It looks trustworthy for them because it transparently and swiftly addresses any potential scandals or wrongdoing of its politicians.

CHAPTER 3 Party membership

3.1. Introduction

This chapter[4] investigates the relationship between the electoral success of ANO and the second aspect of party organization – party membership. Party membership is closely associated with the other party organizational features, in particular with the local party organization. The previous chapter looked thoroughly at the relationship of local branches´ density and autonomy with the electoral success of ANO. This chapter theoretically and empirically looks at the closely related but conceptually different aspect of party organization that is party membership. Local branches and party members are indeed related because very often we associate the density of local branches with the *extensiveness of party membership*. But there does not have to be any relationship (whenever referring to the extensiveness of party membership, the number of party members, is meant). There can be an overlap between the local organizational density, and the extensiveness of party membership because local branches consist of members (more branches should reflect in more extensive membership network). However, there does not have to be a relationship, because there can be a party that has a perfectly extended network of local branches, but there can be only a few members in each of them.

When looking solely at the numbers (i.e. the relationship between the density of local branches and the electoral performance of ANO), the analysis in the previous chapter did not show a strong relationship. However, when the investigation progressed further, the local party organization turned out to be electorally beneficial for ANO, although differently. One of the findings of Chapter 2 was that ANO provides the autonomy to the local branches to select locally-embedded candidates (who organize local party-themed events for the public), and the party benefits from this strategy electorally. Simultaneously, national leadership´s capacity to control the autonomy of local branches seemed to translate into the better able to address any potential scandals at the local level; boosting party cohesion, stability and legitimacy. In light of this, this Chapter 3 will look not only at the numbers (i.e. the relationship between the extensiveness of party membership and the electoral success of ANO) but will explore ANO´s

[4] Part of the data used in this chapter was published as a co-authored article, see: Cirhan and and Stauber (2018).

party membership beyond that. Investigating other specific aspects of its ANO´s party membership should enlighten more potential implications it may have electorally.

The definition of party membership may vary from one political party to another; each party may even hold to a concept of membership, "peculiar to it" (Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994, 19). As such, party membership might describe multiple types of relationships between parties and their supporters. Many parties experiment with various affiliation options, such as registering 'sympathizers' or 'party friends' (Ponce and Scarrow 2014, 1). Traditional individual members can be distinguished from the other forms of membership by the privileges granted to them (or the obligations imposed on them) by the party. Common obligations include "the injunction to refrain from joining rival parties, and the requirement to contribute to party funds. Common privileges include the right to participate in candidate selection, and the right to influence programmatic decisions" (Scarrow 1996, 16). The contemporary literature dedicated to party membership distinguishes between six forms of political participation (see Table 3.1 for their distinction). Throughout this dissertation, I refer to these different types of relationship between citizens and parties as to different types of party membership. As a result of parties experimenting with various forms of party membership, traditional individual members are said to lose their former relevance for parties. Many closely inter-related external factors (the increased availability and importance of mass media, spread of the use of modern technologies and online mobilisation on social networks), and internal factors (highly professionalized campaigning or personalisation of politics) are said to play their role in traditional individual members´ losing their importance within parties (Gallagher and Marsh 2004; Fisher, Denver and Hands 2006).

Table 3.1 Party Membership Types

Type of party member	Obligations, rights and activities of member
Traditional individual membership	heaviest obligations and most political rights
Light membership	lower dues and fewer benefits
Cyber-membership	formally registered, only online activities
Sustainer	supporter with financial links to party
Social media follower/friend	joined the party´s online network, but has no obligations
News audience	only one-way communication from the party

Source: Scarrow (2015, 30-31).

Simultaneously to the above trends, parties are compelled to seek for the alternatives to traditional individual members to compensate that increasingly fewer people are interested in becoming members. Parties are often seen as 'abstract and anonymous institutions' (Hartenstein and Liepelt 1962) or 'impersonal bureaucratic institutions' (Hooghe and Kern 2015) that offer no immediate material advantage to its members, which demotivates citizens from joining them. Traditional individual membership, one of the most time and cost-intensive forms of political activism, has severely suffered from widespread public dissatisfaction with politics and party dealignment (Bruter and Harrison, 2009; Katz et al., 1992; Mair and Van Biezen 2001; Scarrow, 1996; Seyd and Whiteley, 2004; Van Biezen and Poguntke 2014, 205). Some scholars have even predicted that in the near future, a radicalized member-less form of the business-firm party will be electorally successful (Mazzoleni and Voerman 2016, 9). This chapter contributes to this theoretical discussion and explores how ANO approaches its party membership; what forms of party membership are prevalent within the party, and whether and how party members influence its electoral outcomes.

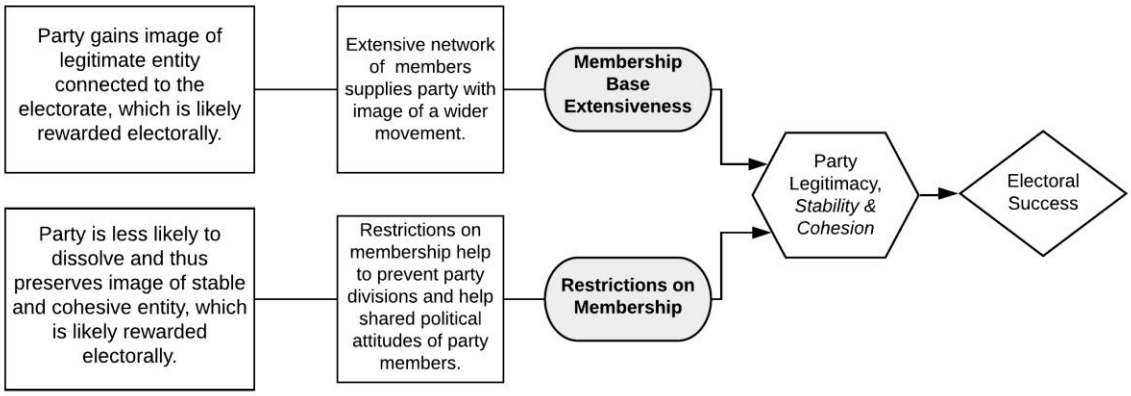
The theoretical arguments in this chapter are the following. Party membership should matter electorally on two levels. On the one hand, an extensive network of party members should support party legitimacy by helping to create the image of the party as a rooted broader movement of people. Having more members should also be electorally beneficial via supporting the party with volunteer labour helping it to communicate better with the potential voters; mobilising votes more effectively. On the other hand, implementing restrictions on party membership should help the party leadership in controlling party stability and cohesion. Preventing internal conflicts and party divisions (and keeping shared political attitudes) is easier in tighter organizations. As explained in detail in introducing Chapter 1, the resulting party cohesion, stability, and legitimacy are likely to resonate with voters positively. The electorate who should more likely support such party in elections. See Figure 3.1 that illustrates these theoretical arguments regarding the relationship between ANO´s membership features and its electoral success. The following section focuses on the theoretical discussion concerning the role of party membership in the electoral success of parties.

3.2. Role of Membership in the Electoral Success

Traditionally, party members have been in the centre of academic research related to party politics for some time. They have been referred to by many terms, comparing party

membership to ‘an electoral cushion’ (Levitsky 2003, 13), ‘the party leadership’s antennas on the ground’ (Seyd and Whiteley 2004, 362), ‘grassroots linkage units’ (Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994), or ‘the backbone of political parties’ (Rohlfing 2015, 18). Several scholars analysed various roles that party members may fulfil within parties. These authors perceived members as grass-roots activists helping to form programmatic policies (Scarrow 1996, 11-13; Bruter and Harrison 2009), as loyal voters (Scarrow 2000; Levitsky 2003, Hooghe and Dassoneville 2014, 376), as a resource pool for recruiting and socialising future candidates and political leaders (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000, 7; Kopecký 1995; Hazan and Rahat 2010, 8; Gherghina 2014, 292; Selle and Svasand 1991; Arter 2016, 20), or as contributors to the party financing (Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994; Scarrow 1996; Ibenskas 2014). Because this chapter is concerned solely with the electoral relevance of party members, only the theory relevant directly to party membership vis-a-vis parties´ electoral success is discussed here.

Figure 3.1 Party Membership and Electoral Success



The impact of party members on the electoral success of parties is viewed differently across the discipline and time, ranging from essential to irrelevant (Van Haute and Gauja eds. 2015). However, two main views prevail. The first view perceives the extensive party membership as electorally beneficial because it supplies party legitimacy. This view is in many ways similar to the theoretical argument discussed in the previous Chapter 2 regarding local branches´ density. This argument is based on three closely-related components. Having more members should boost party legitimacy by supporting party´s visibility, by improving party´s ability to connect with voters, and by enhancing party´s capacity to conduct broader campaigns using its members´ volunteer labour.

Firstly, extensive party membership is seen as an electoral asset because it proofs to the potential electorate that the party has significant roots in society, serving as a valuable source of visibility and legitimacy (Scherlis 2014). Having more party members helps parties to be more visible, voters can know the party better and more likely identify with it (Rohlfing 2015). Secondly, the extensive party membership is said to help parties to connect with voters more efficiently. Party members should cultivate electoral support for the party by multiplying the party's electoral base through their contacts besides the centralized media campaigns (Weldon 2006; Levitsky 2003; Scarrow 1996; Scarrow and Gezgor 2010). With more extensive party membership, the potential voters are more likely to know someone in their social circle who is a party member, and who can persuade them and positively influence their opinions about the party. As such, party members can act as party ambassadors in the local community (Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994), representing important electoral linkage mechanism for political parties with voters (Hooghe and Dassoneville 2014). Several scholars have observed that these personal links are irreplaceable by modern campaign techniques (Scarrow 1996; Whiteley and Seyd 1992; Whiteley 2011). Thirdly, parties with extensive party membership should electorally benefit from utilising member´s free labour during campaigning efforts. Broader campaigns can be conducted thanks to the volunteer work of party members (Rohlfing 2015, 18; Scarrow 2015, 102) locally. Such work may include the assistance with approaching citizens, the distribution of various party materials or other means of spreading the party message (Scarrow 1996; Whiteley 2009; Whiteley and Seyd 2002; Kolln 2014).

The second view perceives extensive party membership as a substantially less important factor for achieving electoral success than other factors (like party marketing or sophisticated and expensive mass media campaigns) (Kopecký 1995; Mair and Van Biezen 2001; Olson 1998; Van Biezen 2003). It even sees party members as costly ‘organizational burdens’ in regards to parties´ stability and cohesion (Scarrow 1996, 27). The relations within parties (especially between party elite and party members) are crucial for their stability and cohesion; these relationships depend on the outcome of ongoing negotiations or so-called ‘organizational power games’ (Panebianco 1988, 22; Sandri and Amjahad 2015). More members may mean more opinions that can stir more internal conflicts. As such, larger parties can be seen as more fragile and more easily divided (Panebianco 1988, 187). The more extensive membership can motivate the creation of factions that may endanger party stability; the inclusiveness of party membership has an impact on the cohesion. When the inclusiveness is high, and recruitment is

restricted, party membership becomes a privileged club with homogenous political preferences and high loyalty. In the opposite case, a more open model of party membership with higher societal reach, may undermine the stability of the organization as the loyalty and attitudinal consensus (party cohesion) of its members is comparatively lower (Bolleyer 2009; Volden and Bergman 2006). Seen this way, the screening of potential party members´ background (including their ideological views) before granting them party membership status, may reveal their future political attitudes, which can prevent future party divisions (Berry 1970, 80). Small (in terms of the number of party members) highly-centralized parties are said to be more politically cohesive due to rigid entrance conditions and careful selection of new members. Thus, preventing excessive organizational expansion may be in line with party leaders´ plan to minimise future divisions. More extensive party membership may be unappealing, as it could create a potentially powerful source of conflict inside the party (Kopecký 1995, 519). When parties get divided into several factions, they lose legitimacy due to increasing levels of their fragmentation, which can quickly discredit them in front of their voters (Scherlis 2014).

The above-reviewed theory yields the following. Party membership should matter electorally on two levels. Having more party members should support party legitimacy (the party is more visible among voters, active party members link potential voters to the party, broader campaigns are possible due to free labour provided by these party members). On the other hand, restrictions on party membership should support party stability and cohesion. Party with smaller party membership can keep shared political attitudes and in turn prevent internal conflicts and party divisions more easily than a party with extensive party membership.

3.3. Methodological Approach

How is the relevance of the above theoretical arguments tested? The empirical analysis of the role of the number of party members in the electoral success has more layers. A cross-regional correlation between ANO´s electoral outcomes and the number of party members (M/E ratio disaggregated on the regional level) is conducted. Networks of different types of party members are compared, the difference between their sizes should demonstrate ANO´ preferred form of party membership. Obligations and rights of different types of party membership within the party are investigated, and the rules concerning the recruitment of members are explored to identify the potential restrictions on ANO´s party membership.

What kind of data do the above analyses depend? The party officials have provided the party organizational data concerning the number of different types of party members. Party statutes enable the analysis of the formal rights and obligations of various forms of party members within ANO. Regional membership statistics and regional electoral statistics are used in the correlations.

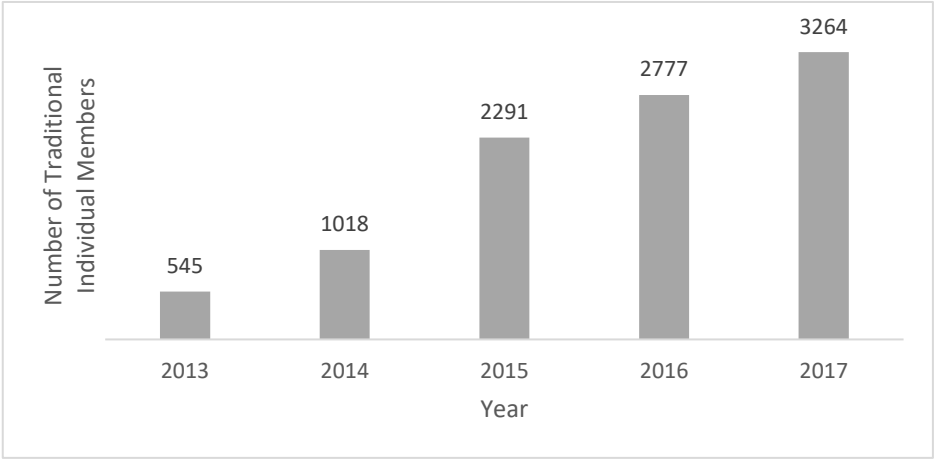
3.4. Empirical Analysis

Following Scarrow´s (2015) distinction of party membership typology, ANO differentiates between three different types of party members. These include traditional individual membership, light membership and social media followers/friends. Light membership in ANO is known as party sympathisers (whenever referring to party sympathisers, the light membership is meant). This empirical section is set up in the following way. The development in the number of ANO´s traditional individual members is explored and discussed first. Then, the rules concerning the recruitment of traditional individual members are reviewed. The discussion proceeds with the analysis of the relationship between the number of traditional individual members and electoral success. Finally, the role of light membership (party sympathisers) and social media followers/friends (the development of their network´s size over time, their rights and obligations within the party) is explored.

3.4.1. Traditional Individual Membership - Size

As a new electorally very successful party, ANO naturally attracted a lot of people who were interested in becoming part of its electoral success (Válková 2014). As such, we should see its traditional individual membership multiplying to reflect this interest (refer to Figure 3.2 with the overview of the development of ANO´s traditional individual membership).

Figure 3.2 Number of ANO´s Traditional Individual Members



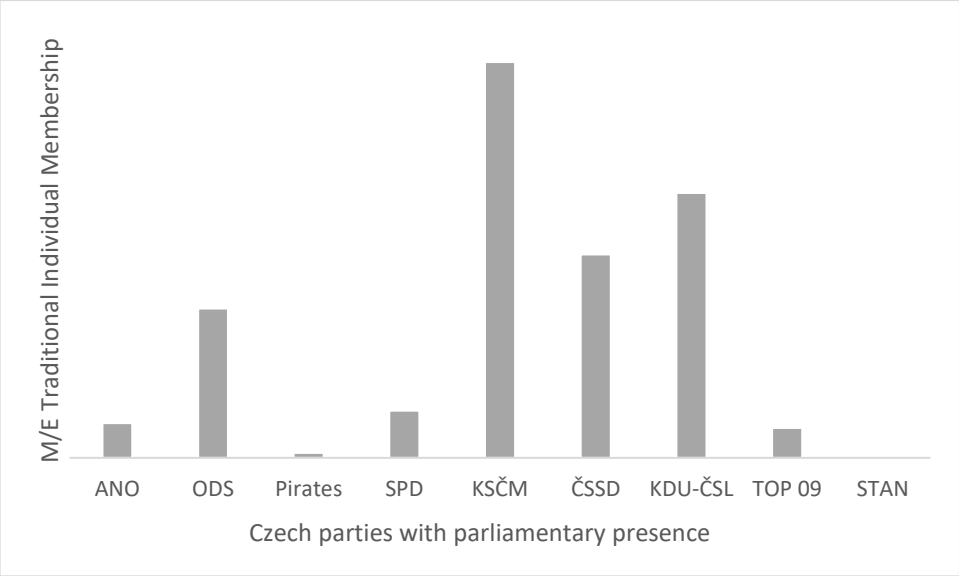
Source: Mazancová (2018), Linek (2015), Spáč (2013, 232–233), Válková (2013, 2014).

The above figure shows that although ANO´s traditional individual membership is gradually extending, its growth keeps a slow pace. ANO was established around Babiš (as a party leader) with only several party members. In 2013 (the year when it competed in general elections for the first time), it had only 545 members. However, because it was highly electorally successful and made an electoral breakthrough, it was quickly awarded by a massive influx of new applications for traditional individual membership (see Válková 2014; Cirhan and Stauber 2018). In the following year, the size of its traditional individual membership doubled to one thousand members. In 2015 (following several elections at different constituency levels, all very successful for the party), ANO doubled its traditional individual membership again to over two thousand party members. However, its size is still far from those of the established parties in the country. To present ANO´s traditional individual membership in the context of other parties in the country, Figure 3.3[5] presents the comparison of all Czech parties with parliamentary presence. M/E ratio (member/electorate ratio dividing the number of these

[5] Figures 3.3 and 3.4 present membership statistics of all parties in represented in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic are from 2017, following the legislative elections of that year.

parties´ traditional individual members by the total number of votes in the election) is used as the indicator for this comparison (Scarrow, Webb and Poguntke 2017).

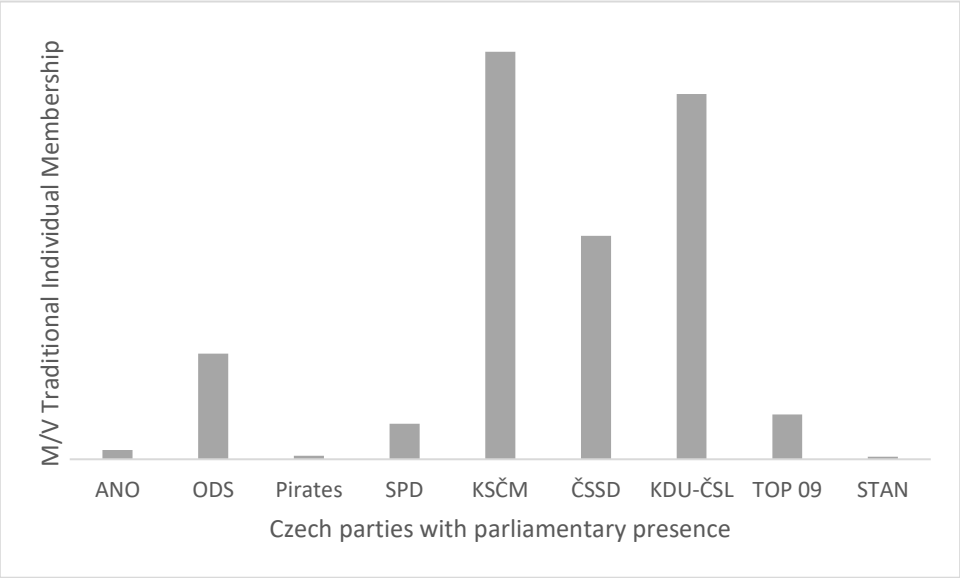
Figure 3.3 M/E Traditional Individual Membership, Year 2017



Source: Rovenský (2018), Brodníčková (2017), Mazancová (2018), Janáková (2018).

When compared with the formerly electorally successful established parties (ODS or ČSSD), the number of ANO´ traditional individual members does not come even close. It is indeed, even more, the case when comparing it to the minor parties with traditionally extensive traditional individual membership (KSČM or KDU-ČSL). However, ANO´s traditional individual membership is compatible with the 'new' parties, such as Pirates, SPD, TOP 09 or STAN. How do these parties´ memberships compare when their electorates are concerned? M/V ratio (member/voter ratio dividing the number of traditional individual members by the number of party voters) is used as the indicator for this comparison (Scarrow, Webb and Poguntke 2017). Refer to Figure 3.4 illustrating parties´ variation in M/V ratio.

Figure 3.4 M/V Traditional Individual Membership Czech Parliamentary Parties



The newer parties (ANO, Pirates, SPD, TOP 09 and STAN) have the lowest number of traditional individual members in regards to the number of their voters. Pirates and STAN have even lower M/V ratio than ANO, which can be attributed to their newness in the national politics, as well as to their recent electoral successes. On the other hand, the established parties (mainly KSČM, ČSSD and KDU-ČSL) have built extensive traditional individual membership in the past, but their electoral performance recently stagnated. The effect of this indicator is strengthened for some of the established parties (ODS and ČSSD) that were electorally successful in the past, but recently witnessed a decline in regards to their electoral performance. Unlike the established parties in the past (and similarly to other new parties), ANO cultivates only minimal traditional individual membership. Following its initial electoral success, ANO decided to take a restrictive approach towards traditional individual membership. The party introduced a robust screening recruitment process to reflect the pressures to expand its traditional individual membership. As a result of this strategy, ANO had (at the time shortly after the first competed in legislative elections) over 6,500 pending applications for traditional individual membership (Válková 2014). Such influx of new applications demonstrates the popularity of this particular party, especially when taking into account that all the established parties in the country experience decreasing interest from new prospective members, and even struggle to keep their existing traditional individual membership stable (Rovenský 2018;

Brodníčková 2017; Mazancová 2018; Janáková 2018). The next section focuses on the restrictions on traditional individual membership in more detail.

3.4.2. Restrictions on Traditional Individual Membership

ANO´s traditional individual membership can be characterised as extremely exclusive (Kopeček and Svačinová 2015, 188). According to the party statutes, "an internal norm, which can be subject to a change at any point, sets the restrictiveness of new members´ recruitment" (ANO 2017). However, the interviewed party leaders pointed out that in reality, several restrictions and requirements are in place. These include sending a full CV, record of personal debt, criminal record, and following six months of probation period (Interviewee 2, 5, 7). These elaborate requirements are unusual in the context of Czech party politics. ANO´s membership exclusivity is also characterised by the fact prospective party members are compelled to take psychological tests (Kopeček and Svačinová 2015, 188). This corporate-like culture of the recruitment process in ANO can be seen as a symbol of the party´s proximity to the business world of Agrofert. The above restrictions on traditional individual membership may be seen as harsh. Still, according to the interviewed party elite, such measures are necessary to protect the party from careerists (or otherwise unsuitable individuals) that could potentially harm the public image of the party (Interviewee 2, 5). The emphasis on the good name of the party was mentioned a lot during these interviews. The goal was to demonstrate that ANO differs from 'the corrupted parties of the past' (Interviewee 2). ANO´s effort to distinguish itself from the established parties (that 'failed in the eyes of their voters') was also evident in the previous Chapter 2 related to the local party organization too. Where local scandals were quickly dealt with by the national party leadership to diffuse negative publicity for ANO.

During the interviews with ANO´s elite, the previously-mentioned backlog of traditional individual membership applications was not attributed to the restrictions on party membership, but rather to the lack of organization within ANO´s regional administration that failed to cope with the high influx of these applications (Interviewee 5). As discussed briefly before, during the screening of new applicants, they are required to provide many personal documents and information about their background. These include their full employment history, their history of party membership, as well as a full record of personal financial situation and business activities. The collection of this information allows party officials to conduct a complete background check, based on which the applicants will be either accepted or refused

as party members (Interviewee 2, 5, 7). These rules resemble an application for a job rather than for membership in a political party (Interviewee 4) and demonstrate ANO´s full consent to control and minimise potential risks associated with party members´ potential future conflicts or scandals. Interviewed party activists emphasised that although they first found these rules strict, they allowed the party to swiftly get rid of individuals, who caused conflicts within the party, which helped to keep the party united (Interviewee 5, 7).

After the 2017 party congress ANO implemented changes in regards to its recruitment rules and further restricted them. Since then, all applications for traditional individual membership are sent to the national party office (to undergo screening) before being sent to the relevant local branch. Simultaneously, party members, whose applications have been declined by the local branch, are welcomed to appeal to the national party office. In reality, this means that national party office acquired complete influence over the recruitment of party members. The party leadership solely decides who is recruited and who is refused as a party member. Having such an impact over the admission process represents a crucial tool in the hands of the party leadership in regards to controlling the party organization. As mentioned in the previous Chapter 2, the party posts responsible for recruiting (and expelling) party members are held by the individuals professionally associated with Agrofert (the business company of the party leader). By having all membership applications sent to the national party office, where the HR director of Agrofert and his team screen through them, the party leadership de facto achieves complete control over the recruitment process. Party leadership´s influence over the admission of traditional individual members implies the party cohesion. The shared political values of members are supported by a requirement of filling-in a questionnaire related to applicants´ political views and opinions, as well as by the necessity to provide a supporting reference from two existing members of ANO during the recruitment process (Paclík 2013). This administration step allows ANO´s party leadership to select its members based on their political attitudes. The screening enabled by the combination of all the above mechanisms will likely prevent individuals with different values from entering the party. Simultaneously, by having such control over the recruitment process, the national party leadership can also put a cap on the size of traditional individual membership. When fewer people are admitted (and the size of the traditional individual membership is kept compact), it is easier for the party leadership to identify and prevent the formation of internal dissent (which could represent a risk for leadership´s position within the party). All of the above restrictions on party membership likely

help the party leadership to avoid party divisions. The following paragraphs will demonstrate the relationship between these restrictions and ANO´s ability to tackle any attempts to establish internal opposition on real-life examples from the media. Controlling the party membership in this way helps the party leadership to attain and preserve party cohesion and stability, which is electorally beneficial, as explained in introducing Chapter 1.

The restrictions on party membership in ANO are not limited to party members´ recruitment; it is equally simple for the party leadership to part with any member after granting them membership status. ANO has an elaborate preventive system in place to control traditional individual membership. The party leadership can swiftly get rid of anybody, who does not comply with its decisions, who presents a threat to it, or who represents a liability to the public image of the party. The annulation of party membership status for disobedient members turned out to be an efficient strategy for boosting the loyalty of party members and disabling internal opposition. The examples from the media show that ANO has proven to make good use of such an approach on numerous occasions. For instance, in České Budějovice, or in Brno, where ANO´s central party office terminated party membership of all members of three local branches. The conflicts over the creation of candidate lists and national party´s response to the local corruption scandals created internal opposition against the regional leadership in Brno. These conflicts led to the expulsion of the majority of party members there and culminated in the legal dispute (expulsed party members sued the party leadership) (Koutník 2020). ANO´s national party leadership decided to support its regional leader fully, and immediately ended the membership status of all party members, who disobeyed his authority. Similarly, in Prostějov, twelve members were compelled to leave the party following a disagreement with the regional leadership (Růžička 2016).

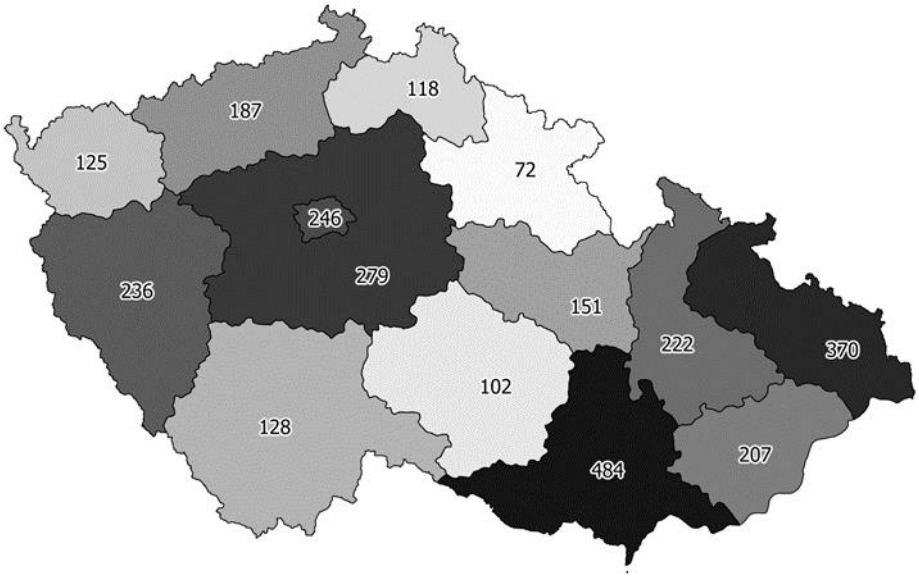
There were numerous other examples when ANO treated the annulation of party membership status (or threat of it) as a tool to enforce obedience and discipline (or to penalize opposition) within the party. It was always the party member, who disobeyed the party leadership that was forced out of the party. Getting rid of individuals who were not loyal to the party leadership helped ANO to prevent divisions within the party. Like in the case of local party organization discussed in the previous Chapter 2, we see a similar successful attempt to take control of the party organization, in this case, over the party membership. In the case of local branches, dissolving entire local branches from above was a common practise when local scandals or any form of internal dissent occurred. In this case, the control over the party

membership is also enabled by the arrangement of rules in statutes, and exercised by the individuals recruited from the corporate network of party leader´s business. Babiš´s companies pay these close associates (or used to pay them), so they are loyal to him as a result (not to risk having a negative career or financial consequences), and the party relies on them to keep the party membership in check. These individuals, professionally-associated with the party leader, have a full authority to decide over the admission and the expulsion of traditional individual members. When party members get into disagreement or conflict with their regional leadership, they will very likely be compelled to leave the party (as the examples from media show). The national party committee deciding over their fate within ANO will be chaired by the party leader, having a significant say in it (Kozák 2019). When expulsed party members would attempt to appeal against such decision, the case would be handled by party´s revision committee chaired by close, loyal associates of the party leader (in particular Agrofert´s former HR manager). One could even see such arrangements transforming this party´s approach towards party members into a quasi corporate-like human resource management. This hunch may be strengthened by the fact that in several cases the party leader made public comments to the media confirming the annulation of party membership statuses even before the committee (voting and deciding over the members´ status) met (Kozák 2019).

