



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Cirhan, T.

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

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3161383>

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

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/3161383> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Cirhan, T.

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

Issue date: 2021-05-12

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 results¹⁰. 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, OLaNO 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 and monographic 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 cases¹¹. 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 studies¹². 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 bias¹³ 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 entrepreneur¹⁴ (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).

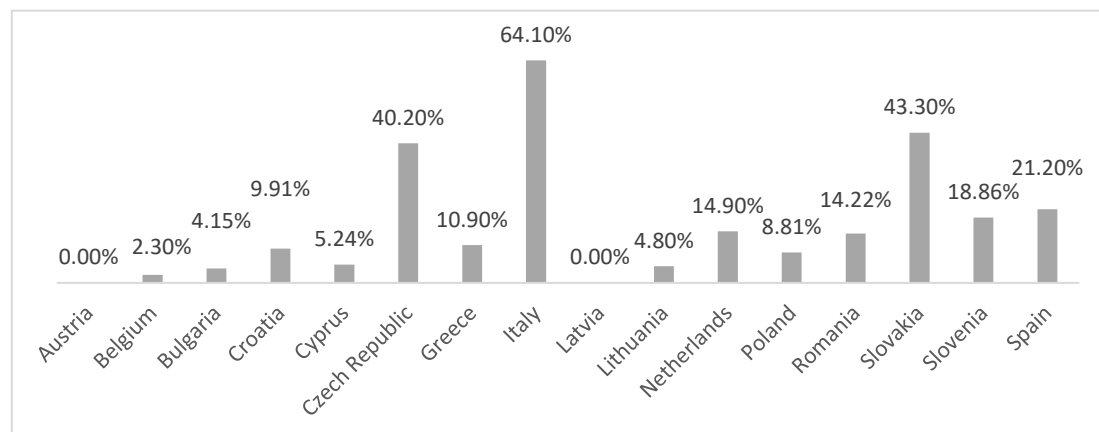
¹⁴ It is also noteworthy that in case of the selected parties, in addition to having a political entrepreneur in their centre, their political entrepreneurs have also been successful businessmen prior to their entrance to politics, and used the of their business firms to support their political ventures.

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 majority¹⁵ 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, OLaNO and FI

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

Source: individual party websites.

Background of TS, OLaNO 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, OLaNO 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, OLaNO, 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, OľaNO 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 OLaNO 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. OLaNO, 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
OLaNO	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. OLaNO achieves total control over the party organization. OLaNO'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
OLaNO	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.

OLaNO 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 led 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 OĽaNO, 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 OĽaNO’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, Ol’aNO 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

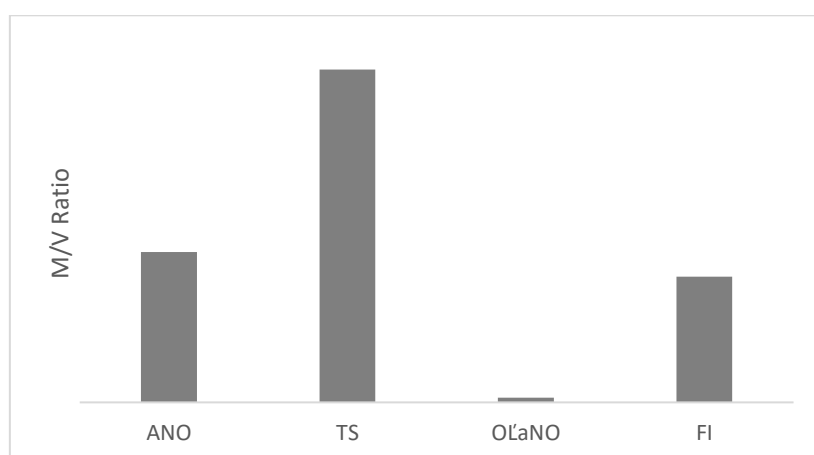
The findings in Chapter 3 indicated that the exclusive character of ANO’s party membership stems from the restrictions on party membership. These restrictions on party membership facilitate party cohesion and stability. ANO restricts party membership, which helps to prevent internal conflicts and dissent. 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 four 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 from 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 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 Elections¹⁶

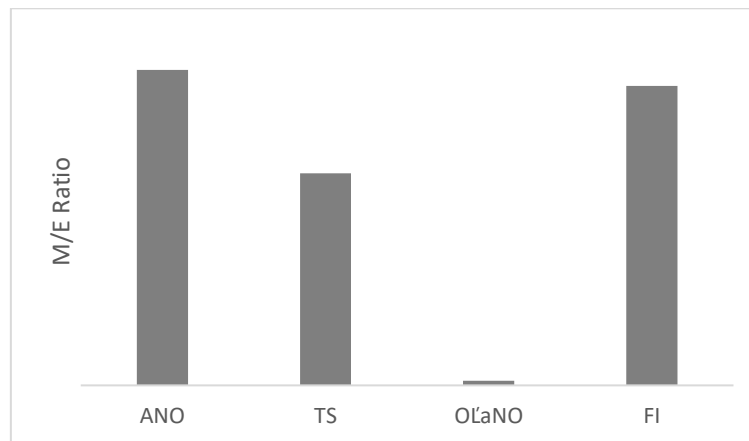


Source: party websites, MAPP Dataset (2016) project.

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 OLaNO. 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, OLaNO 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 OL'aNO conflicts with the principles of parties being based on democratic principles (Golias̃ 2017).

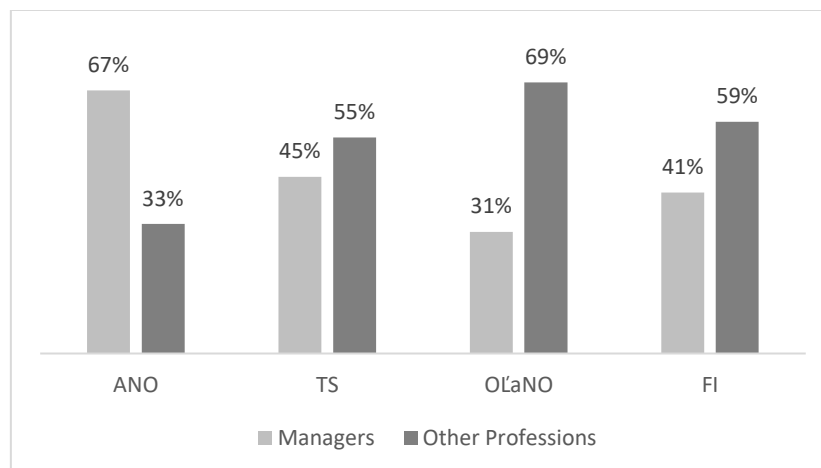
FI and ANO also represent extreme cases when it comes to restrictions on party membership. FI regulates the admission of new traditional individual members to the party, which is a part of its strategy of hierarchically dominated party organizational structure. In FI “a free acquisition of membership 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 OL'aNO 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 OL'aNO 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 OĽaNO'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
OLaNO	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, OLANO 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). OLANO'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
OLaNO	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. OLaNO 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 OLaNO'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, OĽaNO'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 OLaNO did not recruit their party elite from the networks of their party leaders' business firms. Unlike ANO and FI, TS and OLaNO 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 OLaNO, the internal conflicts and division of its MPs damaged the public image of the party. OLaNO 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 OLaNO'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.