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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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Citation
Cirhan, T. (2021, May 12). *The role of party organization in the electoral success of anti-establishment parties: ANO in the Czech Republic*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3161383

Version:	Publisher's Version
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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page

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Issue date: 2021-05-12

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.

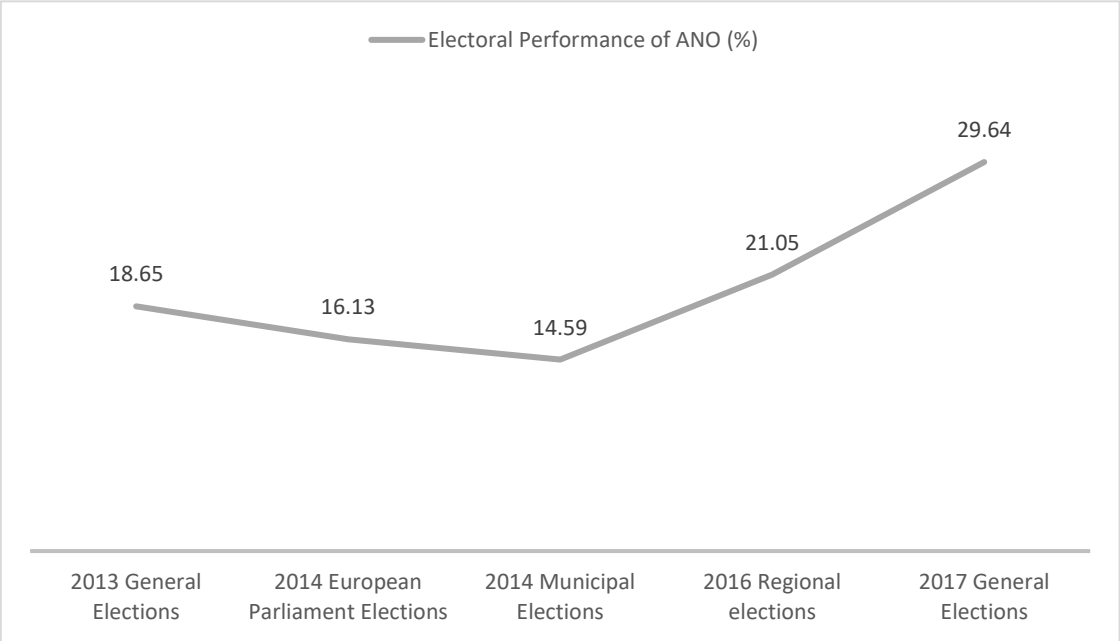
1.2. The Story of ANO´s Electoral Success

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.

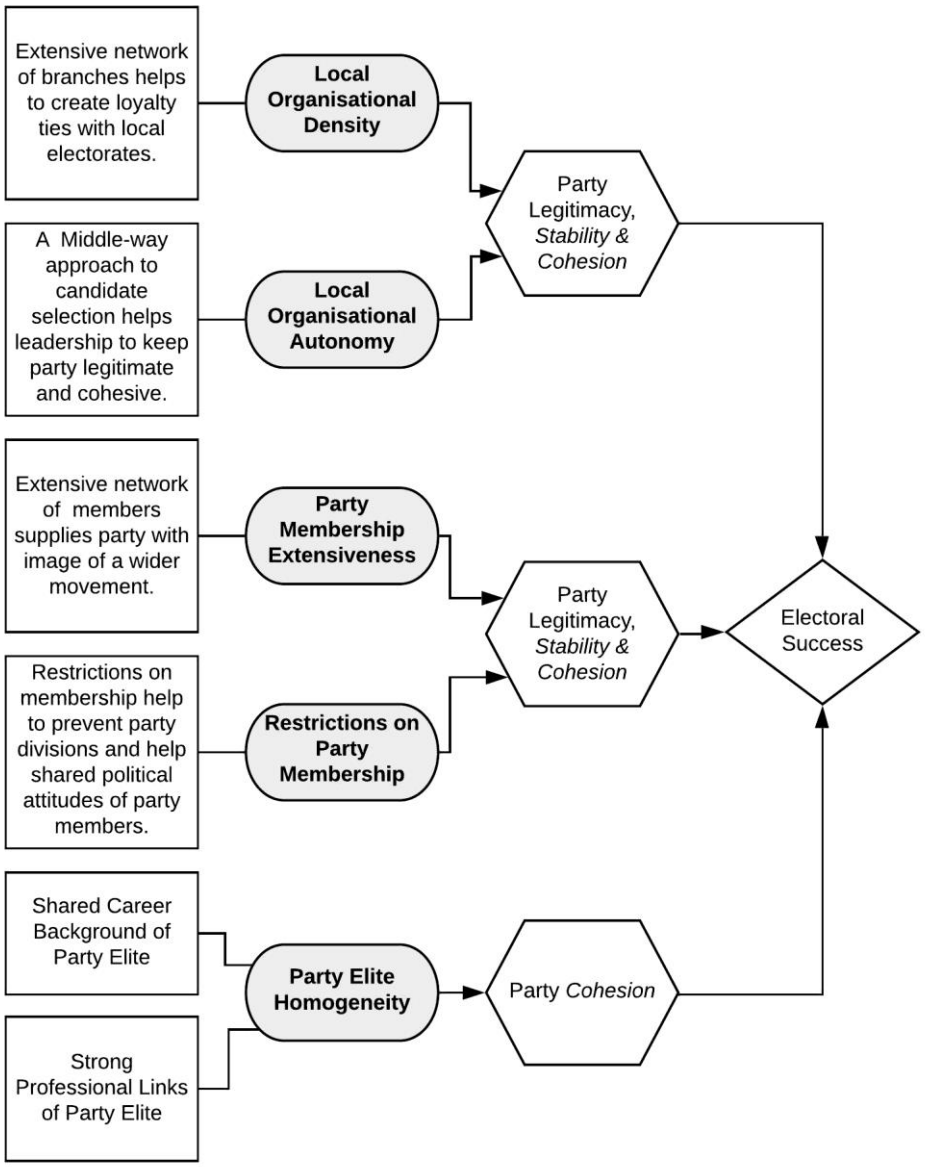
Because these concepts do not exist in a vacuum, they also matter to each other. Figure 1.2 illustrates the theoretical arguments related to the individual, organizational features and the relevance of intermediary concepts. This section focuses on the discussion concerning the relationships between 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.