3.4.3. Number of Traditional Individual Members and Electoral Success

The relationship between the number of ANO´s traditional individual members and the electoral success is analysed by correlating the regional variance in the number of these members with party´s electoral performance by region (refer to Appendix 8 for the data used in this analysis). As the two last columns in this appendix show, there is a highly unequal regional variation in terms of the number of traditional individual members by region. ANO should be more electorally successful in regions with more registered members if they are electorally relevant. Figure 3.5 illustrates the variation in the size of traditional individual membership across the regions of the Czech Republic (the contrast of shading of colours refers to the number of traditional individual members registered in the region).

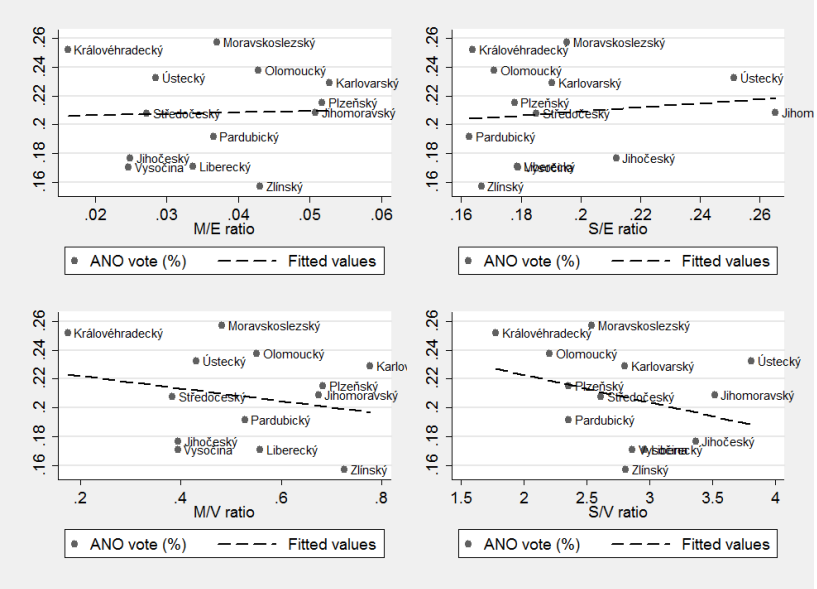
Figure 3.5 Membership base size by region



Source: Cirhan and Stauber (2018).

A correlation between two indicators is conducted to investigate whether a general pattern is suggesting a relationship between them exists. Specifically, ANO´s electoral performance in the 2016 Regional elections (disaggregated on the regional level) and ANO´s traditional individual membership size (measured as M/E ratio disaggregated on the regional level) serve as the indicators for the correlation. Figure 3.6 graphically illustrates that no pattern suggesting any significant relationship between these two variables exists. The impact of the number of traditional individual members on the electoral outcomes of ANO seems to be insignificant. ANO´s electoral performance is stable and nearly identical across the regions, independently of the number of traditional individual members that party registers regionally (which differs sharply from one region to another). Spearman's coefficient shows a low level of correlation (0.12) (Cirhan and Stauber 2018). The outcome of this analysis yields that the number of ANO's traditional individual members does not seem to facilitate better electoral outcomes for the party. The next section focuses on another tier of ANO´s party membership – light membership, known as party sympathisers.

Figure 3.6 Electoral relevance of party membership for ANO

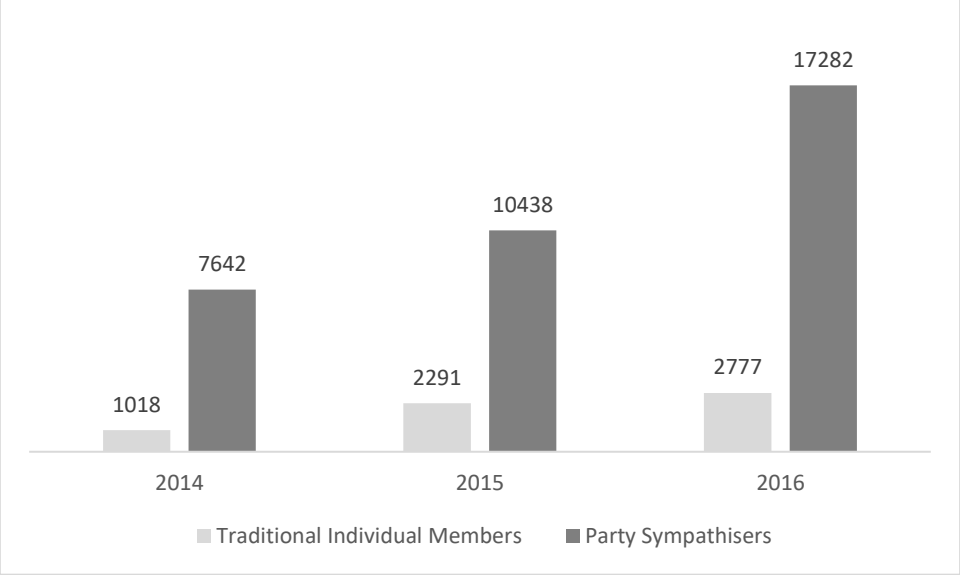


Source: Cirhan and Stauber (2018).

3.4.4. Light membership - Party Sympathisers

Following the above analysis of electoral relevance of the number of traditional individual members on the electoral success, this section explores the role of light membership (party sympathisers) in ANO´s electoral success. Refer to Figure 3.7 that presents an overview mapping the development of party sympathisers´ network over time. When compared with data in Figure 3.2 presented previously, one can see that ANO keeps several times larger party sympathisers´ network than that of the traditional individual members.

Figure 3.7 Number of ANO´s Sympathisers vs. Number of Traditional Individual Members



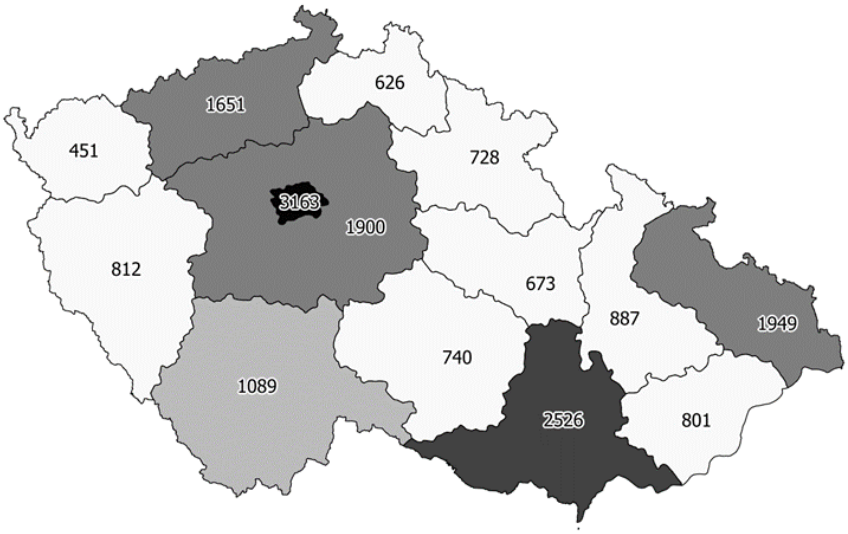
Source: ANO.

ANO has managed to establish a vast network of party sympathisers, consisting of more than 17,000 people (compared to only around 3000 traditional individual members). Such a big difference between the number of traditional individual members and party sympathisers demonstrates ANO´s strategy focusing on the latter type of party membership. Simultaneously, it may show that more people are interested in becoming party sympathisers than traditional individual members. At the individual level, light membership is less time-consuming and does not involve the bureaucracy and responsibilities often associated with the traditional individual membership. Additionally, in the country where parties are seen as less trustworthy institutions (ČTK 2019), not as many people can be expected to be willingly associated with political party officially as traditional individual members. The prevalence of party sympathisers over the traditional individual within ANO reflects this party´s overall approach towards party

membership. The maintenance of party sympathisers´ network is organizationally much less demanding than that of the traditional individual members. The quasi unofficial status of party sympathiser as a supporter is beneficial for the party because party sympathisers are easily managed, and do not present any costs or risks for parties organizationally, this relationship will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Does the number of party sympathisers have any impact on ANO´s electoral success? Figure 3.8 illustrates the variation in regards to the number of party sympathisers per region. The same correlation as in the case of traditional individual membership has been conducted to explore the relationship between the number of party sympathisers and electoral outcomes of ANO. ANO´s electoral performance in the 2016 Regional elections (disaggregated on the regional level) and S/E ratio (sympathiser/electorate ratio dividing the number of party sympathisers by the number of voters disaggregated on the regional level) have been introduced as indicators for this correlation. The impact of the number of party sympathisers on the electoral success of ANO seems to be insignificant (refer to Figure 3.6 for the graphical illustration of this correlation). ANO´s electoral performance is stable and nearly identical across the regions, independently of the number of party sympathisers (that differ sharply from one region to another). A low effect is observed when the number of registered sympathisers is taken into account. The Spearman's coefficient shows a low level of correlation, reaches only 0.14 (Cirhan and Stauber 2018).

Figure 3.8 Sympathiser network size by region



Source: Cirhan and Stauber (2018).

The correlation demonstrated that the relationship between the electoral performance of ANO and the number of party sympathisers is not significant. However, similarly like in the case of local branches´ density discussed in previous Chapter 2, it does not have to mean that this light membership cannot be relevant for ANO electorally in a different way. Lewis (2000) emphasises that it is not merely the size of a party membership base that affects the electoral outcomes of parties. The way party perceives the role of its party members and motivates their activism is what matters electorally. It should give the party its unique character that the electorate is likely to appreciate. The next section investigates the role of party sympathisers within ANO in greater detail.

3.4.5. Party Sympathisers´ Rights and Obligations

Party sympathisers are a crucial aspect of ANO´s party organization. Not only that they strongly outnumber their traditional individual counterparts, but they also play a symbolic role. As a part of its marketing message, ANO often highlights the image of a movement, and if anything embodies this image, it is the wide network of party sympathisers. However, party sympathisers´ role in ANO´s public image is not reflected in the rights that they are given within the party. Unlike traditional individual members, party sympathisers in ANO are granted virtually no decision-making rights. Direct-democratic and participatory principles are not incorporated when it comes to this light membership and these light members´ rights within the party at all. Party sympathisers´ role in ANO is only informal. The party statutes do not explicitly mention them at any point, giving them no privileges associated with their party sympathiser status. Because this form of light membership is not formally institutionalized, party sympathisers cannot influence the functioning of ANO´s party organization in any way. Such organizational setting is convenient for the party leadership, being able to control party organization effectively. When the organizational structure consists mostly of individuals who do not have any impact on the internal decision-making, it is easier for the party leadership to maintain control over the party organization.

However, when it comes to their duties, party sympathisers fulfil the identical role as traditional individual members. The interviewed ANO´s politicians shared their experience with the party using party sympathisers and emphasised that ANO relies heavily on their work during the electoral campaigns (Interviewee 1, 2, 3, 6, 8). Party sympathisers participate in

them directly and provide free volunteer labour, helping to approach the potential electorate in the same way traditional individual members would. These light members connect with the potential voters during local party events that they organize themselves (Interviewee 6, 8). These events include various activities such as goulash cooking contests (Město Jemnice 2019), cleaning events (Uklidmecesko.cz 2020), kids´ days or half-marathons (ANO, tohle je Karlovarsko 2013). Interviewed party activists mentioned that it is not about the quantity (the number of members), but about the involvement of party members and their authentic input into propagating the party. From the beginning, ANO did not try to push toward a broader party organization.

According to ANO´s elite, the party members do not necessarily have to be traditional individual members because party sympathisers are 'as good as them' (Interviewee 1, 2, 5). Party sympathisers can inform people about the party´s goals, and as such, they can mobilise votes as successfully as traditional individual members would (Interviewee 1, 2). It has been shared during these interviews that having a lot of party sympathisers is ANO´s concept (Interviewee 2, 6). It can be interpreted in a way that ANO cares about its members´ input and activism, and not necessarily about their membership status. It has been pointed out that ANO tries to build a network of party sympathisers in every town and village at the local level (Interviewee 1, 2). These light members do not need to be registered as traditional individual members; party sympathisers are enough to spread the positive word about the party in the communities (Interviewee 2). Interviewee 3 went even further stating that "members are important, but sympathisers are far far more important than members, the supporter of our idea is more crucial, I do not think we should aspire to have tens of thousands of members. It is about quality for me, not quantity, but sympathisers can do everything anyway, apart from voting in the party". Party sympathisers may be regarded as appetisers to traditional individual membership status (that will not necessarily follow), who can do everything labour-wise to support party fully (Interviewee 6). In ANO´s party leaders´ perspective, party sympathisers de facto replace traditional individual members in their relevance for the party. This light membership is treated like traditional individual members in other parties. They fulfil the same role when it comes to their duties within the party. Because they are available and easy to manage organizationally, ANO relies on them.

ANO´s interviewed politicians also noted that the most significant advantage of having many party sympathisers (apart from their support during party-related events) lies in their

numerous contacts, which help the party with voter mobilization (Interviewee 3, 6). Party sympathisers successfully use their social circles at the time of elections to persuade their family members, friends and acquaintances to support the party electorally. Interviewed party leaders revealed that party sympathisers represent a valuable source of information for potential voters, having an extended network of party sympathisers helps the party to be visible and gain more votes. To be able to do so, party sympathisers are regularly updated about the party´s vision and events in ANO´s internal newsletter (Musilová 2014). Simultaneously, nearly every local branch of ANO in the country has its group on social media (Facebook), where the sympathisers´ activities are organized. As such, the network of party sympathisers is connected to the other tier of ANO´s party members - social media followers/friends (which will be discussed in the next section). Party sympathisers´ influence on potential voters may be seen as even stronger in case of celebrities and publicly-known figures sympathising with the party (ANO 2019b). These 'V.I.P.' party sympathisers and their life stories were visible on ANO´s website since party´s establishment, and the party, and in particular the party leader, repeatedly made use of these famous connections in the public propagation of the party.

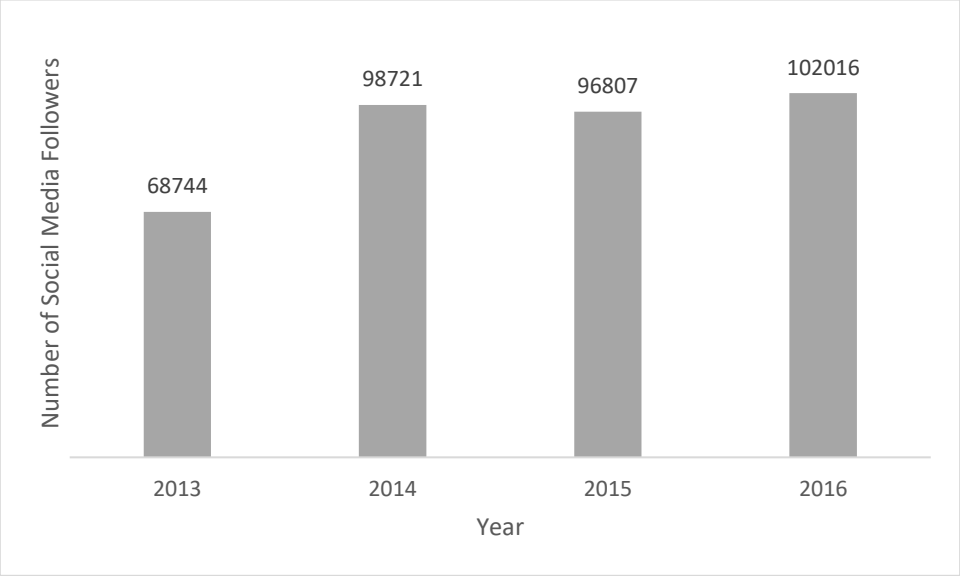
Another example of the party´s usage of its party sympathisers' network was the collection of feedback during the regional election campaign in 2016. In this project, an online forum launched by the party was designed to acquire views on specific policies using a questionnaire. In the second phase of this project, party sympathisers using the forum also had an opportunity to create their topics and discussions. From this project, ANO received feedback from more than 24,000 respondents, which was a huge success in terms of the amount of information gathered (ANO, 2017b). This valuable feedback helped the party with the creation of the program for the upcoming elections. This example clearly shows that ANO is indeed interested in the cultivation of a broader community of light members that can provide the party with feedback on questions of programmatic nature. However, this openness to party sympathisers ends when it comes to granting them rights. Their feedback is welcomed, but this is not reflected in ANO´s willingness to provide them with any rights within the party nor any other privileges.

3.4.6. Social Media Followers/Friends

The lastly discussed tier of party membership in ANO is the network of social media followers/friends. The importance of online activism becomes more prevalent nowadays,

considering that more and more voters use social networks, and gather information online. ANO built an extensive network of social media followers/friends to reflect this current increasingly important phenomenon of online political activism. Facebook fans group of ANO serves as the sole source of data to map the size of this type of party membership. The decision to include the Facebook online social network as the chief and only source of data is straightforward because the frequency of usage of other social networks, such as Twitter is negligible when compared to that of Facebook in the Czech Republic. Figure 3.8 illustrates the development of the number of ANO´s social media followers/friends on Facebook over time.

Figure 3.9 Number of ANO´s Social Media Followers/Friends in Years Comparison



Source: ANO (2017a).

ANO did not underestimate the importance of online party presence. From the beginning, the party presented itself as a modern and online marketing-oriented party. As such, it has an extensive network of social media followers/friends. This approach is directly associated with its emphasis on online presence and considerable investment in the professional marketing channels. ANO even established a specialized social networks team. As ANO´s lead party marketer has emphasized, the party increasingly uses a social network structure before the elections to spread a party message to mobilize votes (Cirhan and Stauber 2018). Social media followers/friends successfully take up the voter-mobilisation role formerly fulfilled by traditional individual members on the ground. One social media follower/friend can have

access to more people online than any individual distributing party documents in person could dream of. When compared to the options of offline propagation of the party, online party communication also has the advantage of social networks´ algorithms targeting individuals based on their preferences and behaviour online (Murthy et al. 2016; Woolley and Howard 2016). As such, online activism can potentially have a much stronger positive impact on the potential electorate (connecting them to the party) than the traditional individual membership would in campaigns in person.

Social networks indeed represent a new arena for parties to propagate their program and candidates, and ANO has demonstrated the capacity to utilize its potential in this respect maximally. In this new arena, social media followers/friends fulfil the role of party activists on the ground. They share and like party posts, videos and other materials with a wider than ever audience of potential voters. ANO can de facto overcome its organizational deficit in the size of its traditional individual membership. Online presence of ANO represents another area of party membership, where ANO skilfully compensates for its limited traditional individual membership (that is a subject to many restrictions). Like in case of party sympathisers, online supporters have no rights nor any privileges granted by the party. Their only impact on the party is in the form of provision of free labour (in this case in the online party propagation and voter-mobilization on social networks), without representing any organizational costs for the party.

3.5. Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter pursued an argument about various features of ANO´s party membership and its electoral success. One part of this chapter focused on the role of the number of party members in facilitating higher electoral outcomes. The theory associates having more party members with a better electoral performance for parties by helping them be more visible to voters, who should more likely identify with them (Scherlis 2014; Rohlfing 2015). Parties with more party members should also mobilize voters more effectively by multiplying the party's electoral base through their contacts and social circles (Weldon 2006; Levitsky 2003; Scarrow 1996), and by providing labour during campaigns (Scarrow 2015; Whiteley 2009; Kolln 2014). The analysis of the role party membership size in the electoral success empirically distinguished two types of ANO´s party membership – traditional individual membership and light membership (party sympathisers). The findings presented in this chapter indicate that the number of either type of

party members does not seem to have a substantial impact on the electoral success of ANO. Looking solely at the number of traditional individual members/party sympathisers and the electoral performance of ANO demonstrated that the relationship is not significant. ANO´s electoral performance is stable across the country. It does not reflect the variation in the number of traditional individual members or party sympathisers that are unequally distributed in different regions. Although having more party members does not seem to be significant for the electoral success of ANO, party membership still seems to matter for it electorally via affecting party stability and cohesion.

Panebianco (1988) and Sandri and Amjahad (2015) saw the control and the exclusiveness of party membership as crucial ingredients of the cohesion and stability of the party organization. Bolleyer (2009), Volden and Bergman (2006) and Berry (1970) claimed that the screening of new party members (with the focus on their ideological views and political attitudes) could prevent party divisions. Scherlis (2014) argued that when parties lose control over their party membership, they get easily divided, and get discredited in front of their voters as a result. The findings presented in this chapter indicate that the exclusive character of ANO´s traditional individual membership aids this party´s cohesion and stability. The restrictions on traditional individual membership (manifested in the rules concerning their recruitment and dismissal) transform ANO into an institution that functions as an exclusive club, inside which is very complicated to get. This confirms the argument made by Bolleyer (2009), whose research has demonstrated that restrictions on party membership help parties to attain stability because it is easier for the leadership to control the party organization. The following logic applies here, once you are admitted into the party, your position is never granted and relies solely on your good relationship with the party leadership. Volden and Bergman (2006) also perceived exclusivity of membership and restrictions on recruitment of members as a crucial aspect of parties' ability to avoid splits and conflicts. This organizational strategy seems to be electorally advantageous for many reasons. The shared political attitudes are stemming from these restrictions on traditional individual membership help to prevent party conflicts and divisions. Like in case of Bolleyer (2009) and Berry (1970), my findings show ANO´s management of party membership helps to keep the party more cohesive and allows for more efficient control of party organization by the party leadership. The real-life examples from the media illustrate that ANO regularly strips off party membership of those who misbehave in any way. When the individuals professionally-associated with the party leader have the

institutional backing to terminate membership status of those, who are not loyal to the party leadership, the leaders can effectively mute any internal opposition. By using the membership status as a tool to institute obedience within the party organization, the leadership´s position becomes more secure. This argument is very similar to one made in the previous Chapter 2 related to the control over local branches´ autonomy. Like for Scherlis (2014), the findings here show that the resulting cohesion and stability are electorally beneficial because the fast and efficient resolution of scandals and conflicts within the party helps ANO´s electoral success by diffusing any negative publicity. Voters are more likely to support a party that is not divided by conflicts and scandals because it appears more competent and trustworthy to them.

The restrictions on traditional individual membership go hand in hand with a strong emphasis on building a wide structure of party sympathisers. This party organizational strategy is beneficial for ANO because party sympathisers are not limited in regards to the duties and labour they provide for the party but have no rights nor any privileges are granted to them. This arrangement allows ANO to utilize the perks associated with having many activists on ground propagating the party while enjoying the luxury of not having to pay any costs for it organizationally. ANO relies on their voluntary labour during the campaigns. These light members organize the locally based party-themed events conducted by local branches (that were discussed in the previous Chapter 2). These events help the party to connect with the electorate. Local branches do not need many traditional individual members, because they depend on the wide network of party sympathisers. ANO also seems to benefit from the numerous contacts and societal circles of its party sympathisers, connecting the party with far more people, who are more likely to support it in elections as a result. By implementing restrictions on traditional individual membership, ANO tackles any source of internal dissent, thus remaining cohesive and stable. At the same time, the network of right-less party sympathisers provides access to a broad community of volunteers on the ground. The same goes to the social media followers/friends, who are numerous and are used excessively to mobilise votes online but cannot negatively influence cohesion and stability of ANO´s party organization.

CHAPTER 4 Party Elite

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapters revealed that two different aspects of party organization, local branches and party members, matter for ANO electorally for various reasons. This chapter[6] explores the role of the third aspect of ANO´s party organization, party elite, in this party´s electoral success. First, the literature is reviewed, and the main general theoretical concepts in the area are discussed. Then, the chapter continues with the debate about methodology, and finally, with the analysis of the empirical evidence. As discussed in the previous chapters, political parties are not unitary actors, and their electoral success is directly dependent on many factors related to their party organization. In particular, the findings in previous chapters indicated that the limited autonomy of local branches and the restrictions on party membership seem to matter for ANO electorally because they help the party leadership to prevent internal conflicts and divisions. ANO´s capacity to efficiently address such scandals helps the party to diffuse negative impact on its public image, which helps the party to be more likely elected. Like the control of local branches´ autonomy and the restrictions on party membership, the party elite represents another aspect of ANO´s party organization that should matter for this party´s electoral success via affecting party cohesion.

No institution operates in a power vacuum, and the struggles over the leadership positions often cause conflicts within organizations. It is even more case in organizations, where elites´ positions rely on the votes (and loyalty) of others within that organization, such as it is the case in political parties. The organizational structures of most institutions operate in a hierarchical order, and the individuals constituting them tend to compete for power continually (Farazmand (1999). As such, all institutions, and political parties, in particular, perform in a power environment, their stability is directly influenced by elites' relationships (Moore 1979). As such, 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

[6] Part of the data used in this chapter was published as a co-authored article, see: Cirhan and Kopecký (2017).

for political and decision-making power" (Sartori 1976, 71), to emphasise their nature of constant potential for internal conflicts endangering their stability.

In theory, party stability results from two processes. The first of these processes is the application of *party discipline* (Andeweg and Thomassen 2010). Discipline is achieved by threatening or actual usage of various sanctions by the party leadership. Such sanctions may include leadership´s threats concerning party activists´ re-nomination, support for their nomination for various positions in the public office (or within the party organization), or personal campaign funding. The use of such disciplinary measures or threats of such measures (so-called sticks) does not have to be limited solely to MPs. It can be similarly applied at different levels of party organization. At the regional level, the relevant party executive bodies may be using actions or threats of actions to enforce discipline. It can take different forms like cutting party funding for certain local elections or individual candidates (or not showing support for specific nominations). Changing the composition of candidate lists for different types of elections may also serve this purpose. In extreme scenarios, they may even consider dissolving local branches may (as discussed in Chapter 2 concerning local party organization). In addition to the mentioned disciplinary measures and threats of these measures, party discipline can be achieved by offers of selective incentives (so-called carrots), which may also take different forms (Panebianco 1988). The most common examples include party patronage[7] and other perks of the office.

The second process, when party stability is achieved by *party cohesion*, we talk about the process, by which party elites share political attitudes and policy preferences, which in turn results in a high degree of their ideological consensus. In contrast to the process of party discipline, where the stability is to a large degree enforced and manufactured by the party leadership, in case of party cohesion the stability is a result of commonly shared collective identities that may be based on many factors. Most commonly on the elite homogeneity stemming from elite´s shared social backgrounds and organizational links from outside of the party organization (Suthanintr 1985; Namenwirth and Lasswell 1970; Searing 1971; Edinger

[7] For a detailed insight into the party patronage topic in the Czech context please see Kopecký (2012) and Kopecký, Mair and Spirova (2012).

and Searing 1967; Farazmand 1999). Both processes of party discipline and party cohesion take place simultaneously in the internal life of parties; one could even state that only a combination of both can help parties to preserve stability in the long term. However, when stability is attempted to be achieved by disciplinary measures in the absence of party elites sharing common political attitudes, these attempts are rarely successful (Heidar and Koole 2000). The limited effect of party discipline without the existence of party cohesion was also noted by Kopecký (2001), who analysed parliamentary elites amongst Czech parties in the 1990s; the enforcement of party discipline as a means to achieve party stability was not effective and brought only limited results. Other scholars observed that the party discipline approach often achieved the exact opposite outcome than anticipated and led to conflicts and divisions (Heidar and Koole 2000).

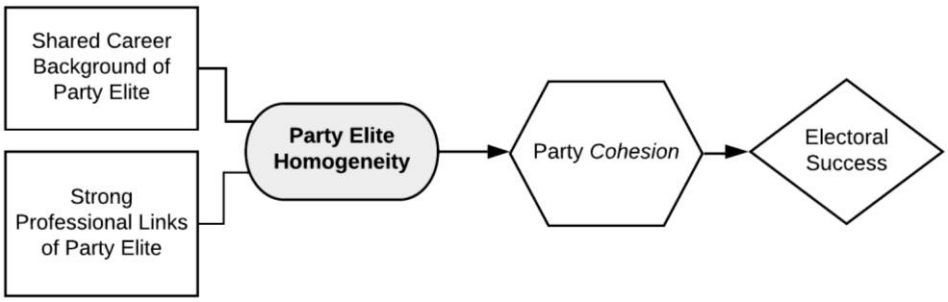
This chapter empirically explores only the impact of ANO´s party elite on the electoral success achieved via party cohesion. In this dissertation party elite homogeneity refers to party elite´s shared social backgrounds and their strong organizational links forged outside of the party organization. Party cohesion refers to common political attitudes of a party elite that support party stability, as explained in greater detail in the introducing Chapter 1. The theoretical arguments in this chapter are the following. The party elite homogeneity facilitates party cohesion that helps the party to present itself publicly as a unified entity. Potential voters will likely welcome a united party elite (manifested especially at the time when the party faces scandals). The common career backgrounds and shared processional links of party elite matter electorally via affecting party cohesion. When the party elite has shared career pasts and knows each other from the same professional setting outside the party organization, they are more likely to hold common political attitudes. This resulting cohesion is electorally advantageous because such a party is more likely immune to internal conflicts and to the negative publicity they entail. Especially at the times of scandals facing the party (or other pressures related to holding public office), the party cohesion gets tested the most. When the party is cohesive, these scandals and pressures less likely trigger party divisions. Party with the homogenous elite is more cohesive and thus better equipped to withstand scandals as a united entity, which sends a positive message to the potential electorate. It positively resonates with voters, who more likely support such party in elections. The following section focuses on this theoretical debate (concerning the relationship between the background of party elite and party cohesion vis-à-vis the electoral success) in more detail.

4.2. Role of Party Elites in Electoral Success

> "Parties, especially newly formed and newly governing parties, are as far from being unitary actors as any organization can be considering the different pressures they face, such as the need to hold the party together, to communicate and coordinate between the central party organization and the party in public office, and to manage internal conflicts and relations within the organization as well as with coalition partners" (Deschouwer 2008, 7).

Previous work concerned with the party elite homogeneity and party cohesion within new Czech parties demonstrated that scandals that took place in parties lacking cohesion transformed into conflicts (Cirhan and Kopecký 2017). These internal conflicts led to parties´ marginalisation because they triggered their destabilisation. The lack of stability quickly transformed into party organizational crisis. Pressures associated with these crises tested parties´ ability to remain united, and those parties that lacked cohesion failed such test. As a result, these parties have lost the confidence of the public, experienced organizational splits, and ultimately disintegrated, completely losing their relevance. In theory, party elite homogeneity is crucial for parties electorally because it facilitates party cohesion. As explained in introducing Chapter 1, party cohesion is defined as a state, in which the party remains united because it achieves consent in major political questions across the party. As such, party cohesion refers to the existence of shared political attitudes within party resulting in an internal party unity, which is a crucial ingredient of party stability (stable parties are less likely to divide, and the immunity to divisions is preferable by voters). *Party elite homogeneity* stems from shared social backgrounds of the elite and their strong links from outside of the party. Refer to Figure 4.1 that illustrates the relationship between the party elite homogeneity, party cohesion and electoral success. The following paragraphs review and discuss the existing theory related to the relationship between party cohesion and electoral performance more generally. This general theoretical discussion is followed by the debate focusing on the role of party elite homogeneity in this process.

Figure 4.1 Elite backgrounds and party cohesion



A party that is cohesive holds shared political attitudes across its organization. For instance, party cohesion translates into MPs´ common voting patterns (a behaviour that is otherwise hard to achieve). Attempts to discipline party elite into voting the same way in the absence of shared political attitudes are rarely successful (Kopecký 2001) and even lead to opposite outcomes risking parties' factionalism (Heidar and Koole 2000). MPs belonging to a cohesive party will more likely vote alike in the parliament and will less likely quarrel in public. As such, sharing political attitudes supports the party´s ability to present a unitary vision, and to spread a unified party message to its voters. Party cohesion is thus crucial for the party´s ability to present itself as a united and predictable actor, which is awarded by the electorate in elections because the public prefers such parties.

This chapter empirically investigates how party cohesion manifests at the time of crises faced by the party. Examples of the most extreme scandals that the party experienced in recent years are used for this analysis. In theory, party cohesion gets tested most in times of crises. When the party faces scandals, party cohesion represents a crucial element for preserving the positive public image. Parties, whose elite share common political attituded are more likely to remain immune to the party divisions that are often triggered by scandals. When party elite does not share political attitudes, parties face the constant danger of factionalism, splits and even disintegration (Tavits 2013). Parties function as collective entities, in which divided opinions (and competition) create internal pressures and potential for dissent. These pressures often "trigger the formation of factions that render the unitary actors" (Boucek 2009, 455-456). The problem of factionalism often triggered by scandals (and allowed by the lack of cohesion) is even more relevant to newly formed and especially newly governing parties. These parties face even stronger pressures associated with their participation in public office because their party organizations are new (and as such more likely fragile). Thus, the consequences of

internal conflicts may be more severe for their organizational survival. Such parties not only have less experience in the governance but simultaneously enjoy more media attention, which adds more pressures to holding a public office (Deschouwer 2008). Attaining party cohesion supports parties´ capacity to prevent internal conflicts and divisions, which translates into better party´s electoral outcomes because the way how the party operates internally strongly affects how the party is perceived externally in media and public discussions (Tavis and Letki 2014). When the party is not divided by conflicts, it positively affects the public image of the party and its popularity, that in turn has impacted the electoral success. Voters are more likely to cast a vote to parties whose elite represents a unitary vision and does not frequently fall into arguments between each other. Internal conflicts likely negatively resonate with the potential electorate, because divided parties appear as untrustworthy and incompetent to govern.

How can party cohesion be achieved? This chapter looks at the party cohesion achieved solely by party elite homogeneity. As mentioned previously, party elite homogeneity consists of two aspects – common career backgrounds and strong links of the party elite. Regarding the first aspect, several authors associate party cohesion with the shared career backgrounds of party elite (Andeweg and Thomassen 2010; Eldersveld 1964; Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008; Kim and Patterson 1988). Common career background is seen as a key to shared values in life generally. In turn, it promotes shared political attitudes. Individuals with same career-paths will likely have similar interests, and thus hold similar preferences in politics too (Eldersveld and Siemienska 1989; Janowitz et al. 1956; Lazer 2011; Lodge 1969; Mills 1956; Eldersveld 1964; Knoke 1993). Although career background is the most influential in forming common political attitudes, other aspects of social backgrounds, such as common educational attainment or similar social class origins can also influence them (Putnam 1973; Higley 1981; Higley et al. 1991; Wellhofer 1974). Concerning the second aspect of party elite homogeneity, in addition to the shared career backgrounds (and other common social roots), it also supports party cohesion when elites know each other from the organizational setting outside of the political party. There is a variety of organizations in which the elite can attain such links. They include universities or other educational institutions, private companies, public offices, student associations, unions, churches and other religious organizations, pressure groups, civil society movements, volunteer groups or any types unpolitical or political movements. However, the cohesion is said to be strengthened most when elite share professional occupational links (Farazmand 1999).

For the purposes of this chapter, the homogenous party elite refers to the party elite sharing both common career backgrounds and professional links. I am aware that part of the existing literature dedicated to the study of party elite backgrounds focuses on various aspects of backgrounds such as social class, education or gender. However, I have decided to omit these aspects and focus only on career backgrounds and professional links between party elite. These two criteria were used chiefly because they were expected to matter most in the case of ANO. The focus on careers and professional association of party elite was a rational choice, considering the business background of the party leader and the presentment of the party as a project of successful managers. More discussion regarding this aspect will be included later in this chapter. I acknowledging ANO´s rhetoric emphasizing the necessity of managerial approach towards the administration of the state and the business background of Babiš. Therefore, I have a hunch that career past and professional association of party elite will likely play a more fundamental role in ANO, than other aspects of social background, such as education or social class.

The existing theory emphasises that those elites, who share not only common career backgrounds, but also have occupational links form so-called 'social circles' (Edinger and Searing 1967). Members of these circles have similar occupational socialization experiences and very likely hold similar political attitudes (Mills 1956). Relationships forged between the party elite in such organizations, before their joint participation in the same political party, help them to form a network (Lodge 1969), which "positively influences attitudinal consensus within the party, leads to shared views on specific public policies and broad ideological orientations" (Moore 1979, 674). When the party elite share both career backgrounds and professional links, there is a high chance that they have worked in the same organization in the past (although potentially in very different occupational roles) or even know each other from that setting. In theory, the highest levels of party cohesion are achieved when common career backgrounds and professional links of party elites concur simultaneously; scholars refer to this phenomenon as to the existence of so-called dual hierarchy within party organization (Janowitz et al. 1956; Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008). Such dual hierarchies lead to the overlap of affiliations of elite members, when "elites hold key posts simultaneously or successively in many types of organizations, as they can coordinate diverse activities, create an affinity and common sharing of interests" (Janowitz et al. 1956, 36-40). When the party elite shares common professional links acquired in the same organization outside of the political party,

they are likely to form an informal network within the party structure that is similar to a friendship. Different scholars refer to these informal networks (formed by party elites with same career past and professional links) by different terms, such as ‘communities of fate’ (Wellhofer 1974), ‘consensually integrated elite’ (Putnam 1973) or ‘interlocking networks’ (Farazmand 1999). When a large proportion of the party elite is homogenous (they simultaneously share career backgrounds and belong(ed) to the same business organization outside of the party organization), they form a corporate network and are much more likely to nurture and maintain party cohesion. Such party cohesion translates into party stability, which mirrors into a more attractive public image for the party that is electorally advantageous (as explained previously).

4.3. Methodological Approach

This chapter pursues the theoretical argument of party elite homogeneity shaping the public image of the party positively as a cohesive entity, translating into better electoral performance. As such, the analysis first explores the relationship between the ANO´s elite´s homogeneity (a combination of their career backgrounds and professional links) and party cohesion. As a second step, the analysis progresses and explores the relationship between the party cohesion and ANO´s electoral success. How is the relevance of this theoretical argument tested? We know the party is electorally successful, but the rest remains unclear. We do not know how homogenous is its elite (in regards to their careers and professional links). We do not know how such party elite homogeneity would translate into making the party more cohesive. Nor we know how such party cohesion would manifest electorally by influencing the public image of the party.

To empirically investigate these relationships, first, an in-depth analysis of the elite´s backgrounds is conducted. The following aspects of ANO´s elite´s backgrounds are empirically treated: their occupational background, their former political experience and the existence of professional links amongst them. This research approach will identify the proportion of ANO´s elite that share career backgrounds and professional links (i.e. it will indicate how homogenous is the party elite). The second step will incorporate the analysis of this potential homogeneity´s manifestation in making the party more cohesive (and in turn more attractive for voters). Exploring various real-life examples from Czech media should enlighten whether ANO held together when the party faced major scandals (and whether its public image benefited as a

result). The analysis will integrate public electoral polls conducted at the time of these substantial scandals to demonstrate the relationship between party cohesion and the public image of ANO.

What kind of data do the analyses mentioned above depend? ANO´s elite´s backgrounds are the chief source of data in this chapter. Following the terminology coined by Katz and Mair (1993), this chapter explores the background of the elite in 'the party in public office', as well as the elite in 'the party in central office'. ANO´s MPs, ministers and mayors constitute the first group, while the second group consists of party praesidium members, leaders of regional organizations and central party staff. In total, online profiles of ninety-two ANO's elites are analysed. In regards to ANO´s MPs, the investigation took place on the Czech parliament website. For the other elites, the official party website of ANO has been used as the main source of data. For the lower levels of political representation and especially for some of the internal party elites the data were not disclosed on the party website, additional research took place on social networks, and sites such as LinkedIn were used as the source). When collecting data, the focus was on the career past of elites, that is on their career patterns (the occupation party elites held before being appointed to the party post). The attention was also paid to the political experience of ANO´s elites (any previous political party membership, candidacy or nomination by the party as an independent candidate). Finally, the professional links between party elite were investigated (the actual specific companies, where elites held posts before their political careers in ANO). Public electoral polls and media articles serve as other sources of information in this chapter.

4.4. Empirical Analysis

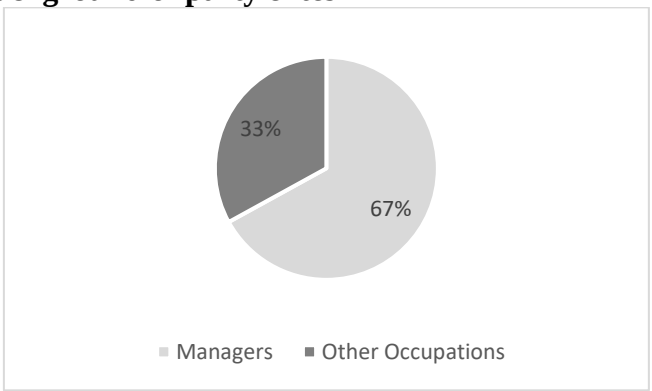
This section explores how homogenous ANO´s elite is in two aspects, looking at their career backgrounds (and political experience) and the professional links between the elite. This section then proceeds with investigating how the party elite homogeneity matters for party cohesion, and in turn for ANO´s electoral success.

4.4.1. Career Backgrounds and Political Experience of ANO´s Elite

The analysis of ANO´s elite´s backgrounds shows that one kind of profession constitutes the single largest category in the sample (the full dataset with party elites´ names, posts held in ANO and specific careers of these elites is attached as a part of Appendices 10-16). The data

presented in the appendices indicate that managers are the most represented profession amongst ANO´s party elite. For this analysis, the managerial category encompasses many career roles, such as company directors, individuals in executive positions and entrepreneurs. As illustrated in Figure 4.2, individuals with such managerial career background account for sixty-seven per cent of the party elite. The other professions include highly heterogeneous groups of the party elite with various careers (ranging from lawyers, teachers, journalists, doctors, actors social workers and others). In terms of the 'party in public office', out of forty-seven MPs, twenty-seven are former managers or entrepreneurs (from various business industries and at different levels of seniority). Six out of its seven mayors have managerial career past, and four out of six ANO's ministers have been previously employed in managerial positions. In regards to the 'party in central office', the party elite replicates the same phenomenon of ‘managers' infiltration’. Nine out of twelve members of ANO's party praesidium have managerial career background. Twelve of the 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. Four out of six of ANO's employees in party secretariat have former managerial career past. The above yields that ANO´s elites are indeed predominately composed of managers.

Figure 4.2 Career background of party elites



Source: www.anobudelip.cz, LinkedIn profiles, parliamentary websites, refer to Appendices 10-16.

This prevalence of managers within ANO´s party elite is consistent with this party´s public image (and with the rhetoric used in the electoral campaigns). The common managerial career backgrounds of party elite observed above can be seen as a part of ANO’s broader strategy to build a public image as the party of managers. From the beginning, ANO praised the role that experienced managers with hands-on experience and pragmatism from real-life can bring into

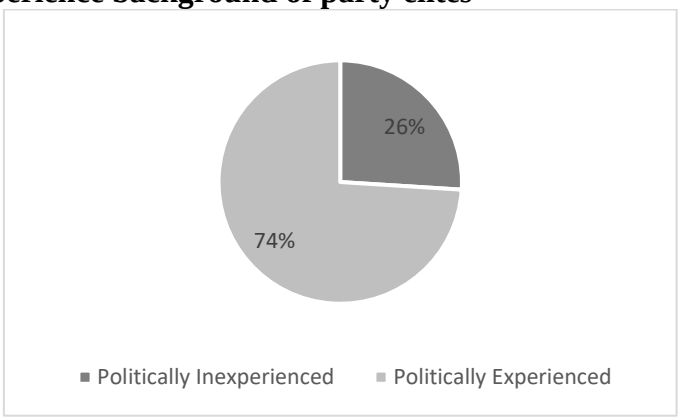
politics. This pragmatic problem-solving managerial ideology in ANO stems from the media appearances of its party leader. As evident from the findings, this part of ANO´s ideology mirrors in the career composition of its party elite as well (in particular within 'the party in public office'). This ‘managerial pragmatism’ is based on ANO´s views on the state as a business firm, and the role of politicians as managers in it (Němec 2012). ANO´s communication style with the public relied extensively on such pragmatic, manager-like, business perspective of running the public administration.

Amongst other things, the strong emphasis was put on promising to run the state like running private business corporations. ANO repeatedly made this claim as the main slogan in its electoral campaigns. Especially in the campaign before the 2013 parliamentary elections, in which the party made an electoral breakthrough. In 2013 the party emphasized to ´manage the state like a firm´ and revisited this idea in the 2016 regional elections. The updated slogan to ´lead a region like a firm´. This idea is based on the premise that people with hands-on managerial experience from the real world will provide a better solution to the malfunctioning state bureaucracy, growing state debt and other issues. Managers were presented as the opposition to the career politicians of established parties with no ´real-life´ career achievement. This business problem-solving idea as a recipe for fixing the state administration was from the beginning, the main slogan of the party. Considering the overall lack of any signs of party ideology in ANO, it was also the only clear symbol of its political views. The findings demonstrate that the career composition of ANO´s elite is related to the business image of the party. Common elites´ backgrounds are de-facto connecting the managerial-like ideological view of the party with its organizational practice. By the opening of public office to the individuals with the managerial experience of running private enterprises, ANO has turned these ideas into practice. It created a party elite with a comparatively high degree of occupational homogeneity.

In addition to the career backgrounds of ANO´s party elite, this analysis includes another aspect of their background – the previous political experience. For this analysis, political experience refers to any elite´s previous party membership or candidacy before participating in ANO. The findings indicate that twenty-six per cent of the party elite had some political experience before joining ANO (see Figure 4.3 for the graphical illustration of the data presented as part of Appendices 10-16). It yields that seventy-four per cent of ANO´s elite had no political experience at all, which is again in line with the ANO´s public image as a party

of managers opposing political establishment. ANO repeatedly emphasised its newness in politics, as well as its strong opposition to the entire political establishment. Because ANO frequently labelled all established parties as corrupt and incompetent in its campaign message, it would come as a surprise if the majority of its party elite would be recruited from the other parties. The anti-establishment rhetoric was strong within ANO. Even the word politics or politician were perceived as pejorative terms. ANO´s party leader himself repeatedly insisted that he is not a politician, despite being MP and minister of finance at the time.

Figure 4.3 Political experience background of party elites



Source: www.anobudelip.cz, LinkedIn profiles, parliamentary websites, refer to Appendices 10-16.

The political strategy of aiming at pragmatic managers from outside of politics is not an entirely new idea in the context of contemporary post-communist Czech politics. A similar strategy was implemented in the case of ODS in the '90s (electorally strongest Czech party at the time). In this respect, Hadjiisky (2011) talks about an essential group of so-called post-normalisation technocrats, who were individuals that formed the ideology and public image of ODS throughout the '90s. These individuals heavily influenced not only the ODS party in the years to come, but their perspective and ideas also had an impact on the crucial economic policies and reforms adopted in the country at the time. This ODS elite shared similar political attitudes based on their common professional past as managers or financiers, and their educational profiles as economists. Several scholars noted that in 1995, one-third of ODS´s party leadership had the technical or economic educational background (Kostelecký and Kroupa 1996). Such

composition of party elite was not a coincidence, Václav Klaus[8] as s conservative, right-wing economist created the party elite from individuals with similar professional and educational profiles, because he came up from this background too. A large proportion of ODS party elite comprised competent professionals, who in addition to having similar career backgrounds knew each other from economic and financial circles. The overlap between the professional network of these technocrats and the formal leadership of the party was crucial for the party cohesion. Hadjiisky (2011, 102) referred to ODS as to a business enterprise because of the influence of these professionals on the party ideology. For similar reasons, Hanley (2004) described ODS as the tool of technocratic modernisation, emphasising the substantial impact these professionals had on the party. Although later the difference between economists and engineers within the party leadership led to widely-spread disputes and tensions and the struggle for control over the party, in the '90s, it unified the party ideologically. The common ground on main policies and common-sense technocratic approach shared by the elite aided ODS´s party elite to share common political attitudes. In turn, this party cohesion protected the party organization from larger conflicts and risk of disintegration. In particular, the technocratic make-up of the party elite and its common ideological profile was crucial for ODS in the ’90s. It helped to navigate the party through the critical phase of its institutionalization when it struggled for control over the party (for more details on Klaus´s party leadership of ODS see Cirhan and Kopecký 2019). The example of ODS shows that the party elite with similar social backgrounds more likely shares political attitudes, which minimises internal conflicts and divisions within the party. Common career backgrounds of ODS´s elite translated into their common political views. Similarly to ODS, in ANO, the common career backgrounds of the party elite help to facilitate party cohesion (as the discussion presented later in this chapter will demonstrate).

4.4.2. Professional Links Between Elites

This section looks at another aspect of the party elite´s backgrounds – their professional links. As explained in detail earlier, in addition to party elite sharing career pasts, professional links

[8] Founder of ODS, party leader from 1991 until 2002, former minister of finance, prime minister and president.

of the elites should further contribute to the party cohesion. In theory, party elite with professional links from the past should more likely hold similar political views and stick together to cooperate in a united manner at times of pressures (considering the relations with each forged outside of their party organization). It should help the party to avoid divisions that should be electorally advantageous by diffusing the negative impact of these conflicts on the public image of the party.

The findings indicate that a not negligible proportion of ANO's party elite has been in the past appointed to (or currently still holds) a managerial position within Agrofert business conglomerate of ANO´s party leader Andrej Babiš. To be specific, seventeen per cent of the ninety-two elites[9] have former or current professional links to Agrofert (see Appendices 10-16). The fact that nearly a fifth of ANO's leadership is professionally associated with Agrofert means that part of ANO's elites forms a corporate network with an unofficial chain of command within the party. Babiš, being a party leader and simultaneously (for part of the elite), either their former or current employer, is creating a chain of dependence. When the party leader´s business pays some of the party elite, they will be more loyal to the party leadership as a result. The loyalty stems from the financial dependency of these individuals on the party leader. This informal relationship based on the financial dependencies has an impact on the party cohesion in ANO and on the position of the party leader. The discussion in the next section will show how party elite homogeneity (common career backgrounds together with shared professional links) translates into party cohesion. The financial dependency of some of the party elite on the party leader further strengthens the effect of the party elite homogeneity on party cohesion. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the data from the party elite´s profiles also indicate that the managers from Agrofert occupy crucial party posts within ANO (see Appendices 10-16). The post of party manager is held by a former Agrofert Human Resources manager, who oversees the overall management of the party behind the scenes. The leader of ANO's parliamentary faction (the most crucial post in relation to the cohesion of ANO´s 'party in public office') is in the hands of another Agrofert´s manager (a current member of Agrofert's board of directors,

[9] Because many individuals hold multiple posts within the party (for instance Andrej Babiš is simultaneously MP, minister and a member of party presidium) the percentage refers more to a proportion of party posts professionally associated with Agrofert, rather than a proportion of individuals per se.

and ANO´s first deputy party leader in one person). The fact that all ANO's MPs have to account to the individuals professionally connected to (and financially dependent on) party leader´s business greatly enhances the cohesion within this party. Simultaneously, ANO´s party cohesion is strengthened by a significant overlap of party posts at different levels of leadership hierarchy; some posts within the leadership are held by the same individuals.

Three members of ANO´s party praesidium are simultaneously leaders of regional organizations; eight members of party praesidium are also MPs. It also appears from the interviews conducted with ANO´s elites that different levels of party leadership regularly hold meetings to discuss party agenda and communicate daily via email to keep all individuals in crucial positions informed and updated. The above findings indicate that the party elite is homogenous in regards to their career backgrounds and professional links. The next section will enlighten how this party elite homogeneity manifests in regards to the party cohesion. The cohesion will be tested on the recent scandals experienced by the party. ANO faced the most extreme scandal concerning its party leader, which represents the most difficult challenge to the party known to date. Special attention is paid to the party elite´s behaviour and ANO´s ability to avoid party divisions when facing this scandal.

4.4.3. Homogenous Party Elite and ANO as Cohesive Party

How can we relate the ANO´s party elite homogeneity (in regards to their career backgrounds and professional links) to its electoral success? According to the existing theory, the party elite homogeneity (the shared career background of the elite, enhanced by professional links between them) helps parties to stay more cohesive. In theory, such party cohesion facilitates electoral success, because the party is better equipped to prevent internal conflicts and party divisions, which is welcomed and rewarded by their potential electorate. At this point, we know that ANO is electorally successful and that it has a homogenous elite. The following paragraphs explore how this homogeneity within ANO´s elite manifests in the party being more cohesive and more immune to negative consequences of organizational crises.

From the very beginning, ANO managed to preserve its public image as a cohesive entity. The cohesion manifested itself strongly in the disciplined voting behaviour and obedience of ANO´s MPs to the party leadership (Procházková 2018). However, in addition to this day-to-day example, the party cohesion within ANO was most strongly tested and

exhibited during the recent scandals experienced by the party. When the party faced serious scandals concerning the party leader, the party elite stayed firmly united behind him. The cohesion and unified nature of the party first showed when several controversial short-notice replacements of ANO´s ministers took place (ČTK 2011; Česká televize 2014; Lidovky 2015; IDNES.cz 2015; Česká televize 2015), and nobody from the party elite voiced any concerns (ČTK 2015b). It was a clear signal that the obedience and loyalty to the party leader are vital to pursuing a successful political career within ANO. Those who tried to criticise the leadership were replaced, and the rest of the elite stood quiet, supporting the choices made by the leadership. The major test of ANO´s cohesion came with the most extreme scandal concerning the party leader being accused of financial fraud. The (not only Czech) mainstream media focused on this case when the allegations of misuse of the European Union funding by one of ANO´s party leader´s businesses became publicly known. Babiš's Stork's Nest Farm conference centre and pet zoo were under the investigation for fraud by The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and by the Czech police for receiving a grant intended for small and medium-sized firms (Neurope.eu 2016). Agrofert, as a large conglomerate of more than two hundred companies, was not eligible. The ownership of the farm was changed, and the application for the grant was made under an anonymous stock shareholding (Holub 2016). Following this scandal, the media attention was fully paid to ANO´s leader, his business and 'his' party. In other parties, such scandal concerning the party leader would likely trigger internal party dissent, and attempts to overthrow him would start. But in ANO at the party elite level, nobody voiced any concerns related to Babiš´s position. There was no publicly visible opposition or faction within ANO against Babiš asking for his resignation, questioning his position, or even suggesting changes in the leadership. On the contrary, in the months and years following the scandal, all members of ANO´s elite continue to support Babiš publicly in the media (Junek 2019; Spěváčková 2017a; Spěváčková 2017b; Blažek and Pokorná 2019) and the parliament (Kosová 2018; Novinky.cz 2016).

The following real-life examples from the media illustrate how the cohesion within ANO manifested publicly and how the party elite helped to defend the party leader and the public image of the party following the media coverage of this scandal. For example, when the media questioned tens of ANO´s regional and local party leaders, they have all voiced unanimous support to the party leader (Čevelová and Kolajová 2019). A similar survey has been conducted with all ANO´s MPs, and senators, a vast majority of them expressed strong

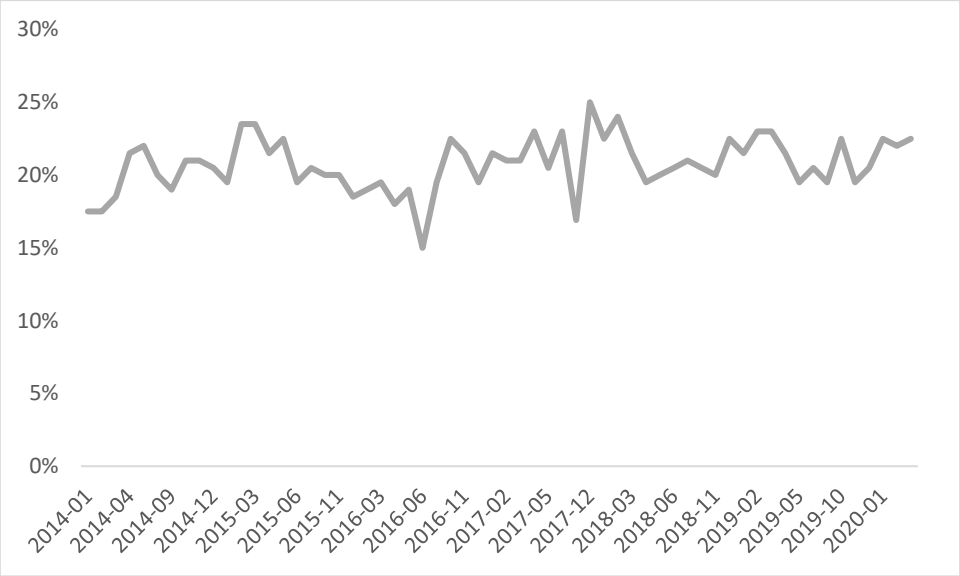
support to the party leader (only several of them shared that they do not know enough about the scandal to comment) (Guryčová et al. 2019). Several ANO´s MPs and ministers also defended Babiš in interviews that they provided to the media, emphasising their full trust to the party leader (Veselovský 2018a; Drtinová 2019; DVTV and Drtinová 2019). One of them was also ANO´s first deputy leader Jaroslav Faltýnek (and simultaneously a manager in Agrofert), who strongly and frequently supported Babiš in interviews provided to the media. Faltýnek repeatedly questioned the credibility of the investigation and claimed it is manipulated and artificially created case aimed to damage the leader and the party (Veselovský 2018b). Richard Brabec, minister for the environment (former manager in Lovochemie company, part of Agrofert) also regularly supported Babiš in numerous interviews to the media, claiming that "the investigation report is full of errors and unverified or false information" (Janda 2019). Brabec emphasised the inaccuracy and false claims in reports related to Babiš´s investigations on more occasions and supported the party leader fully (DVTV 2019). Other times, Brabec and Havlíček (minister of industry and trade) defended Babiš and stated that "the accusations are personal attacks and should be answered legally" (ČT24 2019). One of the MEPs (Member of the European Parliament) elected for ANO also defended Babiš and claimed the misuse of EU funding should not even be discussed in the European Parliament (Smetana 2019). One of ANO´s senators went even further by referring to Babiš´s investigation as to part of the negative campaign against the party, asking for legal punishment of those involved (Veselovský 2018b). Some party elites, such as ANO´s party manager, was even involved in the organization of public demonstrations in support of Babiš (Aktuálně 2018). The cohesion of the party was perhaps best manifested when Babiš had a speech at the Czech parliament concerning this scandal, and all ANO's MPs stood up and applauded him afterwards (Novinky.cz 2016).

4.4.4. ANO´s Positive Public Image Stemming from Party Cohesion

How does the party cohesion, discussed in the previous section reflect in ANO´s public image and its electoral success? When the severe fraud allegations concerning ANO´s party leader became publicly known in 2016, a significant negative impact was expected to hurt the credibility of the party severely. But ANO withstood the pressures associated with this scandal unharmed. ANO should have suffered electorally from its leader´s scandal, but it did not. Since the media coverage of the scandal, ANO was electorally successful in all successive elections

in different electoral arenas held in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 (Refer to Figure 1.1 in the introducing Chapter 1 for details). Also, the electoral polls from the time of the scandal indicate that ANO´s popularity was not significantly affected by this scandal becoming known publicly (CVVM 2020). Refer to Figure 4.4 illustrating the data from electoral poll indicating that the popularity of ANO did not suffer as a result of the scandal. The popularity of ANO in 2016 and 2017 did not decrease below twenty-five per cent of the 'vote'. It was in the period directly following the media coverage of the Stork's Nest Farm scandal (medialised in spring 2016). After the initial minor decrease to twenty-five per cent in April 2016, ANO´s popularity went up over the summer months and from July 2016 until October 2016 is reached over thirty per cent. This increase in popularity (in most of the public electoral polls) was recorded despite Babiš´s scandal being widely publicly-known and being continuously discussed in the mainstream media.

Figure 4.4 ANO´s popularity, Electoral Poll



Source: CVVM (2020).

When the other new Czech parties that lacked cohesion faced scandals, these quickly transformed into internal conflicts that led to their marginalisation (Cirhan and Kopecký 2017). When ANO faced a major scandal (perhaps even more serious than those of the other new parties), its public image should have been shattered similarly, but it was not because the party was cohesive. The examples of elite´s behaviour demonstrate that ANO is cohesive, its party

elite is indeed united and the public image of the party benefits from this party cohesion. As the electoral polls show, the unified reaction of the party elite (standing firmly behind its leader as the time of crisis) translated into the image of the party as a cohesive entity. This party elite´s reaction is attractive to the public as the electoral polls indicate. The electoral performance of ANO in several successive elections following the media coverage of the scandal also shows that voters reward it too. The party elite homogeneity (in managerial career backgrounds and strong professional links of the elite) transforms the party into a cohesive entity. This state seems to be electorally advantageous as the previous studies (as well as the electoral polls) show.

4.5. Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter pursued an argument about two aspects of ANO´s party elite´s background and electoral success via party cohesion. The existing theory states that the common career backgrounds of elites lead to shared political attitudes (Farazmand 1999; Putnam 1973; Wellhofer 1974). When elites share views, it facilitates party cohesion, which in turn translates in the party´s image of unitary entity (Andeweg and Thomassen 2010; Suthanintr 1985). This effect of common career backgrounds is even strengthened when elite also shares professional links. This chapter refers to such party elite as to homogenous elite. Party elite, whose members share career background and are also professionally associated is likely to form an interlocking network within the party, which significantly enhances party cohesion (Janowitz et al. 1956; Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008). The party cohesion resulting from party elite´s professional links positively influences attitudinal consensus within the party, which helps parties to keep united especially at the times when pressures associated with holding public office influence the party (Mill 1956; Lodge 1969; Moore 1979). When the party is cohesive and preserves unified image by being able to prevent internal conflicts and divisions, it will likely be rewarded electorally as the previous studies in the area show. Voters prefer parties that are not in a constant state of conflict because they find them more trustworthy, which positively resonates with them. The previous studies have shown that party cohesion stemming from party elite homogeneity improved parties´ capacity to defuse internal conflicts and divisions and to tackle public scandals (which has a positive impact on their public image). This assumption is warranted in this particular case of ANO.

The findings presented in this chapter indicate that ANO´s party elite is highly homogenous (in regards to the managerial career backgrounds, and the party elite´s professional links). The party elite homogeneity in career backgrounds and professional links facilitates party cohesion necessary for dealing with scandals. ANO´s elite´s cohesion stems directly from the fact that part of it consists of Agrofert´s managers. At the time of crises faced by ANO, its party elite manifested cohesion and strong support to the party leadership. Other new parties in the country quickly fell into internal conflicts and divisions following the media coverage of their scandals (which cost them the valuable trust of their voters who punished them in the next elections). Similar findings have been concluded in the article I have co-authored (Cirhan and Kopecký 2017), devoted to the relationship between electoral success and composition of party elite of Czech anti-establishment parties. The electorally less successful parties, VV and Dawn, were haunted by internal conflicts, and splits that were motivated by the scandals of their party elite (Cirhan and Kopecký 2017). In the absence of party cohesion, stemming from party elites´ common career and professional backgrounds, these two parties quickly fell apart and completely lost relevance (Cirhan and Kopecký 2017). When ANO faced such scandals, its party elite stood firmly united behind its leader and defended him whenever possible. No internal opposition was formed within ANO because of the party cohesion stemming from its homogenous party elite. ANO´s party elite supported the party leadership unanimously, and the party´s public reputation did not suffer as a result. The findings in this chapter not only demonstrated that ANO has highly homogenous elite, but also pointed out that the party leader´s business is strongly incorporated into the party organizational structures. This infiltration of party leader´s business network into party organization reminds us of the business-firm parties and entrepreneurial parties (Hloušek 2012; Hopkin and Paolucci 1999), known for their reliance on business activities of their party leaders. Party organizational features of such parties, found by political entrepreneurs as instruments of their private interests in politics (Klíma 2015), will be discussed in the next chapter in a comparative perspective.

CHAPTER 5 Organization of Anti-establishment Parties: A Comparative Perspective

5.1. Introduction

This chapter compares the findings made in three previous chapters, out of which each focused on one aspect of ANO´s party organization (local party organization, party membership and party elite) with three other anti-establishment parties. This chapter aims to discuss the findings on ANO in the light of these other cases, allowing space for generalizing the single case study results[10]. Doing so will allow this research to contribute to the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of new anti-establishment parties´ electoral success and the role of these party organizational features in it. As mentioned previously in the introducing Chapter 1, the parties selected for comparison are ANO, TS, OĽaNO and FI. All of these parties can be ideologically defined as anti-establishment parties. As mentioned in the introducing Chapter 1, for the purposes of this dissertation, anti-establishment parties are those that portray themselves to represent the ordinary people and to oppose the entire political establishment. To situate this operationalized definition into the existing theory, this anti-establishment rhetoric is a feature of populism (Mudde 2004; 2007; Učeň 2007, Polk and Rovny 2017). More theoretical discussion regarding populism and anti-establishment appeal in politics will take place in the concluding Chapter 6. When reviewing the cases for comparison, it became evident that the majority of the anti-establishment parties in European countries are based on the entrepreneurial party organizational model. Therefore, this chapter explores the party organizational features of the parties that all represent an overlap between anti-establishment parties by ideology and entrepreneurial parties by party organization.

What does this entail? In addition to being in opposition to all established parties ideologically, these parties are founded and led by one political entrepreneur, who is solely responsible for establishing them. This distinction is referred to in more detail later when discussing different party organizational models of parties. The four parties are selected for comparison to include cases with different levels of electoral success. Both electorally

[10] "Comparative aspect in case studies is crucial because single case studies are often essentially descriptive andmonographic rather than theory-oriented" (George and Bennett 2005 p.69).

successful and unsuccessful anti-establishment parties are included in the comparison. Inclusion of parties with different levels of the electoral success helps to highlight the role of different aspects of party organization in the electoral success. In regards to this chapter´s structure, first, the findings from previous chapters are recapitulated in a limited format, and the general theoretical concepts concerning different models of party organization are discussed. Then, the chapter continues with the debate about case selection and methodology, and finally, with the analysis of the empirical evidence.

5.2. Role of Party Organizational Features in Electoral Success

Previous chapters pursued arguments about local party organization, party membership and party elite facilitating electoral success via affecting party cohesion, stability and legitimacy. These three intermediary concepts were employed to demonstrate the impact of party organizational features, because of their mutual inter-connected influence on the electoral success. Party stability helps parties to survive organizationally and preserves their positive image as stable entities in the eyes of potential voters. If the party does not fight and is not factious, it is more likely to enjoy more support among the voters. Party cohesion (or the shared attitudinal consensus within the party) is a crucial component of party stability. Shared political attitudes are essential in preventing party divisions and as such, stability depends on cohesion as a safeguard to internal conflicts. Party legitimacy is a state, in which party achieves positive public image preferable by the potential electorate by appearing as a competent and trustworthy entity. The following findings were discovered in the previous chapters.

Controlling the local branches´ autonomy via the formal rules (and loyal personnel embedded into its organizational structure) helps ANO to resolve local scandals more decisively. The fast and efficient resolution of scandals and internal conflicts helps ANO´s electoral success because it diffuses negative publicity. ANO can control the autonomy of local branches, but only uses it when necessary to mute internal dissent and keep the party organization cohesive and stable. Simultaneously, the party provides elementary autonomy to local branches to organize its events and propose candidates at the constituency level. This compromise results in ANO having nationally endorsed, but locally embedded candidates. This setup is convenient for the party because such candidates are more likely to connect with local voters. On the other hand, the capacity to control local branches´ autonomy (via the network

of loyal business associates of party leader) helps the leadership to tackle scandals at the local level effectively, which is crucial for protecting the positive image of the party.

The exclusive character of ANO´s traditional individual membership resulting from restrictions on membership facilitates party cohesion and stability. These restrictions transform ANO into an institution that functions as an exclusive club, inside which is very complicated to get. Once you are in, your position is never granted and relies solely on your good relationship with the party leadership. This strategy is electorally advantageous because ANO´s capacity to control party membership helps to prevent internal conflicts and divisions. Party leadership can effectively mute any internal opposition by using the membership status as a tool to institute obedience within the party organization. It is further supported by ANO relying on the light membership (party sympathisers), who provide necessary labour on the ground, but have no rights within the party, and therefore cannot negatively affect its cohesion and stability.

The party elite homogeneity (shared career backgrounds and strong professional links of ANO´s party elite) facilitates party cohesion necessary for the positive public image of the party. ANO´s elite´s cohesion stems directly from homogenous elite (a large proportion of managers recruited from the Agrofert business company of party leader). At the time of crises faced by ANO, this cohesion manifested in the strong, unified support to the party leadership. Other new parties in the country quickly fell into internal conflicts and divisions following the media coverage of their scandals. Such conflicts and disunity cost them the valuable trust of their voters, who punished them in the next elections. ANO´s elite stood united behind its leader, and no party divisions were evident due to the cohesion of the party (stemming from its homogenous elite). Because leadership did not slip into conflicts, the party´s public reputation did not suffer as a result. These findings demonstrate how ANO´s approach to party organization facilitated cohesion, stability and legitimacy that translated into more immunity to the pressures associated with high politics (and in turn into a preferable public image). It is electorally relevant because the potential electorate is more likely supportive of parties that are not in a state of internal conflicts (perceiving them as more trustworthy and competent, more likely rewarding them in elections). These findings yield that those electorally successful from the compared parties should have the capacity to control autonomy of local branches, should implement restrictions on membership, and should group professionally-associated party elite with common career backgrounds. The cohesion, stability and legitimacy stemming from such

party organizational setup should equip these parties with the capacity to handle scandals, internal conflicts and other pressures associated with their participation in high politics better. In turn, such parties should more likely cultivate a positive public image of trustworthy entities, which should be favoured by the electorate, as the theory suggests.

5.3. Different Party Organization Models

"Present-day parties are distinguished far less by their programme or the class of their members than by the nature of their organization. A party is a community with a particular structure. Modern parties are characterized primarily by their anatomy (Duverger 1954, 15)". This section reviews different models of party organization to provide the necessary theoretical background into the way parties can organize. This is relevant for two reasons. Firstly, to introduce and describe the model of the entrepreneurial party (that is related to the parties compared in this chapter). Secondly, to position such parties into the context of existing political science theory. A vast body of literature mapping the evolution of different models of party organization exists. Katz and Mair (1995, 18) distinguished between four different party organization models of elite parties, mass parties, catch-all parties and cartel parties. Krouwel (2006) built on theirs and other scholars´ work and differentiated between five different models of political party organization.

Elite-centred cadre parties also referred to as patronage and charismatic parties (Weber 1925), personage parties (Neumann 1956), parties of parliamentary origin (Duverger 1954) or modern cadre parties (Koole 1996), are characterised for being led by prominent individuals, organized in closed and local caucuses with minimal party organization outside the parliament (Krouwel 2006, 250). Mass parties, also referred to as mass bureaucratic parties (Panebianco 1988), programmatic parties (Neumann 1956) or class-mass and denominational mass parties (Kirchheimer 1954) are defined by their extra-parliamentary mass mobilization of politically excluded social groups based on well-articulated party organizational structures and ideologies (Krouwel 2006, 250). Electoralist, catch-all parties, also referred to as of catch-all parties (Kirchheimer 1966), professional-electoral parties (Panebianco 1988), media-mediated personality-parties (Seisselberg 2007) or party machine parties (Seiler 1984) are known for originating from mass parties that have professionalized their party organization and downgraded their ideological profile to appeal to a broader electorate Krouwel (2006, 250). Cartel parties also referred to as state–party cartel (Kirchheimer 1966) and party-cartel

(Lehmbruch 1974; Lijphart 1968; Katz and Mair 1995; 1996) are characterised by a fusion of the party in public office with several interest groups that form a political cartel, which is mainly oriented towards the maintenance of executive power (Krouwel 2006, 251).

The fifth party organizational model is often being referred to as a business-firm party, which is a subcategory of a wider category of entrepreneurial parties, the most recent species of party organization. Such parties originate from the private initiative of a political entrepreneur and have, by and large, the structures that resemble a commercial company (Krouwel (2006, 260). An entrepreneurial party is defined as a party founded and led by one single individual – political entrepreneur (Morlino 1996; Paolucci 2006). It is characterised by the central role of the leader, who is the founding father and the main initiator that uses the party as a vehicle to carry primarily personal political interests (Seisselberg 2007; Pasquino 2003). The charisma of the political entrepreneur is crucial for the identity of the party. An entrepreneurial party is not a product of a promoter organization or social movement and lacks pre-existing social rootedness and connections with parliament (Hloušek and Kopeček 2017, 87-88). Business-firm party is a type of entrepreneurial party, in which the political entrepreneur is a businessman, whose private firm influences how the party operates. In addition to having a vital role in the party, the political entrepreneur's business is also embedded within the party organization. Such parties´ organizational existence is closely connected to a corporate network of the party leader´s business firm (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999, 320).

The large proportion of newly found anti-establishment parties are organized as entrepreneurial parties (Kosowska-Gastol and Sobolewska-Myslik 2017; Krašovec 2017; Marušiak 2017); this includes the four parties that are empirically analysed in this chapter. Because of the vast proportion of anti-establishment parties being organized as entrepreneurial parties, this chapter focuses on the overlap between them. The overlap is based on these parties´ ideology and party organizational model. Ideologically, the concerned parties are in opposition to the entire political establishment. Whilst organizationally, they are formed around one political entrepreneur. As such, the parties considered in this research represent an overlap between anti-establishment parties by ideology and entrepreneurial parties by party organization. For the purposes of this chapter, whenever referring to anti-establishment parties, then the parties opposing the entire political establishment and led by a single political entrepreneur are meant. ANO, in terms of its ideology, manifests strong opposition against all established parties. In regards to its party organization, it is an example of the entrepreneurial

party (of political entrepreneur Andrej Babiš) with strongly visible characteristics of the business-firm party (represented by the influence of Agrofert corporate network on the party organization). Scholars that studied ANO (Kopeček 2016; Hloušek, Chytílek, Kopeček and Svačinová 2017; Hloušek, Kopeček, Vodová 2020) emphasised the crucial central role of party leader stemming from an unusually close affiliation of ANO´s party organization to the party leader´s business. These observations are aligned with the findings of previous chapters demonstrating that Agrofert indeed strongly influences the organization of ANO´s local branches, party members and party elite. The next sections will address how the other parties approach party organization, but first, the attention will be paid to the case selection.

5.4. Anti-establishment Parties in Europe: A Case Selection

In social science research, any meaningful analysis should focus on comparable cases[11]. It means the cases that are similar in a large number of important characteristics (that are treated as constant) and other comparable variables (that one wants to compare and relate to each other) (Simons 2009). Such research setup offers an excellent opportunity for the application of the comparative method because it allows the establishment of causal relationships among variables (Lijphart 1971, 687). Selecting suitable cases is crucial for any academic who aims to demonstrate the relationship between variables, and investigate the relevance of theoretical arguments. Previous scholars saw the most successful comparative studies as those, which work with "a well-defined, smaller scope subclass of the general phenomenon" (George and Bennett 2005, 77). Narrowing the range of cases, even at the cost of selection bias, can, in their opinion, help to analyse and capture causal relations more efficiently.

This chapter limits the selection of cases to four anti-establishment parties. The selection of cases is essential for case studies[12]. Crucial for testing causal relationships is comparing cases that are comparable in some respects, except for the independent variables

[11] In social sciences, comparative method is regarded as an ideal method of discovering empirical relationships between variables, which is done by the establishment of general empirical relationships among two or more variables, while all other variables are controlled, that is held constant (Lijphart 1971, 683).

[12] "Hypothesis-generating case studies start out with a more or less vague notion of possible hypotheses, and attempt to formulate definite hypotheses to be tested of a number of cases. Their objective is to develop theoretical generalizations in area where no theory exists yet. Such case studies are of great theoretical value" (George and Bennett 2005,692).

that are subject to comparison (Lijphart 1971, 691). When selecting cases for comparative purposes, the discussion on selection bias[13] thus moves around the selection of cases that only have a variety of values on the side of the analysed variables that the researcher aims to explain (Collier and Mahoney 1996, 60). All cases should be instances of the same phenomenon (George and Bennett 2005, 69) as the only constant measure, while all others are analysed to allow comparison. It is why the sample of cases considered in this chapter includes only anti-establishment parties with a party leader fulfilling the role of the political entrepreneur[14] (as the constant measure). While the rest of variables (different electoral performance of the parties and their different approach to the concerned party organizational features) serves the comparative purpose. In other words, this comparative research design follows the methods of so-called Most Similar Systems Design (Anckar 2006; Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe 2010). This established method in the political science research consists of a comparison based on comparing very similar cases that only differ in the dependent variable. The assumption is that such design makes it easier to determine which of the independent variables explain the presence (or absence) of the dependent variable, and as such tests the relationship between them.

Before focusing on the actual cases and variables, it is noteworthy to put them into a wider context of the universe of anti-establishment parties founded by political entrepreneurs. This part maps all potential European examples of such parties. It entails any political party that meets the two following criteria. Firstly, it is any party ideologically defined as an opposition to the entire political establishment (to all established parties). Secondly, such party is founded and led by one single individual – a so-called political entrepreneur, which defines the party organizationally. This definition does not prescribe that the political entrepreneur in question needs to have a professional background as a businessman. In Appendix 16, all examples of such parties in the European democracies since 1990 are listed. The scope is limited to European countries (the EU member states) because this research deals with the

[13] Selection biases can occur when cases are self-selected or when the researcher selects cases that represent a truncated sample along the dependent variable (George and Bennett 2005, 23).

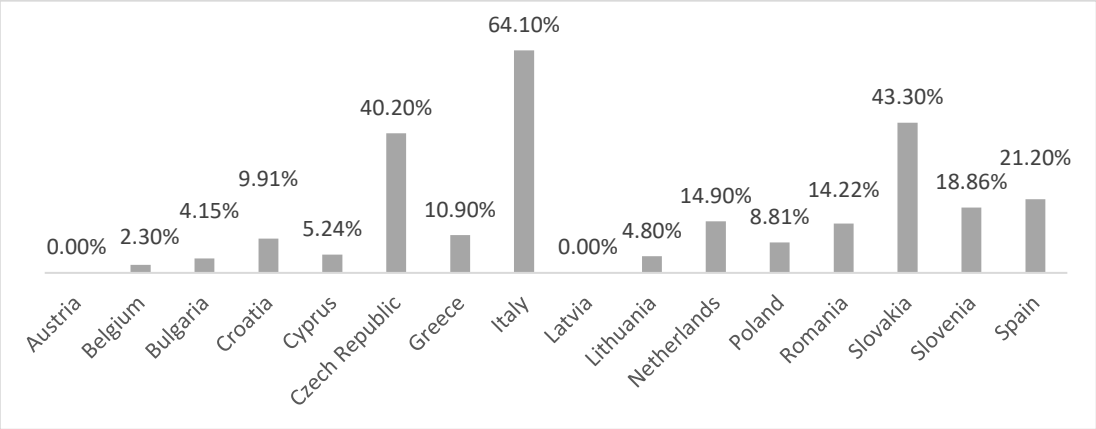
[14] It is also noteworthy that in case of the selected parties, in addition to having a political entrepreneur in their centre, their political entrepreneurs have also been successful businessmen prior to their entrance to politics, and used the of their business firms to support their political ventures.

electoral success of anti-establishment parties in the European context. The period is set from 1990 because before the fall of communism, many of the countries included in the research sample did not have democratic party system competition. In total, forty-eight parties are presented in Appendix 16. Besides the list of parties´ names, the names of the political entrepreneurs, periods of parliamentary presence, and parties´ results in the last contested elections, are also presented as part of these appendices. All the anti-establishment parties listed in Appendix 16 share the characteristic of being dominated by one single individual – political entrepreneur. However, they do differ sharply in different aspects that are associated with the specific country context from which they were formed, such as their approach to campaigning, rhetoric, attained electoral success and party longevity.

When we look at the cases presented in Appendix 16, we can see that these parties are more present in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It is in many cases linked to the newness and instability of their party systems. To investigate the influence that such parties represent politically in different European countries, Figure 5.1 presents the total electoral performance acquired by all anti-establishment parties in each EU country´s last general election. There are sharp differences between the countries when it comes to the proportion of votes acquired by such parties. On the one hand, it is safe to claim that these types of parties are currently represented in the vast majority[15] of European party systems, except for Austria and Latvia (which both witnessed electoral breakthrough of such parties in the past). The highest proportion of these parties can be seen in Italy, and in Central Europe, especially in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In Italy, the success of anti-establishment parties is not related only to FI (the pioneer of such parties in the country) but to the newly found Five Star Movement, and older (but more recently successful) Northern League. In the Czech Republic, in addition to ANO (the major political player in the country), SPD - a new party found on the platform of previously successful Dawn also made an electoral breakthrough. In Slovakia, four anti-establishment parties made it to the National Council.

[15] No anti-establishment parties based around a political entrepreneur were found in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Sweden, nor in the United Kingdom.

Figure 5.1 Anti-establishment Parties´ Votes, EU Countries´ Last General Elections



Because of the methodological approach adopted in this dissertation, it would be difficult to study all parties mentioned in Appendix 16 empirically. Therefore, the scope has been limited to the four parties that are compared in this chapter. The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Italy were selected because such parties are currently most strongly represented in these countries´ party systems. Austria, on the other hand, represents a country, where these types of parties made an electoral breakthrough in the past, but not in the last general elections. The actual parties were selected to represent cases with different levels of attained electoral success (refer to Table 5.1 for the operationalisation of the electoral success in this chapter).

Table 5.1 Definition of Electoral Success of Anti-Establishment Parties

Rate of Electoral Success	Indicator of the party´s electoral performance
Electorally Unsuccessful	One-time electoral breakthrough, unable to repeat entry in next elections
Medium Electoral Success	Electoral performance over the threshold in two and more successive elections, minor party achieving below fifteen per cent of the vote in most contested elections
Electorally Successful	Electoral performance over the threshold in two and more successive elections, large party achieving over fifteen per cent of the vote in most contested elections

The electorally successful ANO was selected because it represents one of the most significant changes in Czech politics since the collapse of the communist regime (as mentioned in the introducing Chapter 1 for more details on ANO´s history). Among the parties in Italy, FI was the most important party for the last several decades. FI was a highly electorally successful party. It was the pioneer of the anti-establishment party politics in the country and remained politically influential until these days. In Slovakia, nearly two decades in politics were defined

by the governance of Smer-SD party. OľaNO (among other small parties) represents a new wave of change. Unlike ANO and FI, OľaNO started small, and as a minor party, it remained in opposition for its first two terms. In the meantime, Slovakia witnessed a swift political change triggered by the murder of investigative journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée (BBC News 2019). The murder pointed out corruption and connections of high-ranking Slovak politicians to mafia networks and sparked the biggest street protests in the country since the Velvet Revolution (Harris 2019). The pressure of the protests led to the resignation of the Smer SD government of prime minister Robert Fico (Makovicky 2018) and created the opportunity for the anti-establishment parties to take its place.

The protest vote motivated by the frustration with political establishment manifested itself in the 2019 presidential elections. The progressive liberal female candidate defeated all the candidates of established parties (Walker 2019). In the 2020 general elections, the electoral success of the anti-establishment parties translated into a political earthquake (Spáč 2020). Smer SD was in government since 2006 (with a two-year break in the opposition between 2010-2012). The defeat of Smer SD translated into the fragmentation of the Slovak party system. From all anti-establishment parties, OľaNO electorally benefited most from Slovaks´ disillusionment with established parties. After winning the general elections, it now leads the national government. As such, it represents the most significant change in Slovak politics in the last decades. When I have started with the case selection and empirical analysis for this comparative Chapter 5, OľaNO was a minor smaller party in the opposition. However, in the meantime, until I have completed the analysis, it has managed to make such an electoral success in the last elections that only few could have expected. The effects of external factors of major significance (i.e., the de facto collapse of the main Slovak governing Smer SD following the mentioned murder of investigative journalist and the subsequent publication of this party´s connections to mafia networks) proved to overturn the importance of other factors and expectations. Although it may make the conclusions of the analyses in this chapter somehow more complicated, it remains unclear how will this party succeed in government and the analysed aspects of party organization may still prove crucial in this process. TS is the electorally unsuccessful party within the sample. Its case is worthy of academic interest because, in the Austrian context, anti-establishment parties rarely make an electoral breakthrough. TS as a party that managed to enter the parliament (but failed to repeat this success) adds variety to the sample of concerned parties. The variation in these parties´

electoral outcomes can help to probe the relationships between their organizational features and electoral success (refer to Table 5.2 illustrate the variation in the electoral outcomes of the parties). The next section briefly focuses on these parties´ history to provide more detailed insight into their background and political fortunes.

Table 5.2 Electoral Performance of ANO, TS, OĽaNO and FI

Party	Electoral Performance First Elections	Rate of Electoral Success	Contested General Elections
ANO	18.65%	successful	2
TS	5.73%	unsuccessful	1
OĽaNO	8.55%	medium electoral success	3
FI	21%	successful	6

Source: individual party websites.

Background of TS, OĽaNO and FI

TS was a new Austrian political party with an anti-establishment appeal that was formed in 2012 and dissolved in 2017(van Kessel 2015). It was a neoliberal party, founded by Austrian-Canadian businessman, modelled as a centre-right party. From the party organizational perspective, the main characteristic of TS is the dominant position of political entrepreneur and party leader Frank Stronach. From the beginning, Stronach was vital in operation as well as in the presentation of his political project (Global Security 2012). His self-made billionaire status was a core element in the party´s public presentment, the business expertise he can bring into politics was equally emphasised. Stronach´s marketing message was built on underlining his company´s vast investments in Austria, the creation of thousands of jobs and contributions to social benefits (Luther 2014). Like in case of ANO, OĽaNO and FI, TS falls under the type of anti-establishment parties. Its ideology was based on appeals against all established parties and references to the ordinary people (Aalberg et al. 2017). Classic populist themes, such as pointing out to shortcomings of the political system and a clear stance against corruption were also the pillars of the party message in the campaign (Wolkenstein 2017). Appeals for more transparency in the governance and accusations of all established politicians as liars make ANO, OĽaNO, FI and TS look alike.

TS chairman Matthias Strolz repeatedly emphasised that "the political status quo is a tragedy for the country" (Wolkenstein 2017), portraying all politicians from established parties as incompetent individuals with no real hands-on experience from the real world. Like in ANO, the emphasis was put on the ability of managers to solve the issues of the country (Luther 2014). For TS, the party leader and top candidate in one person was a crucial element in the party´s media communication. He received most of the media coverage. Twice as many newspaper articles were referred individually to Frank Stronach than to the party (Schärdel and König 2013), the majority of articles portrayed Stronach as a successful entrepreneur, but an uncompromising egocentric individual with authoritarian manners (Schärdel and König 2013; Muller, Weissensteiner and Burgstaller 2014). All of these attributes are often ascribed by media to Babiš and Berlusconi as well. However, the similarity between the parties ends there, as TS was not as electorally successful as the other parties. TS made an electoral breakthrough in 2013 General Elections and obtained less than six per cent of votes, which translated into eleven seats in Austrian National Council. This result has been considered a huge failure by the party leader. As a consequence, in 2017, the party did not contest in elections due to Frank Stronach´s withdrawal of all financial backing to the party (Ethics of Care 2017). Without his financial support, the party could no longer function and fell apart shortly afterwards (Allen 2013).

OĽaNO is a newly formed anti-establishment party in Slovakia. It was formed in November 2011 and was since the beginning led by political entrepreneur - businessman Igor Matovič. Matovič is a local media magnate, owner of regionPRESS, a company operating 36 newspapers across Slovakia. Unlike TS, and similarly to ANO and FI, OĽaNO utilised its access to media outlets owned by party leader for campaigning purposes. The party took advantage of its leader´s media ownership to become visible. Doing so, OĽaNO found a vehicle for spreading its visions, ideas and program via "the biggest network of printed bulletins" (Žúborová 2015, 104). Some have even claimed that OĽaNO ´s electoral breakthrough can be attributed to the regional weeklies that were distributed free-of-charge to all Slovak households. These bulletins allowed Matovič to spread his party´s message, to make appeals against all established parties, and the governing Smer party in particular (Dolný and Malová 2016). OĽaNO ´s message to voters was centred around the unchecked corruption and incompetence of the political establishment parties to tackle it. In Slovakia, the dissatisfaction with the established parties was equally crucial for the new anti-establishment parties´ popularity, as in

the Czech Republic and Italy at the time. Like Babiš, and unlike Stronach or Berlusconi, Matovič initially coordinated his party´s program with various NGOs (in particular the initiative Po prstoch politikom/Over politicians´ fingers) (Rolko 2013, 27).

In contrast to Stronach and Berlusconi, and similarly to Babiš, Matovič was writing an online blog, where he criticised the entire political establishment (in particular Smer party). It helped him to become central communicator for the party and the significant campaign symbol. However, OĽaNO´s start in politics was somewhat different from that of other parties. In 2010, Matovič and three of his associates were elected from last positions of candidate lists of newly found SAS Party (Freedom and Solidarity). This success fuelled Matovič´s ambition to establish OĽaNO just ahead of early legislative elections of 2012, where it acquired 8.55% of votes and secured 16 mandates. As mentioned previously, the events around the murder of a journalist investigating corruption of high-ranking politicians of the governing Smer party led to one of the most substantial political changes in Slovakia since the fall of communism. As a result, OĽaNO won the 2020 general elections and leads the national government with Matovič serving as the prime minister.

FI was founded by Silvio Berlusconi on 26 January 1994. In its first contested elections, it was highly electorally successfully, receiving "over 8 million votes" (Raniolo 2006, 440). Some scholars at the time ascribed this electoral success to the profile of the party leader. In particular his newness to politics, and the emphasis on his self-made business background in the campaign (Farrell 1995) Similarly to other parties, FI was in opposition to the entire political establishment and built on criticising corruption crises of the established parties. It allowed Berlusconi to present his party as a new alternative against the paralyzed established parties, as "the major protagonist of sweeping change" (Paolucci 2006, 165). Like in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and unlike in Austria, the timing of FI´s entry into the political arena, when established parties faced numerous scandals, was vital. Several academics observed that FI´s novelty and strong opposition to established parties translated to its organizational structure as well. FI has been characterised as a personal party of its leader (Raniolo 2006, 439). Berlusconi was described as the owner of his political movement (Pasquino 2003, 202).

Such criticism was linked to allegations that FI was founded solely to fulfil the personal interests of its founder and his economic empire (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999, 321). Berlusconi´s economic activities in media world gave him access to vast resources of political communication that were inaccessible to his political competitors (Statham 1996). His

companies controlled approximately half of the Italian television market at the time of the establishment of FI. Because of this quasi-monopoly, some have referred to FI as to media-mediated personality-party (Seisselberg 2007, 718). ANO and OĽaNO also relied on the advantage of media ownership by their party leaders (Mafra corporation by Babiš and regionPRESS by Matovič). However, in terms of the proportion of media market controlled by Berlusconi at the time, they come nowhere near. FI shares some similarities with the other parties, notably the strong unquestioned position and role of party leader with vast economic resources. However, they differ when it comes to the intersection between their party organizational structures, and the business corporations owned by their leaders. Only two parties are similar in this respect – FI and ANO. In both of these parties, their leaders´ businesses play an essential role. The previous chapters identified that the infiltration of Agrofert´s corporate network has an impact on the organization of ANO´s local branches, party membership and party elite. Similar 'corporate capture' of party organization in FI led to the formulation of the business-firm party organizational model, a term coined by Hopkin and Paolucci (1999). Berlusconi experimented with this new way of organizing a party because building FI´s organization around the network of his Fininvest group company offered a convenient source of personnel (Raniolo 2006, 445).

5.5. Methodological Approach

The comparison between these cases is based on the analysis of variation in three independent variables. The variables are presented in the following paragraphs. Local party organization, party membership and party elite are analysed in this chapter, and the variation in the concerned parties´ approach towards these aspects of party organization constitutes the comparison.

Table 5.3 Local Party Organizational Density

Rate	Indicator of local organizational density
Weak	non-developed structure of territorial branches (not in all regions of the country)
Medium	fully developed structure of territorial branches at the regional level (all regional cities)
Strong	the dense structure of territorial branches at the local level (in addition to regional cities, also a dense presence at the level of district towns)

The first independent variable relates to the local party organization. The investigation of parties´ local branches commences with mapping their density (refer to Table 5.3). However, the main focus is on the autonomy of local branches; that is on the level of control that the national party office has over the local branches. The analysis of party statutes and secondary sources of data (media articles and other scholars´ research) focuses on the areas over which local branches can decide themselves at their constituency level. To be able to perform a comparison between the four cases, three levels of local organizational autonomy are defined (refer to Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Control of Local Party Organizational Autonomy

Rate	Indicator of local organizational autonomy
Weak	the autonomy of local branches to make decisions in most areas
Medium	the autonomy granted only in certain areas; others restricted
Strong	no or highly limited autonomy of local branches

The second independent variable relates to the party membership. The analysis of party membership concentrates on the number of traditional individual party members and restrictions on traditional individual membership. The main focus in this analysis is on traditional individual members to keep the consistency in the data collection method across all four cases. In case of ANO, in Chapter 3, I have also started with analysing traditional individual membership. The analysis of traditional individual membership has a tradition in party politics research and using the standardized and widely used methods such as the M/V ratio and M/E ratio, I can compare between the cases more effectively. Also, the analysis of traditional individual member´s rights and obligations across the cases offers a valuable insight into party affairs and allows for comparison. However, the analysis in this chapter will also stumble on the alternative (light) forms of membership. After mapping the size of parties´ traditional individual membership bases (using M/V ratio and M/E ratio as indicators), the investigation focuses on the restriction on party membership. Analysis of the party statutes, membership statistics, as well as the secondary sources of data (media articles and other scholars´ research) explores the restrictions on party membership practised in the four parties. Three levels of restrictions on party membership were defined for comparison (refer to Table

5.5). It enables me to demonstrate how these parties differ in regards to the way they restrict their party membership and how inclusive their party membership status is.

Table 5.5 Restrictions on Party Membership

Rate	Indicator of restrictions on party membership
Weak	completely inclusive membership status, no restrictions in place
Medium	some restrictions in place, but overall inclusive membership status
Strong	exclusive membership status stemming from numerous restrictions

The third independent variable relates to the party elite, in particular to MPs. The analysis of the elite´s backgrounds has two parts. The first part focuses on their career backgrounds. The purpose of this analysis is to identify how whether the party elite shares common careers and to what degree. Because no such research was done on the concerned parties in the past, an original analysis of primary data was conducted, using personal profiles of party officials on parliament websites or party websites. The focus was on party elite´s former career pasts before becoming members of parliament for the party in question. Three different levels of elite´s career backgrounds were defined for comparative purposes (refer to Table 5.6).

Table 5.6 Party Elite Career Backgrounds

Rate	Indicator of the elite´s common career backgrounds
Weak	0% - 33 % elite with same career background
Medium	34% - 65 % elite with same career background
Strong	66% - 100 % elite with same career background

The second part of this analysis concentrates on the professional links between elite. The purpose of this analysis is to identify how professionally associated is the elite of these four parties. Special attention is paid to the professional links between the party elite and the business companies owned by the party leaders. Three different levels of elite´s professional links were defined for comparative purposes (refer to Table 5.7). Career backgrounds and professional links of party elite are analysed for the year when these parties made an electoral breakthrough. For TS it was the year 2013, Oľ aNO year 2012 and FI a year 1994, and ANO a year 2013.

Table 5.7 Party Elite Professional Links

Rate	Indicator of the elite´s professional linkage
Weak	no professional links between party elites
Medium	several party elites sharing professional past
Strong	the professionally-associated elite forming interlocking network

5.6. Empirical Analysis

Following the research design outlined in the previous methodology section, the empirical analysis in this chapter is built on the comparison between four parties and is based on three independent variables. As a result, this empirical section is divided into three sub-sections, each focusing on one aspect of the concerned parties´ organization – local party organization, party membership and party elite.

5.6.1. Local Party Organization

The findings in Chapter 2 indicated that controlling of the local branches´ autonomy helps ANO to be more organizationally stable by resolving local scandals more decisively. The fast and efficient resolution of scandals and conflicts helps ANO´s electoral success because it diffuses negative publicity. The compared parties differ sharply in regards to the organization of their local branches. This section first looks at how dense is the structure of these parties´ local branches. In regards to the local organizational density (the size of parties´ territorial organizational presence), FI and ANO are equally widely represented. On the other hand, TS and OĽaNO lack the developed territorial presence (refer to Table 5.9 for the differentiation in the density of local party organization of the four parties). While ANO and FI manifested interest in its local party organization and managed to build an organizational presence in all regions of their country, TS only covered the main regional capitals in Austria. OĽaNO, on the other hand, did not invest in the local organizational structure at all, it established no local branches representing the party locally.

Table 5.8 Local Party Organizational Density of Anti-establishment Parties

Party	Local Organizational Density	Level of presence
ANO	Strong	dense local presence built
TS	Medium	presence only at the level of regional cities
OĽaNO	Weak	no local party organizational presence
FI	Strong	dense local presence built

Source: party websites.

In regards to the local organizational autonomy, starting with ANO and FI, these two parties display the closest similarity in a sense that both parties keep close control over their local branches, and have this strategy implemented into their party statutes. OĽaNO achieves total control over the party organization. OĽaNO´s party leadership did not set up any local branches and makes all decisions about candidate selection. On the other hand, TS did not set up any control mechanisms in regards to local branches´ autonomy and shortly failed to keep control over its network of local branches (refer to Table 5.10 for the specific party strategies concerning the autonomy of local branches).

Table 5.9 Local Party Organizational Density of Anti-establishment Parties

Party	Control of Local Organizational Autonomy	Aspects of Local Organizational Autonomy
ANO	strong	party leader with powers to control local branches´ candidate selection, recruitment and other personnel decisions
TS	weak	party statutes do not mention local branches´ rights; party repeatedly failed to control local branches
OĽaNO	strong	no local party organizational presence built; party leadership has complete control of candidate selection process that is not transparent
FI	strong	complete control party uses special local branches (clubs) without decision-making rights

Source: party websites.

OĽaNO is the party that achieved total control over its party organization. It could not grant any autonomy to local branches, because it did not build any local branches in the first place. It did not invest any resources or planning into the establishment of any kind of local

organizational presence; the party had no local branches across the country. As such, OĽaNO´s national party leadership maintains full control over all personnel and other decisions within the party. Findings in Chapter 2 have demonstrated that in ANO the national party leadership has nearly unlimited power to meddle into local branches´ affairs when it comes to personnel decisions, as well as to the creation of candidate lists before elections. The party leader himself can replace names and order in candidates list at any time, overriding the decisions made at the constituency level. In FI, a majority of local branches are registered under the special status of so-called 'clubs'. These clubs have virtually no decision-making rights within the party at all. This precaution is implemented to aid FI to keep control over its local organizational presence and to mute any potential party dissent at the local level. All decisions concerning the candidate selection, personnel and local party management issues are decided by the national party leadership (and these clubs only obey these decisions without being able to influence their outcomes). On the other hand, TS represents a complete opposite of a party that did introduce any precautions nor any control measures over its local branches. TS did not manage to keep control over the local party organization, and the internal opposition against the party leadership started to mount in different regions.

Since its establishment, TS struggled to keep control over its local organizational structure. Party leadership used force to keep its regional and local party activists in line, and conflicts occurred shortly after as a result. "Personalistic leadership had become a liability. Within days of the election, Stronach purged numerous individuals he had placed in key positions in provinces, including the caucus chair and leaders of provincial party groups. Commentators attributed this to his inability to countenance dissent and his demand that the party repay €10m of the €25m he had invested in it. His autocratic actions triggered considerable intra-party criticism" (Luther 2014, 27). This example from local Austrian media shows how the party leader approached the internal party dissent from the position of power (and how it let to destructive outcomes for the party). Unlike in the other parties, in TS, the authoritative approach was chosen, and it completely destabilised the party organization. Those who studied the organization of TS in more detail noticed that the party was under strict authoritative leadership of the party leader from the very beginning. This approach naturally had limited impact and (in contrast to the expectations of the party leadership), it led to internal conflicts and disputes. Numerous party officials were sanctioned for failure to hold the party line and to obey the party leadership. The local news referred that these internal conflicts were

motivated by disagreements between the national party leadership and the local politicians who "failed to comply with the values set by Frank Stronach" (Pühringer and Ötsch 2013, 16).

Party´s incompetence in keeping the territorial structure of the party together became evident shortly after party entered parliament when one of the central party figures (a prominent local party official and leader of Team Stronach´s MP club Kathrin Nachbaur) left the party (Salzburg24 2014). The on-going conflicts at the regional and local levels quickly translated into party´s MPs club as well (and eventually led to the split of the parliamentary representation of TS). Internal conflicts that triggered at the level of regions quickly evolved to the national level. The parliamentary party of TS became an arena for opposing party factions. TS´s MP club shrank from its initial eleven MPs to six MPs as a result (Wien-Konkret 2017). First, after two MPs left the party club in June 2015 to the ÖVP, there were only nine MPs left. In August 2015, two other MPs (the already mentioned Kathrin Nachbaur and another MP Rouven Ertlschweiger) joined the ÖVP MP club (Wien-Konkret 2017). Another MP Jessi Lintl left the Stronach team in August 2015 (she remained as an independent MP and was later admitted to the FPÖ) (Wien-Konkret 2017). Ultimately, TS lost its relevance and disintegrated. This example illustrates that handling party dissent at the level of territorial party organization authoritatively from a position of force leads to catastrophic scenarios for the political party.

In the case of Oľ aNO, its approach to local party organization is peculiar in a way that this party did not develop any local party organizational structure at all. Although parties in post-communist countries (and in Slovakia in particular) have often been highly centralised (with the role of local branches and grass-roots membership base highly limited), OĽaNO went even one step further. This Oľ aNO´s approach to local branches is "a complete novelty in Slovakia. They, in contrast to its predecessors, are not interested even formally to build party structures and territorial organizations or recruiting members" (Dolný and Malová 2016, 1). In regards to its organizational structure, OĽaNO differs from all other parties in the Slovak party system. Since its establishment, the party did not show any motivation to invest in building a local organizational presence as all (Křtínová 2013, 24). This unique approach has been attributed to this party, reflecting its ideological stance based on the hostility to the established party politics. "Matovič stated outright at the founding party congress that the party would only formally meet the minimum legal obligations for the party establishment, and would not pursue the development of regional party structures or recruitment of members" (Dolný and Malová 2016, 14). Because the local organizational structure of the party is irrelevant, OĽaNO is also

unique in its selection of candidates. A vast majority of candidate seats are allotted to independent personalities. The order of candidates on the list is far from being transparent. It is determined by the four party members, who de facto act as true owners of the party and the rules of this selection process are not specified and shared publicly (Dolný and Malová 2016). By not allowing the establishment of local branches and not granting them any rights, the national leadership maintains full control over all decisions made within the party, in particular over the candidate selection. As an anti-establishment party, OĽaNO is in opposition to all the established parties not only ideologically, but also organizationally.

FI´s approach can also be characterised as very restrictive. FI only cultivates alternative forms of local branches (the previously-mentioned clubs) that do not have any influence over the party. Scholars, who studied local party organization of FI referred to "a potentially problematic division of labour and decision-making rights between the centre and the periphery" (Raniolo 2006, 449), meaning that clubs provide the labour to the party but have no influence over any decision made within the party organization. FI built a solid local party organizational presence based on these alternative branches shortly after the party´s establishment. In 1995 FI´s clubs amounted to approximately three and a half thousand (Seisselberg 2007, 729). The sole and only responsibility of these clubs was to help "shape the image of Forza Italia within the local context. The party leadership explicitly gives the clubs the task, in addition to discussion evenings on political topics, of holding cultural events such as party celebrations *(Feste azzurre),* banquets, balls, excursions, charity concerts or sporting events. The club presidents have no institutionalised possibilities of influence outside the local level, neither in programme questions nor in the choice of leadership personnel" (Seisselberg 2007, 729). The selection of party officeholders and candidates for elections is hierarchically controlled. Individuals are not selected from below but nominated from above. The decision about the final layout of the candidate list rests in the hands of the party leader (Seisselberg 2007, 728). This example makes FI highly similar to ANO, where party statutes also allow the party leader to make final decisions over the candidate selection. Both of these parties have the capacity to control the autonomy of local branches and candidate selection efficiently.

Like in ANO (and unlike in OĽaNO and TS), where Agrofert employees oversee local branches, FI uses the corporate network of party leader's company to control its local branches. Territorial organizational presence of FI was carried out in a centralised fashion by the "20 Regional Coordinators named by the leadership, largely Publitalia managers who had been

responsible for the creation of Forza Italia" (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999, 323-324). Likewise in ANO, where regional managers responsible for the operation of territorial branches are largely Agrofert managers. Scholars, who investigated this aspect of FI´s organization emphasise that the staff of Publitalia performed the key organizational role, "a company which is part of Fininvest, and which is a leading firm in advertising at a national level. In a few days, between February and March 1994, they were able to set up about 13,000-14,000 clubs all over Italy with about 80 people per club. According to the official party communication, they had become 6500 in December 1994, with about 40-50 people per club. In an organizational sense, Forza Italia is very difficult to define, partly because of its binary organization: the clubs, on the one hand, and the party with its tiny membership on the other" (Morlino 1996, 16).

To summarise, OľaNO is an extreme example of a party with non-existent local party organization, by which it achieved total control over the candidate selection and all other decisions made within the party. In contrast, TS did not manage to control the network of its local branches. In TS, the MP club quickly fell victim to internal conflicts and splits at the local and regional levels. The authoritative approach of Stronach towards the local branches translated to anything but organizational stability. On the other hand, the party statutes of ANO and FI insured that the party leadership did not have to manage issues at the local level from the position of force. Because both of these parties have control measures to restrict the local branches´ autonomy, their leaders do not have to make attempts to hold the local party organization together authoritatively. Similar attempts to gain control from the position of power in TS turned out to be unsuccessful and brought completely opposite outcomes.

5.6.2. Party Membership

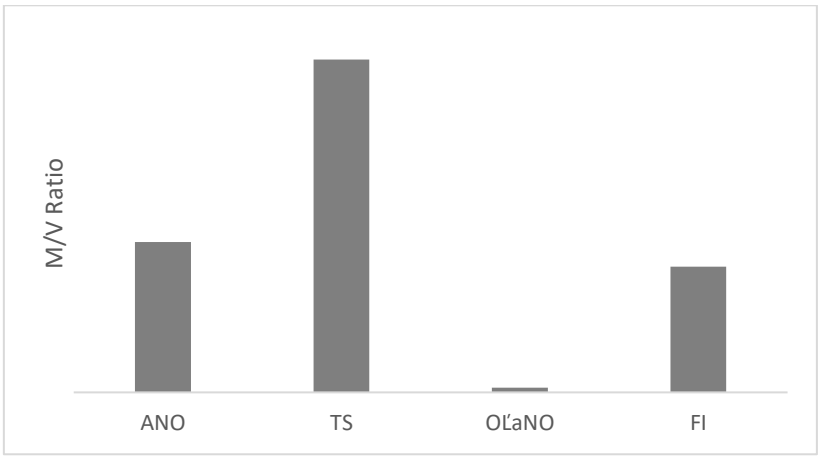
The findings in Chapter 3 indicated that the exclusive character of ANO´s party membership stems from the restrictions on party membership. These restrictions on party membership facilitate party cohesion and stability. ANO restricts party membership, which helps to prevent internal conflicts and dissent. Before focusing on the restrictions on party membership, this section first looks at how the concerned parties differ in regards to the number of party members they register. For this chapter, the analysis of party membership relates to the traditional individual members.

When compared to other (especially established parties) in their countries, all four parties represent extreme cases in regards to the number of party members that they register.

The findings in Chapter 3 indicated that the new parties in the Czech Republic are compatible in regards to the number of their party members, and the biggest variation is between the number of party members registered by new anti-establishment parties and their established counterparts. In Austria, Italy and Slovakia, the situation is very similar. The variation is also higher when comparing our four concerned parties with the established political parties in their respective countries (that often have tens, even hundreds of thousands of traditional individual members). In the year of making the electoral breakthrough, ANO registered just over five hundred traditional individual members; TS had three hundred-fifty, FI four thousand, and OĽaNO only a mere four members. Two indicators - the ratio of members to voters (M/V ratio) and the ratio of members to the electorate (M/E ratio), are employed to present the variation of the number of party members in a comparative perspective. These two indicators are traditionally used in the party politics research when party membership figures are compared across different parties or between different party systems. The electoral statistics from the first general elections in which the concerned parties contested are used in this analysis.

M/V ratio (member/voter ratio) dividing the number of traditional individual members by the number of party voters (Scarrow, Webb and Poguntke 2017), is used as the first indicator (refer to Figure 5.2 illustrating parties´ variation in regards to M/V ratio). All for parties are compatible when their M/V ratios are concerned, all of them have a very low number of traditional individual members when compared to the number of their votes. The M/V ratio ranges the lowest value of OĽaNO (0,000018 percent) to ANO (0,00058 percent), FI (0,00049 percent) and TS (0,0013 percent). OĽaNO exhibits the lowest level of party membership much lower than the other parties, while ANO and FI are most similar. TS´s relatively higher M/V ratio can be attributed to the low electoral performance of this party. In regards to the ratio of members to voters, all four parties exhibit much lower levels of party membership than their established counterparts in the respective countries; for instance, SPÖ in Austria (M/V ratio of 0,17 per cent) or KSČM in the Czech Republic (M/V ratio OF 0,09 per cent), or SMER SD in Slovakia (M/V ratio 0,02 per cent). However, the party membership of all four concerned parties are relatively compatible with the other new anti-establishment parties in their countries, such as SPD (M/V ratio of 0,008 per cent), or Pirates (M/V ratio of 0,0008 per cent) in the Czech republic or SME Rodina in Slovakia (M/V ratio of 0,005 per cent) - but to not so much with the Five Stars in Italy (M/V ratio of 0,01 per cent).

Figure 5.2 M/V Ratio of Anti-establishment parties, First Contested Elections[16]

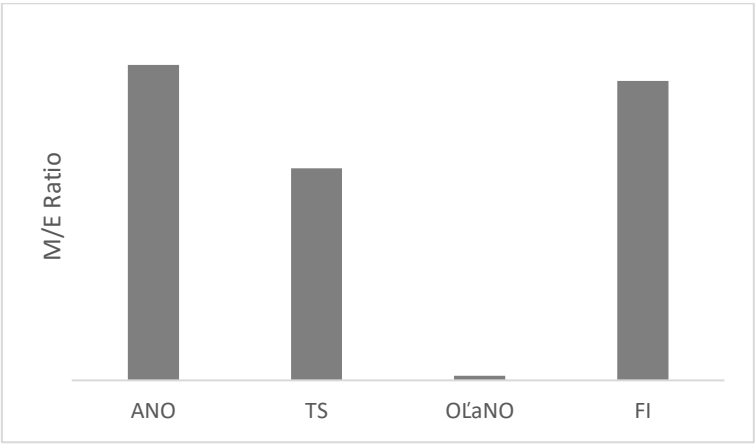


Source: party websites, MAPP Dataset (2016) project.

Next, the analysis focuses on the concerned parties´ variation in regards to the number of party members when compared to the total number of votes in elections. M/E ratio (member/electorate ratio) dividing the number of party members by the number of all votes in the election (Scarrow, Webb and Poguntke 2017) is used as the indicator in this analysis (refer to Figure 5.3 illustrating parties´ variation in regards to M/E ratio). The concerned parties´ first contested general elections are used as the source of the electoral statistics. In regards to the ratio of party members to the entire electorate, all four parties exhibit low levels of party membership and are all compatible with each other in this regard. TS (M/E ratio of 0,00007 per cent) displays similarity with ANO and FI that coincidentally have an identical ratio of members to the electorate (both parties have M/E ratio of 0,0001 per cent). In regards to this indicator, OĽaNO again exhibits the lowest level of party membership (by far) from the rest of the concerned parties.

[16] *For FI the electoral performance is measured for the electoral alliance with Christian Democratic Centre.

Figure 5.3 M/E Ratio of Anti-establishment parties, First Contested Elections



Source: party websites, MAPP Dataset (2016) project.

The low levels of party membership are a direct result of restrictions on party membership introduced by the concerned parties, in particular of the restrictions on the recruitment of new party members (refer to Table 5.12 for the summary of the restrictions on party membership implemented by the concerned parties). The most extreme case, when it comes to the restrictions on party membership, is OĽaNO. This party does not admit any new members. No ambition has even been assigned to build any party membership at all. By not recruiting any party members, OĽaNO achieves total control over the party membership. As mentioned previously, since its establishment, the entire party organization consists of only four party members (the party leader and three of his close associates).

TS did not implement as extreme restrictions, and only randomly screened application for party membership. However, the number of party members remained limited. The low level of party membership of TS (with its 350 members) is even more striking when we consider the Austrian parties´ tradition of building extensive party membership organizations. The low number of party members in TS can be attributed to the fact that the party failed electorally and lost its relevance shortly afterwards. Out of the concerned parties, the two most closely-related parties, when it comes to the number of party members and the restrictions on party membership are FI and ANO. Both of these parties introduced restrictions on party membership and also displayed a strong preference for light membership (refer to Table 3.1 for the distinction of party membership typology). While ANO only restricts the recruitment of traditional individual members (by implementing a variety of requirements – see Chapter 3), FI´s party leadership went much further. It introduced a complete ban on recruiting traditional

individual party members shortly after establishing the party. Unlike in OĽaNO and TS, in ANO and FI light tier of party membership highly outnumbers traditional individual membership. These light members provide free labour to the party as activists but have no decision-making rights. The following paragraphs look at the specifics of the concerned parties´ membership.

Table 5.10 Restrictions on Traditional Individual Party Membership

Party	Rate of restrictions on party membership	Restrictions rules*
ANO	strong	the highly developed screening procedure, six months probation period
TS	medium	party leadership decides who is recruited, only randomly screens applicants
OĽaNO	strong	no new party members admitted
FI	strong	a complete ban on the recruitment of new members

*Rules valid in the year of party´s electoral breakthrough

Source: party statutes.

In regards to the number of party members, TS is an extreme case in Austrian politics. With its 350 traditional individual members in 2014 (Die Presse 2014) TS was nowhere near the other Austrian parties such as ÖVP (700 000 members), SPÖ (205 224 members) or FPÖ (50 000 members) (Statista 2018). However, even the newer smaller parties, such as Grüne (6500 members) or NEOS (2200 members) had considerably larger membership than TS at the time (Statista 2018). The small party membership of TS may signal that this party did not put building a solid grassroots structure as its priority. Alternatively, it can be attributed to the short survival of TS in high politics. TS did not show any interest in building a network consisting of alternative form of membership. As mentioned previously, OĽaNO differs sharply from the other concerned parties in regards to the way it approaches party membership. Unlike the other parties, OĽaNO completely gave up on building any party structures, and on recruiting party members for that matter. This party organizational setup allows Matovič as the chairman of the party to control all programmatic and personnel decisions made within the party. OĽaNO´s party statutes are not transparent and do not mention if any light tier of membership exists (or if it may even attend party congresses or influence the party in any way) (Dolný and Malová 2016, 14-15). The party is an extremely closed circle, where nobody (apart from the four founding party members) has access to making decisions about the party. As such, several

scholars even raised doubts if OĽaNO conflicts with the principles of parties being based on democratic principles (Goliaš 2017).

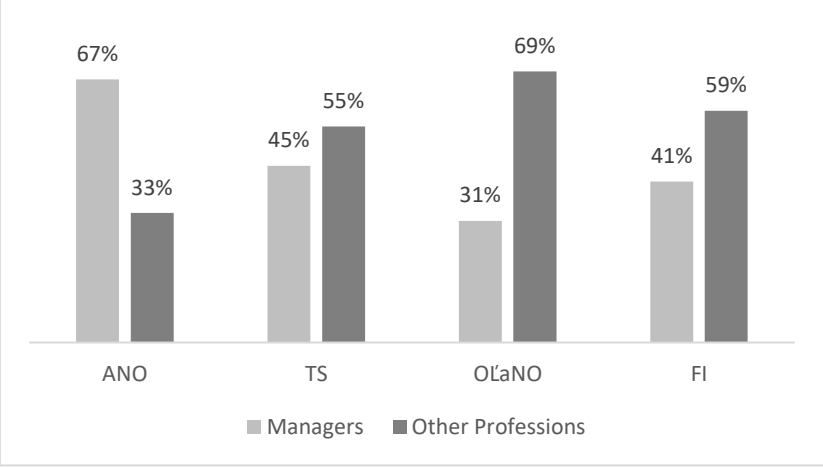
FI and ANO also represent extreme cases when it comes to restrictions on party membership. FI regulates the admission of new traditional individual members to the party, which is a part of its strategy of hierarchically dominated party organizational structure. In FI "a free acquisition of membership is not possible. Membership cards for the Forza Italia political movement were only given out during a few weeks in the spring of 1994 when a total of around 4,000 people were admitted. In the summer of 1994, a ban on admission was declared –which has not yet been lifted" (Seisselberg 2007, 729). Unlike FI, ANO does not entirely ban the admission of traditional individual members but introduces several restrictions on party membership. Prospective party members in ANO are required to submit a CV, records of personal debts and follow a six months probationary period (see Chapter 3 for more details). However, both parties are very similar in regards to their approach towards the light tier of membership. ANO exhibits a preference for light members (party sympathisers), who highly outnumber its traditional individual members, and the party frequently uses their free labour in campaigns. FI registers three types of light members in the form of 'promoters', 'club members'(Seisselberg 2007, 729) and 'benemeriti' (Raniolo 2006, 447). In both parties, these light members have no formal membership rights and consequently, no possibility to influence the political line or the selection of party personnel (nor any other impact on the party organization). Unlike OĽaNO and TS, ANO and FI prefer this light form of membership because these members provide free labour to the party but do not influence the party organization.

To conclude this section, the electorally successful parties, ANO and FI are most similar when it comes to the party membership. Both parties limit the number of traditional individual members (that have decision-making rights), and both parties successfully established extensive networks based on light membership. In OĽaNO the party leadership achieves total control over the party membership, but by more harsh measures - by not recruiting any party members at all (apart from the four initial members who found the party). Unlike the other concerned parties, TS did not introduce strict restrictions on party membership. Its low membership figures may be a result of its failure in elections that quickly led to the disintegration of the party.

5.6.3. Party Elite

The findings in Chapter 4 indicated that ANO´s elite is highly homogenous in regards to their career backgrounds and professional links. The party elite homogeneity (in managerial career backgrounds and professional links of party elite to the business of party leader) facilitates party cohesion. At the time of major crises faced by ANO, this cohesion helped the party to stay united and strongly supportive of the party leadership. The immunity to internal conflicts and party divisions turned out to be electorally beneficial. Voters prefer unified parties that maintain the public image of trustworthy and competent entities. This section is structured in the following way. First, it looks at the career backgrounds of the concerned parties´ elite. Then, the empirical analysis proceeds with exploring the professional links between their party elite. After investigating how homogenous is the party elite of the four parties in regards to these two aspects, the section continues with the discussion related to these parties´ cohesion, scandals and internal conflicts. In regards to the party elite career backgrounds, in all concerned parties, managers constitute the single most represented career category (refer to Figure 5.4 illustrating the variation in party elite career backgrounds). ANO has by far the highest proportion of managers in its party elite (see Chapter 4 for more details). In none of the other parties, the managers exceed fifty per cent of professions of the party elite.

Figure 5.4 Anti-establishment Parties, Party Elite Career Backgrounds



Source: party websites, LinkedIn profiles, parliamentary websites, refer to Appendices 9-15 and 17-19.

TS´s party elite included a variety of professions. In addition to managers, former MPs, farmers, physicians, lawyers, or business consultants were present. In terms of careers of Oľ aNO´s party elite, it was "a hodgepodge of a party list that contained a mix of individuals

from all walks of life" (Hlaváč 2016, 436). In addition to some managers, it included a high variety of other professions, such as teachers, musicians, doctors, ecologists, managers of bio-farm, civic activists, physicists, actors, paediatricians, professors, journalists, former ombudsman and many others (Rolko 2013, 45). This mixture of professions is consistent with this party´s strategy of relying on independent individuals from all parts of society. In regards to FI, three types of occupations are over-represented within its party elite. The most represented group are forty-one per cent of elites with a managerial background (46 out of 116 individuals), followed by thirteen per cent of journalists (14 out of 116 individuals) and twelve per cent of lawyers (13 out of 116 individuals). The high proportion of journalists within the FI party elite is in line with the corporate background of its party leader (who has built his business empire in the media industry). When recruiting the party elite, FI relied on the business connections of Berlusconi.

How do the four parties compare when it comes to the professional links of their party elite? In all concerned parties, the party elite includes individuals that are professionally associated with each other (and in all of them, these professional links lead to the businesses of their party leaders). However, there are differences when it comes to the level of infiltration of party elite by individuals professionally associated in this way (refer to Table 5.11 illustrating the variation in the professional links of the concerned parties´ elite). In TS, only three MPs are professionally connected to Stronach´s business (as former managers at Stronach Group company - a vice-president of business development, PR manager and media manager of his company). In OĽaNO, only two elites (Matovič himself, and Jozef Viskupič) are professionally associated with Matovič´s regionPRESS business company. In these two parties, there is no other party elite that would have any professional connections with party leaders and their businesses.

On the other hand, in ANO and FI, it is an entirely different story. The findings presented in Chapter 4 indicated that a considerable proportion of ANO´s party elite is composed of managers recruited directly from the party leader´s business companies. In FI, a large proportion of party elite is also recruited from the business world of the party leader. In both of these parties, the prevalence of these individuals professionally associated with party leaders´ businesses creates an inter-locking corporate network.

Table 5.11 Corporate links of parties´ elites

Party	Elite common professional links	Corporate network
ANO	strong	developed structure of Agrofert corporate network
TS	medium	several elites associated with Stronach Group
OĽaNO	medium	several elites associated with regionPRESS
FI	strong	developed structure of Fininvest corporate network

Source: party websites, LinkedIn profiles, parliamentary websites, refer to Appendices 9-15 and 17-19.

Several researchers have already studied professional links within FI´s party elite (Paolucci 2006; Morlino 1996; Seisselberg 2007; Pasquino 2003). These scholars pointed out that this party was, from the very beginning, intentionally structured along the lines of Berlusconi's Fininvest firm. FI was established with "a direct transfer from the firm to the party not only of people but also of the procedures, organizational design and style of the sponsoring firm" (Paolucci 2006, 167). In 1994, "14 MPs were coming from Publitalia" (one of Berlusconi´s companies) (Morlino 1996, 18)). Fininvest managers and other Fininvest employees were a crucial part of FI´s party elite and played an essential role in FI´s marketing (under Diakron) and advertising (under Programma Italia). These Berlusconi´s associates were also in charge of setting up the network of FI´s local branches (clubs) (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999, 323-324). FI relied heavily on the individuals professionally associated with Berlusconi´s companies. Its centralised, leader-dominated, firm-centred political organization was infiltrated by individuals professionally linked to Berlusconi from top to bottom.

How cohesive were the concerned parties and how successfully did they handle internal conflicts and scandals? Like in ANO, where Agrofert's managers transformed the party elite into a cohesive inter-locking network, many scholars saw FI´s party leadership as a highly cohesive closed circle of Berlusconi's close associates (with limited access for individuals from outside of this corporate circle). The entrance to FI´s party elite was a subject of personal preference of party leader. Posts on candidate lists for potential MPs were open only to "the chosen prominent figures and personal confidants of Berlusconi, who were nominated by the party leadership" (Seisselberg 2007, 729), Berlusconi was only surrounded by "faithful advisers and collaborators" (Pasquino 2003, 200), which translated into party cohesion. FI was cohesive because it relied on the structure of loyal employees from Berlusconi´s companies "the organizational confusion between Fininvest and Forza Italia characteristic of the party's

genetic model. Party strategy was elaborated by an inner circle of Berlusconi's closest collaborators and friends, a group held together by admiration and loyalty towards Berlusconi and accustomed to working under his leadership: the two Vice-Presidents of Fininvest, the President of Publitalia, a number of Fininvest managers, and a Mediaset TV celebrity. The strategies elaborated within this leading group were, in turn, implemented by three different sub-groups of Fininvest managers" (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999 p.323-324). Like in ANO (see Chapter 4), in FI the party cohesion manifested itself in several occasions and helped the party to withstand pressures of high politics. FI´s MPs displayed considerable loyalty to Berlusconi and supported him on numerous occasions when the party faced issues and scandals (Vassallo 2007). The loyalty and support of FI´s MPs repeatedly helped Berlusconi to navigate through the challenging times and to manage intra-coalition conflicts (Vercesi 2013). Because FI´s party elite consisted mostly of loyal Fininvest employees, these individuals unquestionably supported FI´s party leadership when the party faced pressures in the government (see Vassallo 2007; Vercesi 2013).

In regards to TS, Although Stronach not only founded but also largely funded his political party (similarly to Babiš and Berlusconi), he did not invest the same attention into the party organizational affairs. From the beginning, the party was not cohesive, the party elite did not share political attitudes, and internal conflicts quickly occurred. Apart from the anti-establishment appeal, the party was ideologically very shallow. There was no common ideology unifying the party elite. As time has shown, TS failed to survive in the long term due to internal conflicts caused by a lack of cohesion. These conflicts soon translated into party divisions. Nearly half of its MPs left the MP club and party divided at the regional level too (as discussed earlier in this chapter). Ultimately, only six MPs represented the party in the parliament. In 2015 four MPs switched to ÖVP (Austrian People's Party - Österreichische Volkspartei in German) and one MP became independent. As a result of these events, within a year after the 2013 elections, TS completely lost its popularity in polls. It did not even contest the 2014 EP elections. In the absence of common ideology, recruiting of party elite with common backgrounds (in regards to their career backgrounds and their professional links) could compensate and facilitate cohesion for the party.

From the beginning, OĽaNO had issues with preserving party cohesion. There was a variety of political attitudes within the party; the members of party elite differed "from one candidate to another" (Rolko 2013, 46). OĽaNO ´s MP club is far from being cohesive as it

consists of an individual with a wide range of political attitudes. The most striking difference between OĽaNO and other political parties (not only in Slovak context) is the fact that it does not have any internal mechanisms to coerce and control voting preferences and voting behaviour of its MPs. The party often does not vote uniformly on many issues as a result, which leads to internal conflicts. These conflicts repeatedly resulted in party divisions in OĽaNO. For instance, two MPs left the party following a conflict with Matovič (Dolný and Malová 2016, 14). The vast majority of the party elite consisted of independent candidates with no shared political attitudes (Rolko 2013, 7), to the extent that the party had only one unified message - a sharp criticism of the Smer government's corruption. As a result, no unifying ideology or other mechanisms to facilitate party cohesion could be expected. Those, who focused on OĽaNO´s MP club attributed the lack of cohesion to this party´s significant reliance on independent candidates (out of 150 candidates, 126 places were allocated to independents) (Rolko 2013, 43; Rolko 2013, 44).

Because of the different political attitudes of the party elite, the party could not avoid serious internal conflicts. Several MPs left the MP club as a result. First MP to leave the club was Alojz Hlina, who criticised the party for "lack of democratic elements within the movement" (Skala 2017, 80) and also suggested to focus on increasing the party membership, which did not happen. After Hlina, Mária Ritomská left the MP club one year later in 2013, followed by Mikuláš Huba, who blamed the party for its ideological change towards conservatism (Skala 2017). Any party with the elite having opposite views ranging from "ultraconservatives like Štefan Kuffa, whose sharp criticism of homosexuals made him infamous, to the environmental activists and true liberals like Mikuláš Huba" (Gollaš 2017, 52) is a ticking bomb waiting to explode. In the absence of common party ideology, there were no unifying elements that would facilitate cohesion. One of the elements helping the party elite to be cohesive could be stemming from the party elite homogeneity (in their career backgrounds and their professional links). However, OĽaNO displays high variation in elite´s career backgrounds and lack of professional links between the elite, which cannot help to facilitate common political attitudes. Simultaneously, OĽaNO has no internal mechanisms to coerce common voting behaviour. Because the party is not ideologically determined, it can hardly achieve party cohesion. When it combines with the absence of party elite homogeneity or other unifying themes, it is a recipe for arguments. The mentioned conflicts are the price that OĽaNO has to pay for its lack of party cohesion. The limited electoral outcomes of OĽaNO in the first

two terms may even be attributed to the internal conflicts and party divisions. Based on the existing theory, one can only speculate that if OĽaNO would be more cohesive and its MP club would not divide so dramatically, it would look more trustworthy to voters. As such, it could even achieve electoral success more quickly.

To conclude this section, unlike in OĽaNO and TS, in ANO and FI, the professional links of party elite to the business firms of their party leaders helped to facilitate party cohesion. This cohesion helped both parties to remain more immune to internal conflicts and divisions. The pressures of holding public office did not affect them as strongly because their party elite endured them in a united manner. In contrast to them, OĽaNO and TS experienced party divisions triggered by the lack of cohesion within the party elite. In case of TS, it even led the split of its MP club. Later it escalated into subsequent disintegration of the party as a whole. OĽaNO´s MP club witnessed similar divisions, but due to significant political changes and scandals of the governing party in Slovakia, it managed to succeed in elections despite these shortcomings. As the leading party in the current national government, it remains unclear how OĽaNO´s party elite will behave considering the internal party conflicts and divisions that haunted this party in the past.

5.7. Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter introduced a comparison between four anti-establishment parties. The goal was to investigate which party organizational features matter electorally for them. Two electorally successful, and two electorally less successful parties were selected for comparison. The variation in the electoral performance helped to explore the relationships between the individual party organizational features and electoral success. The findings in previous chapters indicated that the following aspects of party organization matter electorally for ANO.

Controlling the local branches´ autonomy helps ANO to resolve local scandals more decisively. Its capacity to control the autonomy of local branches facilitates party cohesion and stability by helping to mute internal dissent and divisions. Elementary autonomy is left to local branches to organize their locally-based events. Nationally endorsed, but locally embedded candidates better connect with local voters. Party´s capacity to control local branches´ autonomy helps leadership to tackle scandals at the local level effectively, which is crucial for protecting the positive image of the party. ANO´s party cohesion and stability also stem from the restrictions on party membership. These restrictions help leadership to institute obedience

within the party organization. It is further supported by relying on a light form of membership (party sympathisers), who provide necessary labour on the ground, but have no rights within the party, and therefore cannot negatively affect ANO´s cohesion and stability. The party elite homogeneity (shared managerial career backgrounds and professional links of ANO´s party elite forged in party leader´s business company) facilitates party cohesion necessary for the positive public image of the party. At the time of crises faced by ANO, this cohesion manifested in the firm, unified support to the party leadership. Because the elite did not slip into conflicts, the party´s reputation did not suffer as a result. The comparative element in this chapter was implemented to validate the above findings concerning the relationships between party organizational features and electoral success (refer to Table 5.12 presenting a summary of the findings made in this chapter).

Table 5.12 Party organizational features and electoral success

Party	Rate of Electoral Success	Control of Local Branches´ Autonomy	Restrictions on Party Membership	Party Elite Professional Links
TS	Unsuccessful	Medium	Medium	Medium
OĽaNO	Medium Electoral Success	Strong	Strong	Medium
ANO	Successful	Strong	Strong	Strong
FI	Successful	Strong	Strong	Strong

The findings in Table 5.12 indicate that the electoral success of the considered parties can be attributed to the combination of three aspects. These include strong control of local branches, strong restrictions on party membership and strong professional links of the party elite. However, the main difference between the concerned parties lies in the professional links of their party elite. The electorally more successful parties (ANO and FI) have a considerable proportion of party elite sharing professional links (acquired in business firms of their party leaders). In addition to these strong professional links between their party elite, the findings in this chapter indicate that the electorally successful parties also implement strong control of local branches´ autonomy and strong restrictions on party membership. OĽaNO with the medium electoral success achieved strong control of its local branches and party membership, but its party elite does not share professional links. The resulting lack of cohesion within OĽaNO´s party elite translated into internal conflicts. These internal conflicts led to party

divisions within its MP club. The electorally unsuccessful TS started to fall apart quickly after its electoral breakthrough. TS did not control the autonomy of its local branches, did not restrict its party membership, nor did it group party elite sharing strong professional links. Internal party conflicts occurred at all levels of its party organization. In the absence of common ideology or other unifying elements, the party started to divide. TS started to lose relevance completely, and its organizational crisis described in this chapter speeded up this process.

In regards to local party organization, the findings show that in both electorally successful parties, ANO and FI, the national party leadership has nearly unlimited power to meddle into local branches´ autonomy. In ANO, the party leader can replace names and order in candidate list at any time, overriding the decisions made at the constituency level. In FI, a majority of local branches are registered clubs that have no decision-making rights within the party. These precautions help ANO and FI to keep control over their local party organization and to mute any potential party dissent at the local level. OĽaNO achieved total control over all decision made within the party by not establishing any local branches. In contrast, the electorally unsuccessful TS did introduce any precautions nor any control measures over the autonomy of its local branches. TS did not manage to keep control over its local branches, and the internal opposition against the national party leadership started to mount. These internal conflicts quickly translated into divisions within its MP club.

Concerning the party membership, ANO and FI implement strong restriction on party membership. Both of these parties limit the number of traditional individual members and instead established extensive networks of light members. Because these light members do not have any decision-making rights within the party, they do not represent any risk in regards to the stability of their party organization. TS did not restrict its party membership; its membership status was inclusive. The party staff performed only random screenings of prospective members. On the other hand, Oľ aNO´s leadership achieves total control over the party membership by not recruiting any traditional individual members apart from the four initial members who found the party.

In regards to the party elite, strong professional links between elites seem to help facilitate party cohesion. Because all considered parties are ideologically very shallow, they do not have many unifying elements that would help their party elite to facilitate common political attitudes. In the absence of common party ideology, the shared professional links can compensate and facilitate party cohesion amongst the party elite. The strong professional links

of FI´s and ANO´s party elite were forged within the business firms of their party leaders. These strong professional links of their party elite translated into party cohesion, that helps these parties to stay united. The cohesion within ANO and FI manifested itself on numerous occasions when their party elite supported party leadership in a unified manner. On the other hand, TS and OĽaNO did not recruit their party elite from the networks of their party leaders´ business firms. Unlike ANO and FI, TS and OĽaNO witnessed many internal conflicts and divisions within their MP clubs. In the case of TS, these crises speeded up the process in which the party lost its relevance. In the case of OĽaNO, the internal conflicts and division of its MPs damaged the public image of the party. OĽaNO currently leads the national government, and as the pressures from holding the public office will mount, the party cohesion will be crucial for this party to hold political power. If the party fails to keep its MPs united, the consequences for its future in high politics may be fatal. It remains unclear how OĽaNO´s party elite will endure this test.

The findings presented in this chapter indicate that the electoral success of the considered anti-establishment parties seems to relate to the combination of three aspects. The control of local branches, restrictions on party membership and professionally-associated party elite seem to facilitate party legitimacy, stability and cohesion. The internal conflicts that result from lack of cohesion can have a destructive impact on the party stability (a division within parties´ MP clubs) and in turn on their legitimacy (public image). In addition to the controlled local party organization and restricted party membership, the professionally-linked party elite (drafted from the corporate setting of party leader´s companies) represent one of the possible sources of party cohesion. When parties recruit their elite from the same professional setting outside of the party organization, the like-minded individuals are more likely to hold similar political attitudes which facilitates cohesion. But more importantly, when these professional settings belong to the business firms of the party leaders, it changes the relationships between the party elite completely. Party elite professionally associated with the party leader´s business will be more loyal because they get paid by that business. As explained in Chapter 4, the party elite´s financial reliance on party leader facilitates dependencies that transform into their obedience and loyalty. Recruiting professionally-associated elite is one of the ways to achieve cohesion within the party.

The summary of findings presented in Table 5.12 demonstrates that the combination of controlled autonomy of local branches and restrictions on party membership together with

strong professional links between party elite help the considered parties to be more likely electorally successful. Together with restricting party membership and controlling local branches´ autonomy, by recruiting a proportion of the party elite from the corporate networks of party leaders´ companies, parties achieve de facto full control of the party organization. Such party organizational setup seems to be beneficial for these parties, because it positively influences their party cohesion and stability, and in turn party legitimacy. A party that controls its local branches restricts party membership, and groups loyal professionally-linked party elite seem to be more immune to internal conflicts and divisions. A party that functions like a cohesive and united entity can better act as a competent and predictable entity and is better equipped to withstand pressures of high politics. The public image of parties benefits from the lack of internal conflicts and divisions, such parties are perceived as more trustworthy by their potential electorate that is more likely to reward them in elections.

CHAPTER 6 Conclusions

This dissertation dealt with the electoral success of new anti-establishment parties. Such parties succeed electorally at the expense of their established counterparts. This relatively recent phenomenon takes place in the majority of European countries. Many of these newcomers disappear quickly after their electoral breakthrough. This research empirically explored the relationship between party organization of anti-establishment parties and their electoral success. The analysis of party organization has a tradition in party politics research. However, party organization is only one aspect that can influence the electoral success of parties. Other aspects, such as party ideology, party leader or marketing, were not empirically analysed as a part of this research. The analysis of the role of the party organization in the electoral success was based on the single case study of the Czech party called ANO. The main objective was to find evidence indicating which of the three studied party organizational features matter for electoral success. The single case study results were validated by implementing a comparative element with three other anti-establishment parties.

6.1. Cohesive, Stable and Legitimate Party as a Formula for Electoral Success

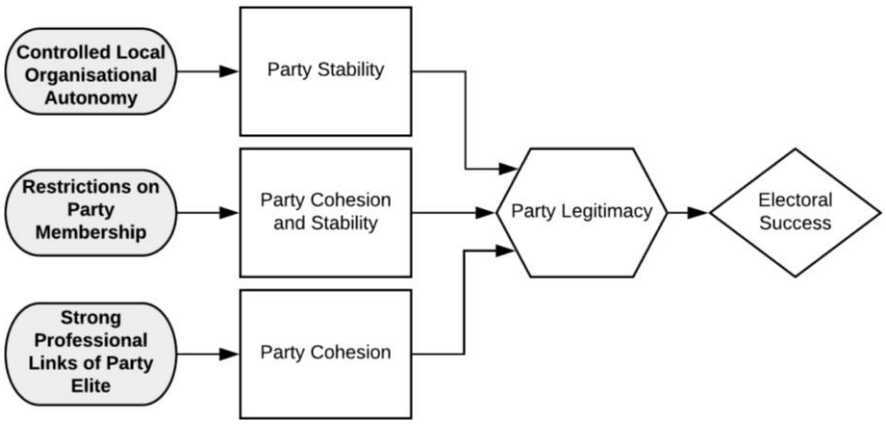
How did ANO (unlike the other new anti-establishment parties) manage to continue succeeding in elections? What helped this party to remain immune to the pressures associated with its participation in high politics (especially to the scandals that were a plague to the other new anti-establishment parties) (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2018)? The existing theory attributes the ability of political parties to repeatedly succeed in elections to various aspects, ranging from their party organization, party ideological profile, charismatic party leadership, marketing strategies and others. This dissertation empirically focused only on the party organization. The goal of this research was to explain the role of party organization in the electoral success of new anti-establishment parties, and ANO in particular. This single case study whose validity is proved by limited comparative analysis comprised of three individually studied party organizational features (local branches, party membership and party elite). The research objectives were achieved by conducting an in-depth single case study. And then, by expanding the analysis by incorporating a comparative element with three other cases that attained different electoral outcomes.

Consistent with the previous research focusing on the role of different party organizational features in shaping the electoral success of parties, the findings in this

dissertation indicate that different aspects of party organization play a significant, influential role in the electoral success of ANO. More specifically, the findings demonstrated that the capacity of limiting local organizational autonomy and implementing restrictions on party membership together with grouping a professionally-associated party elite helps to facilitate party cohesion, stability and legitimacy (that are necessary for achieving electoral success). All of the theoretical discussions concerning the role of party organization in the electoral success in this dissertation were underpinned by the relationship between these three intermediary concepts (of party cohesion, stability and legitimacy).

Party stability helps parties to avoid party divisions, which aids to preserve positive public image as stable and trustworthy entities in the eyes of potential voters. When the party does not fight and is not factious, it is more likely to enjoy support among the voters because it is perceived as more competent, credible and convincing. Party cohesion is a crucial component of party stability. Shared political attitudes are important in preventing party divisions and as such, stability depends on cohesion as a safeguard to internal conflicts. Party legitimacy is a state, in which party achieves positive public image preferable by the potential electorate by appearing as a competent, reliable and trustworthy entity. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, the comparative element that has been incorporated into the research included four anti-establishment parties founded by political entrepreneurs (ANO, TS, FI and OľaNO). Building on the conclusions of this comparative analysis, this dissertation yields the following outcomes, outlined in the following paragraphs (refer to Figure 6.1 for the summary of findings).

Figure 6.1 Findings Party Organization and Electoral Success



In theory, the limited autonomy of local branches is associated with party stability. Controlling local organizational autonomy helps parties to prevent internal conflicts, party divisions, and the creation of internal dissent (Katz 2014; Hanham 1956). The findings in this dissertation show that in the electorally successful concerned parties, the party leadership maintains power to meddle into local branches´ autonomy. In one of the parties (ANO), the party leader himself can override the decisions made by local branches in regards to candidate selections. In the other one (FI), the local branches are set up as clubs that have no decision-making rights within the party at all. Similarly, another party (OľaNO) did not even set up any local branches at all, which equals to a complete level of control. These control measures over local branches´ autonomy help parties to be more stable; these parties did not experience any significant issues or conflicts at the local level. Unlike them, the electorally less successful party (TS) did not introduce any precautions nor any control measures over the autonomy of local branches. Its inability to keep control over the local branches quickly spread into party organizational crisis. The conflicts at the local level gradually led to the creation of internal opposition against the national party leadership. Internal conflicts started to mount locally and quickly translated into party divisions within the MP club.

In regards to the party membership, the restrictions on party membership are in theory related to party cohesion and stability. Members may represent a potentially powerful source of conflict, endangering the stability of the party (Panebianco 1988; Kopecký 1995). Restrictions on party membership facilitate party cohesion because shared political attitudes are easier to attain in smaller membership base (Bolleyer 2009; Berry 1970; Volden and Bergman 2006; Cross and Young 2002). The findings in this dissertation indicate that electorally successful parties in the sample implement strong restrictions on party membership. The number of traditional individual members is limited by many recruitment restrictions (or even a complete ban on their recruitment). Instead of relying on traditional individual members, those electorally more successful of the concerned parties build extensive networks of light members (with no decision-making rights within the party). These rightless light members still provide free labour to the parties but do not represent a risk in regards to the party cohesion and stability.

In regards to the party elite (in particular to the professional links of party elite), the electorally successful parties group strongly professionally-associated party elite. Previous studies associate strong professional links of party elite to party cohesion. Party elite that shares

professional links have similar occupational socialization experiences and thus hold similar political attitudes (Lodge 1969; Moore 1979). The common professional links of party elite lead to the dual hierarchy within the party organization, which translates into the overlap of affiliations (Janowitz et al. 1956; Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008). Party elite sharing professional links forms an interlocking network. Especially at the time of crises, the party cohesion is crucial because it helps parties to stick together. In the absence of party cohesion parties quickly fall into internal conflicts, and party divisions occur following the media coverage of their scandals (which cost parties valuable trust of their voters who punish them in the next elections).

The findings in this dissertation concerning the party elite indicate that the electorally less successful of the concerned parties did not recruit professionally-associated party elite (and their party elite did not hold together). MP clubs of these parties witnessed many internal conflicts and party divisions. In one case (TS), these crises speeded up the process in which the party completely lost its relevance. The cases of ANO and FI demonstrated that when the party elite is professionally-associated with the party leader´s business network, they are more likely loyal to the leadership (because they get paid by their company). The financial reliance of party elite on party leader translate to dependencies, which transform into their obedience and loyalty. This setup leads to a quasi firm-like hierarchy within the party organization (which enhances party cohesion and stability). Consistent with these findings, other scholars who focused on ANO noted that its capacity to control and unify the party organization is based on the existence of corporate links between ANO´s elite and the leader´s business background. Kubát and Hartliński (2019) argued that when Babiš faced resistance within the party, he quickly replaced the party elite with loyal individuals from his business corporation that he could easily control. “The greatest conflict occurred in 2013 when he (Babiš) stifled the rebellion of four (out of five) of his deputies who, notably, were not related to Agrofert. Since then, he has surrounded himself only with checked and loyal associates” (Kubát and Hartliński 2019, 111).

To summarize, the findings in this dissertation demonstrated that party organization matters for the electoral success of anti-establishment parties. The combination of the control of local branches´ autonomy, the restrictions on party membership and the professional association of the party elite seems to help new anti-establishment parties to succeed in elections. Although the electorally successful parties relied on controlled autonomy of local

branches and restricted party membership, the most significant difference between them (ANO and FI) and the two other parties lies in the strong professional links of their party elite. More or less, it seems to be the combination of the studied aspects of party organization that together helped these parties to be more electorally successful.

In regards to the main research question, the chief objective in this dissertation was to find the evidence demonstrating which party organizational features are most likely to make the electoral success of new anti-establishment parties possible. The following aspects of party organization have turned out to be most important in this matter. Firstly, the party cohesion stemming from professional links between party elites helped to manage party conflicts and scandals more effectively. This lack of internal conflicts (also supported by party elites´ loyalty derived from their financial reliance on party leader´s business), supported the party legitimacy. We may only speculate whether the professional links themselves, or the actual financial reliance of party elite on party leader´s business (stemming from this professional association) play a more significant role in forging loyalty and obedience. Secondly, there is a benefit of the membership management strategy of reliance on the light form of membership. It provides volunteer labour and other advantages but does not represent any costs organizationally in regards to party stability. The cultivation of rightless light form of membership, in combination with a cohesive party elite, translates into stronger control of party organization by the leadership. The control of party organization helped to create a positive public image of trustworthy entity, a state preferrable by voters. That is why these two aspects mattered most for the electoral success. In other words, the two mentioned aspects of party organization enable the leadership to control the party organization more efficiently, which helps to create conditions favourable to the electorate. What mattered less is building of the structure of local branches and of the membership base.

6.2. General Outcome of the Research

The above-described party organizational setup (based on limiting the autonomy of local branches, implementing restrictions on party membership, and grouping professionally-associated elite) seems to depend on one common aspect. This common aspect is the intersection of party leaders´ businesses and the party organizational structures. The corporate network (of individuals professionally-dependent on party leader´s business) enables this party organizational setup to exist in ANO and FI. The influence of the party leader´s business on

the party organization reappears as the chief unifying theme throughout all the findings concerning different party organizational features of ANO and FI. These two parties intentionally built their party organization around the corporate network of their party leaders´ companies. Agrofert and Fininvest form the backbones of FI´ and ANO´s party organization. The business-firm infiltration defines how these parties are internally organized. This de facto corporate capture of their party organization is visible at all party organizational levels that were subject to this research. From the professionally-associated party elite on the one hand, or the regional managers recruited from the party leaders´ firms (overlooking operation of regional and local branches) to the business associates controlling the party membership on the other.

Organizing the party in this way seems to be convenient for Babiš and Berlusconi for several reasons. It allows party leadership to keep tight control over the organizational structure to a degree unimaginable in the established parties. As the earlier discussion has shown, the infiltration of business associates into their parties helped ANO and FI to avoid the establishment of internal party dissent (that would endanger these parties´ cohesion and stability). Party leaders´ strong position in these parties remains secure thanks to this arrangement. Previous studies have demonstrated that FI heavily utilised the personnel resources from Berlusconi´s business company (as well as its procedural and financial resources). This strategy of relying on the human resources and organizational know-how of the party leader´s business firm helped FI to set up a functioning party organizational model. As mentioned in Chapter 5, in party research, this model is known as the business-firm party (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999). This organizational strategy represented a substantial advantage for FI against its political competitors in Italy at the time. The intersection between party and business structures helped FI to dominate the entire political scene of Italy for years to come (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999). When compared to FI (that existed within the Italian party system for several decades), ANO is now nearly at the beginning of its journey. However, (as the findings in this dissertation point out) it already benefits from its reliance on the intersection between its party organizational structures and Babiš´s business networks. As discussed previously in Chapter 2, 3 and 4 in greater detail, this business-party alliance aids ANO to navigate itself successfully through the obstacles of high politics (by helping the party to preserve the image of a cohesive, stable and legitimate entity).

The above discussion concerning the party organization of ANO and FI may challenge our views on how political parties operate. It may be the case, especially when the democratic division of power within parties is concerned. In theory, intra-party democracy should be something that parties pursue. In case of these two parties, what prevails instead is the picture of a corporation that expanded its area of business to politics. A business enterprise invested resources and expertise to build a facade resembling the basic characteristics of a political party. While inside de facto operating more like a corporation. And yet, these two parties are preferred by voters and are electorally very successful (despite functioning in a fundamentally undemocratic way). These findings go against the conclusions made in the literature focusing on intra-party democracy (Stokes 1999; van Biezen 2004; van Biezen and Piccio 2013; Cross and Katz 2013). In this case, implementing restrictions on party membership or hindering local´ branches rights should not be appreciated by voters. Despite what many scholars have been arguing (Webb 2005; Ebert-Stiftung 2005; Scarrow 2005; 2013; Ikeanyibe 2014; Ajah and Chinonso 2018), the limiting of intra-party democracy seems advantageous in regards to the electoral success of these two parties.

The findings discussed in this dissertation provide specific evidence showing that different party organizational features matter electorally. But the party organization is not and cannot be the sole explanation of new anti-establishment parties´ electoral success. As a complex process, electoral success has many explanations. As such, it is not possible to explain its cause by analysing only certain factors, such as party organization. Rather than attempting to explain why anti-establishment parties succeed electorally, this dissertation focused on determining which party organizational features matter for electoral success. Because many other factors (that were not within the scope of this research) may contribute to the electoral success, it was not the aim of this research to find a complete explanation for such a complex phenomenon by merely analysing one factor. Instead, the chief objective in this dissertation was to gather and analyse enough empirical evidence to demonstrate which aspects of party organization have an impact on the electoral outcomes (and how). As such, this dissertation empirically treated only one factor with the potential of influencing the electoral success of parties and only did so on a single case study whose validity was proved by a limited comparative analysis. Many other alternative explanations of new anti-establishment parties´ electoral success may indeed exist. If one would consider to empirically look at different factors

such as the party ideology, party leader, marketing or party financing, numerous other alternative explanations of anti-establishment parties´ electoral success would arise.

Within the universe of explaining the electoral success, the empirical analysis in this dissertation comprised only a proportion of the overall explanation. Only in combination with the other factors (for instance some of those mentioned above), one would see the full picture. In some cases, the alternative explanations may also be better suited than the party organization. For example, in the case of ANO (and FI), the professional links between the party elite and party leader´s business seem to function as the main source of party cohesion. However, in other new anti-establishment parties, the party cohesion does not have to come from this source at all. While in case of these concerned parties it is the corporate interlocking network within the party elite that provides party cohesion, in different parties it may originate from elsewhere. For instance, other factors, such as common party ideology, may provide party cohesion. All four parties considered in this research are ideologically shallow, and their party cohesion falls back on the strong professional links amongst their party elite. However, in different parties that are ideologically determined, the common ideology can be a source of cohesion in those cases instead.

6.3. Directions for Further Research

The future research of anti-establishment parties and their electoral success should incorporate a detailed analysis of the role of political entrepreneurs´ financing in their parties. The investigation of potential usage of corporate finances for party purposes would further enlighten the influence of political entrepreneurs´ businesses on their party organizations. Simultaneously, research based on a broader sample of anti-establishment parties modelled around political entrepreneurs would highlight the relevance of the findings made in this dissertation (and shed more light on the role that business firms´ involvement has on party politics). Investigating potential relationships between the party organizational structures and corporate networks on a wider sample of cases would also further verify the role of party organization in contemporary parties´ electoral outcomes. As such, to fully empirically explore and describe the relationship between businesses and political parties, future researchers should include the investigation of party funding and an in-depth analysis of different types of donors. It would help us to understand the degree of political entrepreneurs´ financial involvement in their parties (as well as the financial involvement of their close associates, affiliated companies

and other related corporations). Such analysis would be enlightening, considering that new anti-establishment parties found by political entrepreneurs can be expected to rely financially on their party leaders´ businesses, especially in the initial phases of their party formation. This speculative expectation should be verified on an extended sample of such parties. The detailed analysis of ANO´s financing would help to explain how the party was founded and whether the relationships within the party (and outside of it) have any connection to the source of party financing. Scholars who have already conducted a similar empirical analysis found out that ANO was from the very beginning primarily funded by Andrej Babiš and his Agrofert[17] company (as well by its affiliates and business associates). This party funding was facilitated in the form of loans to the party and represented a large proportion of this party´s income (Brunnerová 2018). Analysis and overview of more anti-establishment parties´ financing (especially when conducted on a wider cross-national comparative sample of cases) would help us understand the role of political entrepreneurs and their wealth within these types of parties. Party´s financial reliance on the party leader´s financial resources could potentially represent another example of dependency that would, in turn, help the leader to control the party organization. Some authors have claimed that Babiš can make most decisions regarding the party freely because he is the main funder the party (Kopeček 2016). Perhaps because Babiš largely pays for ANO to operate (and the party is indebted to him for that), he can implement the control measures over the party organization that were discussed throughout this dissertation. Future academic studies investigating the above relationships would, in my view, enrich our understanding of anti-establishment parties´ formation, operation, and grounds for their electoral success. To understand and draw some general insights on ANO, the next section concludes with a theoretical debate regarding the significance of ANO in the light of my findings.

6.1. Further Discussion About the Role of ANO in Czech Politics

ANO´s electoral success represents one of the most significant political changes in the Czech Republic since the fall of communism. Anti-establishment sentiments gradually mounted in Czech society for many years (Stolarik 2016). The protest vote strengthened with every new

[17] According to the Czech branch of Transparency International, Agrofert provided at least 30 million CZK (around 1.2 million EUR) to ANO between 2012 and 2015 (Transparency International 2016).

corruption case that involved high-ranking politicians of one of the two major parties. The frustration with the established parties culminated with the media coverage of so-called Nagy-gate case (Havlík, Hloušek and Kaniok 2017, 45) based on the accusation of PM´s chief of staff (and lover) for misusing her position to spy on PM´s wife. This complex case exposed bribing and misuse of power among the highest post in ODS and led to PM Nečas´s resignation and fall of his coalition government in June 2013 (Právo 2013). Shortly afterwards, in October 2013, the Czech political scene witnessed an electoral earthquake that was unexpected by many.

A new era of Czech billionaire Andrej Babiš and his party called ANO has just begun (Roberts 2018). This new electorally very successful anti-establishment party emerged overnight. It represented an unprecedented political change that has no comparison in contemporary Czech politics (Havlík and Voda 2016). In the course of the next seven years, ANO became the strongest political player in the country, winning a vast majority of all successive elections in different electoral arenas. Since the 2013 legislative elections, with ANO making a swift entry into Czech party system, scholars and media commentators alike start witnessing a new phase of the Czech politics characterised by the strong position of one party. It can remind us of Italian politics under Berlusconi a few decades ago. Although Czech politics is by far not yet dominated by one party 'owned' by its party leader (and his business), ANO very quickly became the main party at the Czech political scene. From the formerly virtually invisible billionaire, Babiš built a party that holds public office at every single level of state administration, and at the time of completing this dissertation nearly nothing happens in this country´s politics without his name being mentioned. The electoral success of Babiš´s party significantly changed Czech party politics; the following paragraphs will enlighten how ANO influenced it.

In the years following the Velvet Revolution, the Czech parliament witnessed the initial stage of institutionalization, professionalisation and democratic learning (Simon, Deegan-Krause and Mansfeldová 1999). The years to come were marked by the political competition based on the clearly defined ideology-driven conflict between two main parties. This continuous struggle over the control of political power was between left-wing (democratic socialism of ČSSD) and right-wing (neoliberalism of ODS) ideologies representing opposing views on the country´s politics and economy (Vachudová 2008; Cirhan and Kopecký 2019). Out of these two competitors, the right-wing neoliberalism of ODS modelled on the British

Conservatives was more successful in the first years after the fall of the communist regime (Hanley 2008). However, during these times, increasing public distrust in the political establishment and the institutions of the state (Kunštát 2012) was mounting, fuelled by voters´ frustration from numerous corruption scandals (Havlík 2011). The atmosphere amongst Czech voters could be characterised as disillusionment (Linek 2010). The hopes that were invested in the change of regime in 1989 remained unfulfilled for many Czechs (Balík et al. 2017). Gradually, both of these major parties started to lose the support of voters, and the dynamic of the Czech party system was changing (Szczerbiak and Hanley 2006).

Ultimately, right-left two-party completion ended with Babiš´s entry into politics and electoral breakthrough of his ANO. Unlike it was the case for these two parties, ANO represents a new phenomenon in the Czech context - a phenomenon of so-called centrist populism (Havlík and Pinková et al. 2012). Parties ideologically defined in this way increasingly gain ground within the region of Central Eastern Europe (Učeň 2004; 2007), the Czech party system is only one example where it takes place. Although, the first signs of established parties losing support were evident long before Czech voters heard of the name Andrej Babiš (Roberts 2010). One of the first times that the frustration with the political establishment manifested itself strongly was in the 2010 general elections (Berglund et al. 2013), which were referred to as an 'electoral earthquake' (Havlík and Hloušek 2014; Hloušek and Kaniok 2010; Stegmaier and Vlachová 2011). The results of these elections not only weakened the position of the two major established parties, but two new parties also entered the parliament (Haughton, Novotná, and Deegan-Krause 2011). As discussed in greater detail in introducing Chapter 1, in 2010, a new anti-establishment party called VV made an electoral breakthrough. Like in the case of ANO, VV´s electoral success can also be seen as a part of the wider phenomenon of political entrepreneurs infiltrating the Czech party system (Hloušek, Kopeček and Vodová 2020).

In addition to VV, the electoral space occupied by ODS and ČSSD also shrank considerably because TOP 09 a new conservative party entered the lower house parliament (Skalnik Leff 2019, 179). Rather than a genuinely new party, some have categorised TOP 09 as a breakaway party of KDU-ČSL (Hanley 2012, 123). Unlike TOP 09, VV was the first party running on the anti-establishment appeal that made an electoral breakthrough in twelve years (Hloušek 2012). In the Czech context, VV can be seen as a model for other subsequently founded anti-establishment parties with populist rhetoric (e.g. ANO, Dawn, SPD) that achieved

greater electoral success than VV at the time (Kubát and Hartliński 2019, 107). Its only predecessor, SPR-RSČ that combined anti-establishment appeals with the extreme right-wing rhetoric, left the lower house of the Czech parliament in 1998 (Havlík 2012). In contrast to SPR-RSČ, VV did not have a clearly defined ideological profile, and its identity was built solely on the criticism of the entire political establishment and its corruption (Havlík and Hloušek 2014). As mentioned previously, VV participated in the national government led by ODS. However, the party did not manage to hold together due to internal party conflicts triggered by the scandals of MPs and gradually fell apart (Cirhan and Kopecký 2017).

As a result, the position of the government was unstable. ODS had to count on the votes of TOP 09´s MPs and part of former VV´s MPs that remained in the government under the newly formed LIDEM party (Havlík 2012). The government´s issues with VV were only a presage of its future fall. The previously discussed scandal that led to the collapse of Nečas´s government was followed by the caretaker government set up by the Czech president (Hloušek and Kopeček 2012). This cabinet of independent bureaucrats continued to govern illegitimately ignoring the ruling of the Czech Constitutional Court that announced early elections (Balík 2011). The 2013 early general elections were preceded by great instability in Czech politics. The trust in the established parties (that was already at its lowest before the 2010 general elections) hit a new bottom, the frustration with the political establishment mounted (Havlík 2014). In this atmosphere, ANO appears branded as the new savour and as the main critique of all the established parties (in particular of ODS and ČSSD that have managed to squander their political capital completely). These two major established parties, to which some authors referred as clientelist organizations for their close connections to lobbyists, private businesses and even criminal entities (Klíma 2013), were anything but ready to face this new competitor. ANO´s steadily rising popularity stemmed directly from its image as a new 'outsider' party and as a clearly pronounced opposition to all established parties discredited by scandals (Hloušek, Kopeček and Vodová 2020). ANO´s electoral success symbolises the beginning of a new era in Czech post-communist politics.

The Czech party system was previously considered as consolidated, stabilised and institutionalised (Cabada, Hloušek and Jurek 2014; Berglund and Dellebrant 1991; Hanley 2008; Lewis 2000). ANO´s entry fragmented its composition into one bigger party and many smaller parties. Simultaneously, ANO´s electoral breakthrough changed the dimensions of the political competition. The conflict between parties became to be no longer primarily ideology-

driven, but interest and marketing-driven. ‘ANO´s era’ will be remembered for the greater interest of parties in the professional party marketing and strong emphasis on their public presentment rather than on their political program or party ideology. Reliance of parties on marketing experts did, of course not commence with ANO´s involvement in politics, but the importance of marketing and public presentment indeed increased. Additionally, one could even go further and argue that the intersection between business and politics in the case of ANO also changed our perception of the role of parties in society. From political actors responsible for forming and proposing new policies into institutions existing de facto solely to produce highly professionalised marketing messages to win over public opinion. Babiš´s ownership of several mainstream media outlets (two major daily newspapers, radio station and internet TV) also altered our perception of (and tolerance to) the concentration of power in the hands of politicians. What was previously unimaginable in Czech high politics quickly became a new ‘norm’. Especially when this second-richest Czech purchased the country´s largest print media house providing him with media power inaccessible to his political competitors. When combining such media power with his vast economic power of Agrofert business empire (Roberts 2018) and the newly acquired political power of ANO, Czechs find themselves in a situation highly unusual and inconceivable in the established democracies west of the country´s borders.

In terms of party ideology, ANO´s electoral breakthrough can also be perceived as part of a self-sustaining anti-establishment supply to the electorate frustrated with the politics of the main parties, and ODS in particular (Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015). As such, ANO´s victories marked the end of the right-wing politics of ODS. In its place, we see ANO as a broad movement of the centre, something for which the demand lasted from the first days of Civic Forum. In one interview Sean Hanley emphasised that with ANO´s entry to the party system, the specific kind of technocratic populism of Andrej Babiš replaced the former right-wing politics of ODS (Willoughby 2017). This technocratic populism entails that ANO combines anti-establishment rhetoric with the centrist managerial-like technocratic politics (Havlík 2019). Unlike the other European anti-establishment parties either on the radical right (Party for Freedom in the Netherlands) or the radical left (Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain), ANO is positioned in the centre. Its ideology of hostility against the entire political establishment combines with centrist, technocratic policies (Havlík and Voda 2018). Because ANO (and previously VV as well), relies on populist slogans in its communication to the electorate (in

addition to the strongly pronounced anti-establishment appeals), it is often referred to as a populist party too.

The contemporary literature refers to populist parties as to those that claim to represent the will of ordinary citizens (Aalberg et al. 2017), while opposing the political elites (Stanley 2008; Roberts 2017), labelling them as corrupted (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013; Mude and Kaltwasser 2017). ANO´s and VV´s kind so-called centrist populism (Stanley 2008) is closely associated with the party politics of post-communist countries of Central Eastern Europe (Učeň 2004; 2007). In other EU countries, populism is more often associated with the radical right (Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Mudde 2004; 2007; 2010; Norris 2005; Pirro 2015; van Kessel et al. 2020) or with the radical left (March and Keith 2016). For the majority of Europe´s extreme right or left parties, the core of their ideology lies in anti-elite salience (Polk et al. 2017). With the notable exceptions such as Italy's Five Star Movement that combines anti-establishment rhetoric with centrist voter preferences (Mosca and Tronconi 2019), in southern and western European party systems, populist appeals are often combined with nationalism or xenophobia (Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Zaslove 2011; Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011; Minkenberg 2015). In the Czech context, not all new parties (that can be classified as populist parties) are positioned ideologically in the centre either. VV and ANO merged populist themes (and anti-establishment appeals) with the centrist ideological position. Others, notably Tomio Okamura (with his Dawn and SPD parties) combined these two aspects of political ideology and communicational strategy with the radical right-wing politics. Unlike Okamura´s right-wing populism that is running on the anti-immigration, anti-Muslimism and anti-EU ticket (Kopeček et al. 2018; Císař and Navrátil 2019), ANO introduced the technocratic populism into the Czech political context.

But what does ANO´s version of technocratic populism entail? As mentioned in introducing Chapter 1, ANO built its ideology and party image on the idea of managing the state efficiently, like running a private business-firm. Chiefly, it includes appeals for fixing and centralising the state administration, tackling the incompetence and the corruption of civil servants, and introducing vast infrastructure projects. Babiš repeatedly emphasised that only experienced managers can run the state effectively (Havlík 2019), ANO´s overall rhetoric and party communication towards public stemmed directly from Babiš´s appeals of this kind. The technocratic approach of ANO is closely related to the managerial background of its leader and his close associates (as discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, which focused on ANO´s party

elite.) The hands-on experience of ANO´s elite from business circles mirrors in their managerial-like approach to politics and the set of technocratic policies they introduce (Buštíková and Guasti 2018). The technocratic approach of ANO shows that the anti-establishment rhetoric in Central and East Europe is not necessarily combined with other elements of populism. These classic themes established in the political science literature like people-centrism, radical ideology, or the invocation of general will are not present in the case of ANO (Canovan 1999; Engler, Pytlas and Deegan-Krause 2019). ANO´s opposition to the entire political establishment goes hand in hand with its technocratic, managerial problem-solving rhetoric because of the notorious incompetence of previous governments in planning and executing concrete reforms and projects. In the past, the established parties were repeatedly targeted by media for their failures to resolve many issues regarding the administration of the country. In particular, the criticism was aimed at the pension reform, reconstruction and building of the infrastructure or the investment into the medical system. Consequently, ANO´s anti-establishment appeals work together with its technocratic promises of functioning state administration. However, ANO´s technocratic populism (symbolised by the managerial problem-solving approach) has similar limits like the neoliberal right-wing politics of ODS; it can quickly fail with the voters once "the myth of expert competence is exposed" (Buštíková and Guasti 2018, 322).

In addition to the technocratic approach to policies, from the very beginning, ANO built its party communication on the criticism and strong opposition to all established parties. Babiš´s strongly pronounced anti-establishment rhetoric may look paradoxical to those familiar with Czech politics because of his close relationships with many politicians from major parties of the past (both ODS and ČSSD). However, this marketing strategy of distancing from the political establishment (despite the apparent links to politicians from the established parties) is common amongst the leaders of new anti-establishment parties. Deegan-Krause (2017) observed that many leaders of such parties could be recognised as an elite in regards to their wealth or prominence. In many cases, their fortune is even a result of their political connections in the past. Their apparent anti-establishment distancing from the current political elite is visible as a part of their marketing strategy (Deegan-Krause 2017). Scholars, who focused on anti-establishment parties in the post-communist context noticed that their anti-establishment stance is of more importance than the classic populist themes. "Particularly in post-communist countries, anti-establishment rhetoric tends to be a feature of many (new) parties, making a

distinction between populist and non-populist parties arguably less meaningful" (van Kessel 2015a, 33). In the Czech context, the anti-establishment stance amongst new parties reflects the frustration of the voters with the established parties haunted by corruption scandals of the past. Within such an environment, even new non-populist parties, like Pirates, often make strong anti-establishment appeals as well.

When ANO gradually acquired more political power and managed to replace the established parties in the national government, many journalists and public intellectuals alike started to ask whether its involvement in politics represents a risk for Czech democracy. Because Babiš started to concentrate more economic, media and political power, his rise in Czech politics could not go unattended by the political scientists either. Hanley and Vachudova (2018) focused on ANO as a part of the discussion on the democratic backsliding in Central Eastern Europe. They compared the new political situation in the Czech Republic to that already experienced for some time by Poles and Hungarians. Unlike it was the case for the governing parties in Hungary or Poland (that relied mainly on illiberal nationalism), ANO started its attempts for the concentration of power in the name of technocratic efficiency. In contrast to PiS or Fidesz, ANO lacks "a similar nationalist justification for centralizing authority, though to some extent it uses the fight against corruption and traditional parties as a stand-in" (Vachudova 2019, 5). The sequence of events that led to the concentration of power has also been different in the Czech Republic. Babiš´s journey followed the opposite trajectory than that of his counterparts in Poland or Hungary. The concentration of his tremendous economic and media power as oligarch preceded his gain of political power (that came later with the electoral success of his party) (Hanley and Vachudova 2018, 283). Although in the past Babiš was not politically active in public, he used his political contacts within ČSSD and ODS to facilitate acquisitions of many formerly state-owned companies, which helped him to accumulate economic power (Kmenta 2017; Pergler 2014). Unlike in Poland or Hungary, in the Czech case, all the power has been accumulated into the hands of one person.

But have there been any significant consequences of Babiš´s concentration of power for Czech democracy? Several publicly-known intellectuals warned that Babiš as prime minister (in cooperation with the Czech president Miloš Zeman) might attempt to dismantle liberal democracy in a way paralleling with the political changes seen in Poland or Hungary (Příbáň 2017). On this note, Hanley and Vachudova (2018, 289) conclude that the economic, media and political power accumulated by Babiš amplify one another (and some of his ideas

border with stripping away checks and balances of the democratic system in the name of efficiency). However, according to them, ANO does not represent a threat comparable to the nationalist and illiberal PiS or Fidesz. Unlike these parties, ANO´s technocratic rationale and lack of parliamentary majority (which translates into its dependence on smaller parties to form and sustain the national government) prevent Babiš from eroding the liberal democracy in the Czech Republic (Roberts 2020). On the other hand, ANO´s participation in politics de facto embodies what Innes (2016), who has closely studied party–state relationships in the Czech Republic, referred to as a corporate state capture. The incorporation of ANO´s politicians (who are often closely professionally associated with Babiš, as this dissertation also confirms) into public administration raises concerns while we consider that Agrofert is one of the major recipients of public funding. Moreover, NGOs, such as Transparency International refer to European Parliament´s resolution regarding Babiš´s ongoing conflict of interest (Pearson 2020). This evidence is especially paradoxical when we acknowledge that at the beginning, ANO campaigned with strong emphasis of being the champion of anti-corruption. As mentioned in the introducing Chapter 1, ANO even formulated its initial public proclamations closely on the cooperation with several NGOs, in particular with Rekonstrukce Státu (Rekonstrukce Státu 2020). Now the same sector calls for Babiš to get rid of his business (now with ownership transferred to two trust funds) or resign.

Other scholars added that although it remains unclear what risk will ANO represent for the liberal democracy in the Czech Republic in future, there are already some red flags visible today. For instance, “the erosion of informal democratic norms that goes hand in hand with the polarization of party systems” (Vachudova 2019, 705), is a phase we already start to witness now. The plans for dissolvement of some institutional checks and balances were also mentioned by Babiš (Lorenz and Formánková 2020). In his book, Babiš shared ambitions to amend the constitution, aiming to make it more efficient, to disband the Senate, regional level of governance and to reduce the size of the parliament (Tucker 2017). It thus remains unclear what the future will bring.

At the time of completing this dissertation, ANO remains as the leading political player in the Czech Republic, leading the country´s government. Currently, it is the biggest party in the lower house of Czech parliament, it leads all the electoral polls, and its position seems unchallenged by any of its competitors. Several observers shared the irony (or perhaps even the geniality) of Babiš using an anti-corruption platform to acquire and maintain vast political

power while simultaneously struggling with his scandals that border with corruption, misuse of public funding and conflict of interest. In the past, several new anti-establishment parties in the Czech Republic disappeared quickly after making electoral breakthrough (in particular VV and Dawn). These parties became victims of the internal conflicts triggered by the scandals of their party elite. Unlike for these parties, ANO´s presence in high politics proved to be more long-term. A number of similar patterns between these parties and ANO are visible; such as the speed with which they have emerged and gained the attention of public and media and skilfully utilised the widespread discontent with the established parties to made electoral breakthrough. Despite these similarities, ANO prevailed, and the other parties disappeared as quickly as they appeared (mainly due to their inability to stay united when facing challenges and pressures). Their disunity translated into incompetence to tackle negative publicity following the media coverage of their elite´s scandals (Cirhan and Kopecký 2017) and foreshadowed their fall. ANO´s elite, in the particular the party leader himself faced similar (in fact even far more severe) scandals like the elite of the other two parties. Nevertheless, ANO did not fall apart, and its public image did not suffer as a result of it. Unlike in the other parties, the scandals of the party leader did not translate into the party organizational crisis within ANO. The findings presented in this dissertation indicate that due to the stable and cohesive party organization, ANO remains immune to adverse impacts of party leader´s scandals (and other pressures associated with its participation in the government).

Other scholars, like Van Kessel (2013) differentiated two types of factors that affect the electoral success of new anti-establishment parties – factors on demand and supply sides. Political scientists, who focused on 'the demand' noted that new anti-establishment and populist parties more likely electorally succeed during the times of crises (Pirro and van Kessel 2018). ANO equally benefited from the crisis of the political establishment and the impact of the economic crisis at the time. Like in the case of the 2008 financial crisis, the migration crisis or the Brexit negotiations, the current crisis around the global pandemic will likely offer fruitful opportunities for populist and anti-establishment parties to shine as well. Because such parties are characteristic for utilising voters´ frustration, some scholar refers to them as to 'agents of discontent' (van Kessel 2015b). These types of parties were told to thrive only when "a substantial part of the electorate feels dissatisfied with the political elite, which generates a truly conducive environment for populist parties" (van Kessel 2013, 194). However, because 'the demand' can only explain the emergence of new parties, not their electoral success in the

longer term (as explained in greater detail in the introducing Chapter 1), this dissertation did not empirically treat the demand-side factors. In regards to 'the supply', van Kessel (2013) adds that even when the conditions are favourable in times of crises (as described above), the new anti-establishment parties need to pose themselves as credible alternatives to their established counterparts to maintain lasting electoral success. What van Kessel (2013, 194-195) means by the 'electoral credibility' is closely related to the leadership and organizational stability. According to van Kessel (2013), the electoral credibility (enabled by the party stability) supports parties´ ability to convey a resonant convincing message to their electorate. As the findings summarised in the previous section indicated, ANO´s ability to achieve the party cohesion and stability is essential for its 'electoral credibility' (legitimate public image), which is a crucial part on 'the supply' side attracting its voters.

6.2. References

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6.3. Interviews

Interviewee 1 – Member of ANO´s Executive Committee, a founding member of the party, MP, former minister, prime minister, the party leader. Interview held on 7th September 2016.

Interviewee 2 – Member of ANO´s Executive Committee, a founding member of the party, MP, leader of ANO´s MP club, the first deputy party leader. Interview held on 8th September 2016.

Interviewee 3 – MP, the regional party leader. Interview held on 13th September 2016.

Interviewee 4 – MP, deputy regional party leader, municipal politician. Interview held on 13th September 2016.

Interviewee 5 – Former member of ANO´s Executive Committee, former MP. Interview held on 7th September 2016.

Interviewee 6 – Former member of ANO´s Executive Committee, former MP, former minister, the former deputy party leader, former regional party leader. Interview held on 13th September 2016.

Interviewee 7 – Former member of ANO´s Executive Committee, municipal politician, area organization leader. Interview held on 12th September 2016.

Interviewee 8 – MP, former minister, municipal politician. Interview held on 20th June 2017.

Interviewee 9 – Member of ANO´s Executive Committee, MP, regional governor, municipal politician. Interview not held in person; questionnaire filled in online instead.

6.4. Appendices[18]

Appendix 1 Local organizational density by municipalities

Regions	ANO Number of votes in regional elections 2016	ANO % of votes in regional elections 2016	Number of ANO´s local organizations 2016	Number of municipalities 2016	Number of ANO´s local organizations / 100 municipalities
Total	533061	21,05	242	6279	3
Praha	NA	NA	2	22	9
Středočeský	72795	20,77	25	1144	2
Jihočeský	32348	17,67	13	624	2
Plzeňský	34506	21,52	16	501	3
Karlovarský	16078	22,92	11	134	8
Ústecký	43308	23,25	20	354	6
Liberecký	21156	17,09	11	215	5
Královéhradecký	41075	25,19	3	448	0.70
Pardubický	28612	19,17	15	451	3
Vysočina	25875	17,05	9	704	1
Jihomoravský	71797	20,85	50	673	7
Olomoucký	40218	23,78	13	402	3
Zlínský	28525	15,68	21	307	7
Moravskoslezský	76768	25,71	33	300	11

[18] Appendix 1 –7, Source: Volby.cz.
Appendix 8 – Source: Český statistický úřad (2016).
Appendix 9 – 15, Source: www.anobudelip.cz.
Appendix 16, Source: individual party websites.
Appendix 17-19, Source: individual party websites.
Appendix 20, Source: www.vectorstock.com

Appendix 2 Local organizational density by voters

Regions	ANO Number of votes regional elections 2016	ANO % of votes regional elections 2016	Number of voters regional elections 2016	Number of ANO´s local organizations 2016	Number of voters for one local organization	Number of local organizations for 100 000 voters
Total	533061	21,05	7461766	242	30834	3.24
Praha	NA	NA	NA	2	NA	NA
Středočeský	72795	20,77	1026801	25	41072	2.43
Jihočeský	32348	17,67	513857	13	39527	2.53
Plzeňský	34506	21,52	456716	16	28545	3.5
Karlovarský	16078	22,92	236933	11	21539	4.64
Ústecký	43308	23,25	656600	20	32830	3.05
Liberecký	21156	17,09	350267	11	31842	3.14
Královéhradecký	41075	25,19	444612	3	148204	0.67
Pardubický	28612	19,17	413501	15	27567	3.63
Vysočina	25875	17,05	413171	9	45908	2.18
Jihomoravský	71797	20,85	952480	50	19050	5.25
Olomoucký	40218	23,78	518478	13	39883	2.51
Zlínský	28525	15,68	480457	21	22879	4.37
Moravskoslezský	76768	25,71	997893	33	30239	3.31

Appendix 3 Locally selected candidates, general election 2013

Regions	Number of candidates	Number of candidates selected at constituency level	Number of candidates selected at the national level	% of candidates selected at the constituency level	ANO % of votes in general elections 2013
Praha	36	32	4	88,89	16,46
Středočeský	33	31	2	93,94	20,07
Jihočeský	22	22	0	100,00	16,97
Plzeňský	20	20	0	100,00	18,52
Karlovarský	14	14	0	100,00	21,32
Ústecký	26	25	1	96,15	21,29
Liberecký	17	16	1	94,12	21,59
Královéhradecký	20	19	1	95,00	20,28
Pardubický	19	19	0	100,00	19,82
Vysočina	20	20	0	100,00	15,89
Jihomoravský	34	32	2	94,12	17,34
Olomoucký	23	23	0	100,00	19,61
Zlínský	22	22	0	100,00	18,31
Moravskoslezský	36	35	1	97,22	18,07
Total	342	332	12	96,49	18,65

Appendix 4 Locally selected candidates, general election 2017

Regions	Number of candidates	Locally selected	Not locally selected	% locally selected	ANO % votes general elections 2017
Praha	36	36	0	100,00	20,35
Středočeský	34	32	2	94,12	28,66
Jihočeský	22	20	2	90,91	28,86
Plzeňský	20	19	1	95,00	30,98
Karlovarský	14	13	1	92,86	35,42%
Ústecký	26	26	0	100,00	37,55%
Liberecký	17	17	0	100,00	29,83%
Královéhradecký	20	20	0	100,00	31,77%
Pardubický	19	19	0	100,00	30,81%
Vysočina	20	19	1	95,00	28,63%
Jihomoravský	34	34	0	100,00	27,40%
Olomoucký	23	23	0	100,00	31,39%
Zlínský	22	22	0	100,00	28,76%
Moravskoslezský	36	36	0	100,00	35,42%
Total	343	336	7	97,96	29,64%

Appendix 5 General election 2013, Locally selected (top 25 % candidates)

Regions	Number of candidates	Locally selected	Not locally selected	% locally selected
Praha	9	7	2	77,78
Středočeský	9	9	0	100,00
Jihočeský	6	6	0	100,00
Plzeňský	5	5	0	100,00
Karlovarský	4	4	0	100,00
Ústecký	7	7	0	100,00
Liberecký	4	3	1	75,00
Královéhradecký	5	4	1	80,00
Pardubický	5	5	0	100,00
Vysočina	5	5	0	100,00
Jihomoravský	9	8	1	88,89
Olomoucký	6	6	0	100,00
Zlínský	6	6	0	100,00
Moravskoslezský	9	9	0	100,00
Total	89	84	5	94,38

Appendix 6 General election 2017, Locally selected (top 25 % candidates)

Regions	Number of candidates	Locally selected	Not locally selected	% locally selected
Praha	9	9	0	100,00
Středočeský	9	8	1	88,89
Jihočeský	6	6	0	100,00
Plzeňský	5	4	1	80,00
Karlovarský	4	3	1	75,00
Ústecký	7	7	0	100,00
Liberecký	4	4	0	100,00
Královéhradecký	5	5	0	100,00
Pardubický	5	5	0	100,00
Vysočina	5	4	1	80,00
Jihomoravský	9	9	0	100,00
Olomoucký	6	6	0	100,00
Zlínský	6	6	0	100,00
Moravskoslezský	9	9	0	100,00
Total	89	85	4	95,51

Appendix 7 Candidates 2013 – 2017 general elections re-nomination

	Total Number of candidates	Number of new candidates 2017	Number of renominated candidates	Renomination(%)
Praha	36	26	10	27,78
Středočeský	33	24	9	27,27
Jihočeský	22	16	6	27,27
Plzeňský	20	15	5	25,00
Karlovarský	14	9	5	35,71
Ústecký	26	22	4	15,38
Liberecký	17	15	2	11,76
Královéhradecký	20	15	5	25,00
Pardubický	19	15	4	21,05
Vysočina	20	14	6	30,00
Jihomoravský	34	27	7	20,59
Olomoucký	23	16	7	30,43
Zlínský	22	19	3	13,64
Moravskoslezský	36	33	3	8,33
Total	342	266	76	22,22

Appendix 8 Electoral relevance of party members

Region	2013 General elections ANO	2013 General elections all parties	2013 General elections ANO (%)	2016 Regional elections ANO	2016 Regional elections all parties	2016 Regional elections ANO (%)	Number of members 2016	Number of sympathisers 2016
Prague	96,564	586,509	16.46	N/A	N/A	N/A	246	3163
Central Bohemia	125,984	627,492	20.VIII	72,795	350,539	20.77	279	1900
South Bohemia	52,81	311,171	16.97	32,348	183,064	17.67	128	1089
Pilsen	48,808	263,425	18.53	34,506	160,317	21.52	236	812
Karlovy Vary	26,157	122,673	21.32	16,078	70,155	22.91	125	451
Ústí	71,986	338,082	21.29	43,308	186,286	23.24	187	1651
Liberec	43,727	202,451	21.59	21,156	123,817	17.80	118	626
Hradec Králové	55,548	273,891	20.28	41,075	163,079	25.18	72	728
Pardubice	50,677	255,603	19.82	28,612	149,23	19.17	151	673
Vysočina	41,662	262,032	15.90	25,875	151,79	17.50	102	740
South Moravia	99,509	573,857	17.34	71,797	344,374	20.85	484	2526
Olomouc	59,808	304,844	19.62	40,218	169,153	23.78	222	887
Zlín	54,089	295,334	18.31	28,525	181,909	15.68	207	801
Moravia-Silesia	99,911	552,62	18.VIII	76,768	298,598	25.71	370	1949
Total	927,24	4,969,984	18.66	533,061	2,532,311	21.50	2927	17,996

Appendix 9 ANO MPs

Name of MP	Career background
Andrej Babis	manager, owner of Agrofert
Helena Valkova	lawyer, 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 the department of transport
Ivana Dobesova	manager of two secondary schools, a former teacher
Radka Maxova	manager (Agrofert)
Roman Kubicek	manager in a multinational company
Josef Vozdecky	manager in the wine industry, former general manager at Bohemia Sekt
Jan Volny	the 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 a museum in Cheb
Zdenek Soukup	A Czech TV reporter and moderator
Richard Brabec	manager (Agrofert)
Vlastimil Vozka	mayor of Most, a manager in energy companies
Bronislav Schwarz	director of municipal police in Most
Stanislav Pfleger	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 the drink industry (Fruitstrue)
David Kasal	manager in hospital in Chrudim
Martin Kolovratnik	manager in Czech Radio, journalist
Josef Kott	product manager (Agrofert)

Zuzana Sanova	lecturer (University Hradec Kralove)
Martin Stropnicky	actor, stage actor, diplomat
Roztislav Vyzula	professor (Masaryk University Brno)
Karel Rais	rector VUT Brno
Bohuslav Chalupa	tax office clerk
Miloslav Janulik	director of the hospital, vice-president of the paediatric society
Milan Brazdil	manager of regional ambulance service
Jaroslav Faltynek	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 the mining industry
Jan Sedlacek	business manager
Martin Sedlar	entrepreneur - Natura Data
Igor Nykl	cardiologist

Appendix 10 ANO Mayors

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 the packaging industry
Decin	Marie Blazkova	social worker

Appendix 11 ANO Ministers

ANO Minister	Name	Career background
Finances	Andrej Babis	manager, owner of Agrofert
Defence	Martin Stropnicky	actor, stage actor, diplomat
Environment	Richard Brabec	manager (Agrofert)
Local development	Karla Slechtova	manager of EU fund department
Transport	Dan Tok	manager in the construction industry
Justice	Robert Pelikan	lawyer, academic career

Appendix 12 ANO Party Praesidium

Party praesidium	Name	Career background
Leader of the 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 Jermanova	manager in company Aksamite
Deputy leader	Jan Volny	manager in logistics
Deputy leader	Radmila Kleslova	lawyer, a regional politician
Member of Presidium	Margita Balastikova	manager of Hrebcin Napajedla a.s.
Member of Presidium	Richard Brabec	manager (Agrofert)
Member of Presidium	Martin Stropnicky	actor, stage actor, diplomat
Member of Presidium	Martin Komarek	journalist
Member of Presidium	Radek Hlousek	manager
Member of Presidium	Radek Popelka	manager, entrepreneur

Appendix 13 ANO Regional Leaders

Region	Name	Career background
Prague	Radmila Kleslova	lawyer, a regional politician
Central Bohemia	Frantisek Petrtyl	entrepreneur in the 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 the banking and insurance industry
South Bohemia	Radka Maxova	manager (Agrofert)
Olomouc	Ladislav Oklestek	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)

Appendix 14 ANO Regional Managers

Region	Name	Career background
Prague	Martin Haushalter	advisor of Prague mayor, owner of Paladino Consulting
Central Bohemia	Jaromír Maceška	assistant of ANO MP František Petrtýl
South Bohemia	Vladimíra Hrušková	planner at Agrostav, member of České Budějovice city council for ANO, assistant of ANO MP Maxová
Pilsen	Michal Marek	member of real estate commission in Pilsen council
Karlovy Vary	Vlastimil Lesčinský	entrepreneur sport equipment
Ústínad Labem	Jakub Komárek	entrepreneur Health services
Liberec	Jana Hajná	entrepreneur
Hradec Králové	Darina Kricnarová	agricultural entrepreneur, town councillor
Pardubice	Simona Barvířová	consultant and loans provider
Vysočina	Lubomír Nechvátal	management Agroslužby Horní Cerekev
South Moravia	David Aleš	account manager, Diversey
Olomouc	Milan Passinger	entrepreneur AZ Tech Trade (parts for aeroplanes)
Moravia-Silesia	Markéta Nowaková	manager Mediatel
Zlín	Kateřina Vašicová	entrepreneur (cosmetic beauty treatments)

Appendix 15 ANO Central Party Staff

Division/department	Name	Career background
Analysis	Darek Kysela	member of management (Agrofert)
Regional support	Bozena Hazova	journalist, a consultant at PR Essential Communication
Communication	Vladimir Vorechovsky	PR and marketing manager (Agrofert)
Central manager of the party	Erika Duchanova	manager (UniCredit Leasing, Tatra Trucks)
Regional management	Tomas Kratky	manager (UROCONT)
New media	Marek Prchal	digital director, idea maker, campaign manager

Appendix 16 Overview of anti-establishment entrepreneurial parties

Country	Party name	Political entrepreneur	Years active	% votes last election	Nº seats last election
Austria	Alliance for the Future of Austria	Jörg Haider	2005-2010	3.53%	0
-	Team Stronach	Frank Stronach	2012-2017	5.73%	11
Belgium	Libertarian, Direct, Democratic	Jean-Marie Dedecker	2007-now	2.3%	1
Bulgaria	Attack	Volen Siderov	2005-now	9.07%	27
-	National Movement for Stability and Progress	Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha	2001-2017	0.24%	0
-	Reload Bulgaria/Bulgaria Without Censorship	Nikolay Barekov	2014-2017	5.69%	15
-	Volya	Veselin Mareshki	2007-now	4.15%	12
-	Bulgarian Business Bloc*	George Ganchev	1991-2001	4.93%	12
Croatia	Bridge of Independent Lists	Božo Petrov	2012-now	9.91%	13
Cyprus	Solidarity Movement	Eleni Theocharous	2016-now	5.24%	3
Czech Republic	Action of Dissatisfied Citizens	Andrej Babiš	2012-now	29.6%	78
-	Dawn/SPD	Tomio Okamura	2013-now	10.6%	22
-	Public Affairs	Vít Bárta	2001-2015	10.88%	24
Greece	The River	Stavros Theodorakis	2014-now	6.1%	17
-	Independent Greeks*	Panos Kammenos	2012-now	4.8%	13
-	Popular Orthodox Rally*	Georgios Karatzaferis	2000-now	1.03%	0
Italy	Five Star Movement	Beppe Grillo	2009-now	32.7%	227

-	Northern League	Umberto Bossi	1991-now	17.4%	124
-	Forza Italia	Silvio Berlusconi	1994-now	14.00%	106
Latvia	For Latvia from the Heart	Inguna Sudraba	2014-now	0.84%	0
-	Latvian Association of Regions	Mārtiņš Bondars	2014-now	4.15%	0
-	For a Good Latvia	Andris Šķēle	2010-2011	7.82%	8
-	New Era Party	Einars Repše	2002-2011	16.5%	18
-	People's Party*	Andris Šķēle	1991-2011	19.7%	23
Lithuania	Labour Party	Viktor Uspaskich	2003-now	4.8%	2
-	The Way of Courage	Jonas Varkala	2012-now	0.29%	0
-	National Resurrection Party	Arūnas Valinskas	2008-2011	15.09%	16
Netherlands	Party for Freedom*	Geert Wilders	2006-now	13.1%	20
-	Forum for Democracy	Thierry Baudet	2016-now	1.8%	2
-	Pim Fortuyn List*	Pim Fortuyn	2002-2008	0.2%	0
Poland	Kukiz'15	Paweł Kukiz	2015-now	8.81%	42
-	Your Movement*	Janusz Palikot	2011-now	10.0%	40
-	Modern	Ryszard Petru	2015-now	7.60%	28
Romania	Save Romania Union*	Nicușor Dan	2015-now	8.87%	30
-	People's Movement Party*	Traian Băsescu	2014-now	5.35%	18

-	People's Party – Dan Diaconescu	Dan Diaconescu	2011-2015	13.98%	47
Slovakia	Freedom and Solidarity*	Richard Sulík	2009-now	12.1%	21
-	Ordinary People and Independent Personalities	Igor Matovič	2011-now	11.0%	19
-	Kotleba – People's Party Our Slovakia*	Marian Kotleba	2010-now	8.0%	14
-	We Are Family	Boris Kollár	2015-now	6.6%	11
-	Network*	Radoslav Procházka	2014-now	5.6%	10
-	Idea*	Pavol Rusko	2001-now	1,22 %	0
-	Party of Civic Understanding*	Rudolf Schuster	1998-2003	8.01%	15
Slovenia	Modern Centre Party - Party of Miro Cerar	Miro Cerar	2014-now	9.75%	10
-	Party/Alliance of Alenka Bratušek*	Alenka Bratušek	2014-now	5.11%	5
-	Zoran Janković's List – Positive Slovenia*	Zoran Janković	2011-now	2.97%	0
-	Civic List*	Gregor Virant	2011-now	0.64%	0
Spain	We can	Pablo Iglesias Turrión	2013-now	21.2%	71

*Political parties that are not genuinely new, and thus fall into the category of so-called breakaway parties19

19 Breakaway parties by definition are new parties formed by either splitting from existing established parties or largely founded by elites breaking away from existing established parties (Hanley 2012, 123).

Appendix 17 TS MPs

Name	Career background
Waltraud Dietrich	owner of a company
Christoph Hagen	a former member of parliament
Robert Lugar	a former member of parliament
Martina Schenk	a former member of parliament
Leopold Steinbichler	farmer
Ulrike Weigerstorfer	Stronach manager, the owner of a PR company, worked for Stronach
Rouven Ertlschweiger	media manager of Stronach
Marcus Franz	physician
Georg Vetter	lawyer
Kathrin Nachbaur	vice-president of business development at Stronach's company
Jessi Lintl	business consultant

Appendix 18 OĽaNO MPs

Name	Career background
Martin Fecko	ornithologist
Alojz Hlina	entrepreneur in gastronomy
Eva Horváthová	doctor, professor
Igor Hraško	musician
Mikuláš Huba	ecologist
Erika Jurinová	teacher
Miroslav Kadúc	laywer, Kaduc PARTNERS
Štefan Kuffa	manager of hospice
Igor Matovič	entrepreneur, owner regionPRESS
Helena Mezenská	manager, publicist, mediator
Ján Mičovský	manager Lesy SR (forests state agency)
Peter Pollák	plenipotentiary for Roma communities
Mária Ritomská	an official at labour inspectorate
Branislav Škripek	translator, evangelist
Richard Vašečka	teacher, writer, preacher
Jozef Viskupič	project manager regionPRESS

Appendix 19 FI MPs

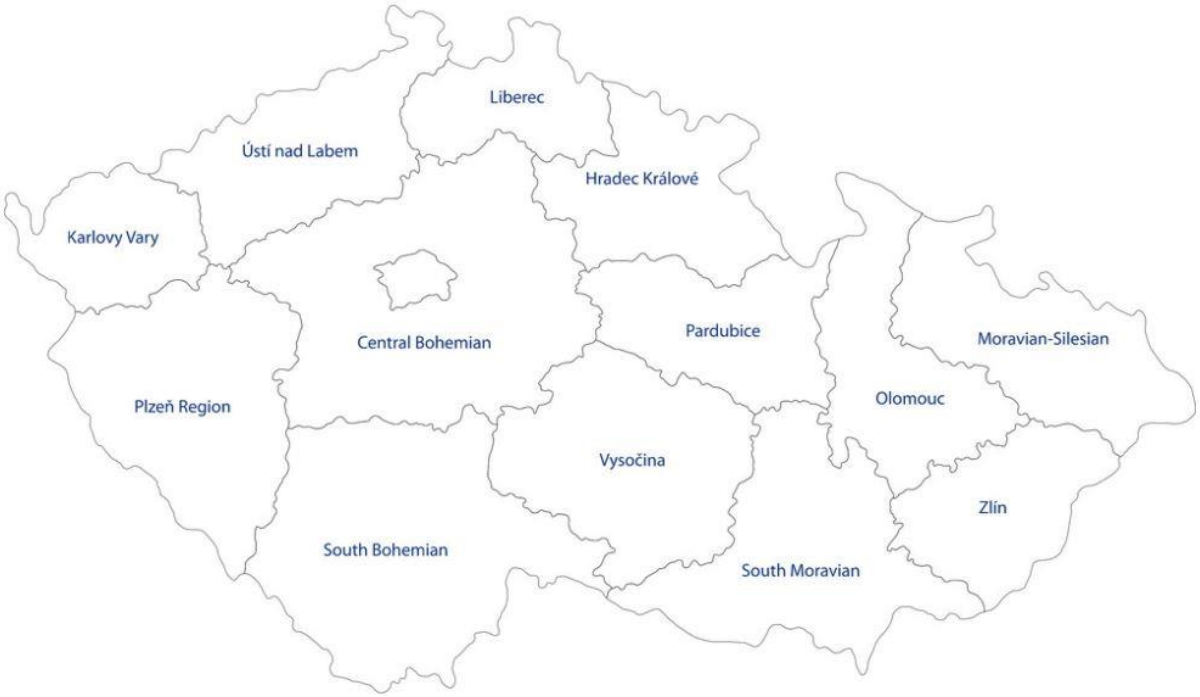
Name	Career background
Alberto Acierno	business owner/manager
Valentina Aprea	headteacher
Paolo Arata	company manager, public official
Giacomo Archiutti	business owner/manager
Giacomo Baiamonte	university professor
Augusta Lagostena Bassi	lawyer
Alessandro Bergamo	dentist
Silvio Berlusconi	business owner/manager
Giorgio Bernini	university professor, lawyer
Maurizio Bertucci	journalist
Vincenzo Bianchi	insurance agent
Alfredo Biondi	lawyer
Emma Bonino	political activist
Mario Bortoloso	business owner/manager
Gian Piero Broglia	business owner/manager
Maria Burani Procaccini	journalist, writer
Emanuela Cabrini	business owner/manager
Michele Caccavale	banker
Giuseppe Calderisi	civil engineer
Riccardo Calleri	business owner/manager
Onorio Carlesimo	university professor
Francesco Cascio	surgeon
Mariella Cavanna Scirea	public relations officer
Umberto Cecchi	journalist
Antonio Cherio	architect, building contractor
Sergio Chiesa	hotelier
Salvatore Cicu	lawyer
Roberto Cipriani	business owner/manager
Manlio Collavini	business owner/manager
Edro Colombini	surgeon
Gianfranco Conte	business owner/manager (service sector)
Raffaele Costa	lawyer, journalist
Alberto Cova	business owner/manager
Rocco Crimi	pharmacologist

Giacomo de Ghislanzoni Cardoli	business owner/manager (agriculture)
Fabrizio Del Noce	journalist
Raffaele Della Valle	lawyer
Angelo Raffaele Devicienti	doctor
Alberto Di Luca	business owner/manager
Pietro Di Muccio	government official
Vittorio Dotti	journalist
Mario Francesco Ferrara	business owner/manager
Ilario Floresta	business owner/manager (telecommunications)
Antonio Fonnesu	business owner/manager
Giancarlo Galan	business owner/manager
Giacomo Galli	business owner/manager
Giacomo Garra	state councilor
Enzo Ghigo	business owner/manager
Giuliano Godino	business owner/manager
Antonio Guidi	surgeon
Giancarlo Innocenzi	business owner/manager
Giorgio Jannone	business owner/manager (paper factories Paolo Pigna SpA)
Roberto Lavagnini	business consultant
Giuseppe Lazzarini	business owner/manager
Lucio Leonardelli	journalist
Marianna Li Calzi	lawyer
Silvio Liotta	retired
Domenico Lo Jucco	an employee of a private company
Vittorio Lodolo D'Oria	surgeon
Tiziana Maiolo	journalist
Paolo Mammola	business owner/manager
Paola Martinelli	business owner/manager
Antonio Martino	professor of economy
Antonio Martusciello	business owner/manager
Mario Masini	business owner/manager
Piergiorgio Massidda	specialized doctor
Riccardo Mastrangeli	pharmacist
Amedeo Matacena	business owner/manager
Cristina Matranga	business owner/manager
Francesco Mele	pharmacist

Alessandro Meluzzi	university professor
Andrea Merlotti	insurer
Gianfranco Miccichè	business owner/manager
Paolo Sandro Molinaro	business owner/manager
Luigi Muratori	surgeon, university professor
Enrico Nan	lawyer
Emiddio Novi	journalist
Giampaolo Nuvoli	journalist
Paolo Oberti	business owner/manager
Paolo Odorizzi	business owner/manager (construction)
Pierangelo Paleari	business consultant
Giuseppe Palumbo	professor of gynaecology and obstetrics
Tiziana Parenti	lawyer
Riccardo Perale	surgeon, university professor
Giovanni Pilo	business owner/manager
Maria Gabriella Pinto	business owner/manager
Beppe Pisanu	business owner/manager (public company)
Antonio Piva	business owner/manager
Stefano Podestà	university professor
Stefania Prestigiacomo	business owner/manager
Paolo Romani	journalist (publisher)
Roberto Rosso	lawyer
Alessandro Rubino	business owner/manager
Enzo Savarese	business owner/manager
Paolo Scarpa Bonazza Buora	business owner/manager
Vittorio Sgarbi	philosoph
Attilio Sigona	business owner/manager
Michele Stornello	doctor
Lorenzo Strik Lievers	University professor
Paolo Emilio Taddei	lawyer
Marco Taradash	journalist
Vittorio Tarditi	lawyer
Adriano Teso	business owner/manager
Roberto Tortoli	political activist
Nicola Trapani	teacher
Sandro Trevisanato	lawyer

Giuliano Urbani	university professor
Carlo Usiglio	business owner/manager
Mario Valducci	business owner/manager
Antonietta Vascon	journalist
Paolo Vigevano	journalist (publisher)
Elio Vito	sociologist

Appendix 20 Regions of the Czech Republic



6.5. Curriculum Vitae

Tomáš Cirhan was born in Jihlava, Czech Republic in 1988. After graduating at Business Academy and Language school in Jihlava, he relocated to Scotland, where he completed an HNC in Social Sciences at Banff and Buchan College (Fraserburgh, United Kingdom). He completed his university education at the University of Aberdeen (Aberdeen, United Kingdom), from which he graduated with commendation in September 2013 with an MSc in Globalization. He holds an BA (Hons) in Applied Social Sciences from Robert Gordon University (Aberdeen, United Kingdom). His research interests lie in the cross-national comparative analysis of anti-establishment political parties and their party organization. In his PhD research conducted at the Institute of Political Sciences of Leiden University, he focuses primarily on party politics in Central and Eastern Europe. His authored and co-authored articles were published in *East European Politics* and in *Czech Journal of Political Science*. He has contributed a chapter to a book titled *East Central Europe at a Glance: People -Cultures – Developments,* and co-authored a chapter in a volume titled *Party Leaders in Eastern Europe.*