# The consolidation of centre-right parties in the Czech Republic as an issue for comparative analysis[*]

Seán Hanley[**]

## 1. Introduction

The emergence of strong parties of the centre-right in the Czech Republic in the early 1990s of a predominantly neo-liberal or "liberal conservative" orientation was one of the more unexpected outcomes of early post-transition politics in Central and Eastern Europe. Many commentators had assumed that Czech(oslovak) party system would be shaped by what they took to be) the country's "social democratic tradition" or cultural proximity to the social market economies such as Austria or Germany. A centre-right bloc, if it emerged at all, was expected, to be Christian Democratic in character.

Such expectations were rapidly confounded by the formation and rise of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) in 1990–1 which, as academic observers more correctly anticipated, became one of the most electorally successful and enduring party formations in the region, contributing both to stable broader pattern of centre-right politics and the wider consolidation of the Czech party system. Rather than providing a narrative overview of the development of Czech centre-right parties or considering its "unexpected" character (for my own attempts to address this see Hanley 2007), this paper reflects upon the question of the Czech centre-right's *stabilization,* reviewing how existing literature has addressed this issue and considering what future directions might be open to researchers. The paper considers three principal sets of issues:

- The extent to which centre-right parties in the Czech Republic have undergone patterns and processes of consolidation distinct from *general* processes of party (system) consolidation in the country.
- The extent to which centre-right parties in the Czech Republic have undergone patterns and processes of consolidation distinct from comparable cases in the Central and East European region and beyond.
- The extent to which research on the Czech centre-right might make a broader theoretical and comparative contribution to the literature on parties.

[**] Senior Lecturer in East European Politics School of Slavonic and East European Studies University College London; e-mail: s.hanley@ssees.ucl.ac.uk.

In doing so, I am guided by the view that single country studies, however theoretically informed and empirically rich they might be, must be explicitly integrated into a comparative perspective that goes beyond a mere juxtaposition of national cases. As Kitschelt (2006) argues, when this not undertaken – or is undertaken inadequately – such approaches risk degenerating into mere "story-telling" and have limited (and decreasing) intellectual impact (Lees 2007; see also van Biezen and Carmani 2006).

## 2. The distinctness of the Czech centre-right

In comparative (cross-national) terms the Czech centre-right is distinct in a number of respects. The dominant centre-right grouping, the Civic Democratic Party, has a strong (neo-)liberal orientation, while the more conservative, social market-oriented Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) are a minor party and sometime junior partner to ODS and the "civic" right. This reverses a more common pattern in Central and Eastern Europe where (neo-)liberal parties have been small weak parties overshadowed by electorally and politically dominant conservative-national or national-populist blocs. KDU-ČSL is also distinct among Christian Democratic and Christian parties in the region in the relative moderation of its social conservatism, greater stress on socio-economic issues and greater openness to economic liberalism. Such features reflect – and shape – a distinct aspect of the wider Czech party system: the centrality of distributional issues as the key dimensions of party competition and, to a more limited extent, party-voter linkages. Czech centre-right parties – like their left-wing counterparts – have also had little difficulty in profiling themselves (and winning acceptance) as *bona fide* members of West European party families and Euro-party groupings: the Civic Democrats' projection of themselves as a liberal-conservative grouping in the Anglo-American tradition and close alignment with the British Conservatives has made it one of the least politically problematic members of the newly formed, Tory-led European Conservatives and Reformers Group (ECR) in the European Parliament (Bale, Hanley and Szczerbiak 2010, forthcoming). KDU-ČSL had an early and close relationship with the European People's Party.[1]

A further distinct feature of the Czech centre-right has been the continual presence alongside ODS of a succession of small, short-lived market-oriented, liberal parties which have sought to correct in different ways the perceived narrowness of Civic Democrats' vision of socio-economic transformation and proclivity to statism and clientelism with policies promoting transparency, ecology, decentralization, civil society, and the middle class. This role was successively played by the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA), the Freedom Union (US), the Green Party (SZ), and – if current poll ratings are borne out in forthcoming elections – the new TOP09 party. Although both the identities of these parties and their relationship with the Civic Democrats varied, all drew on similarly-sized electorates of younger, better educated, urban-based voters and were favoured by important sections of the Czech intelligentsia.

## 3. The consolidation of the Czech centre-right

The consolidation of parties and blocs of parties has been most understood in the literature in terms of institutionalization. In the early 1990s party system institutionalization in Eastern and Central Europe was extensively discussed – mainly in terms of party systems – as a marker of democratic consolidation (Pridham 1990; Randall and SvÍsand 2002a), but examined only to a limited extent as a *process* or a facet of comparative party development. Two decades of successful democratic development in the region have, however, weakened the shibboleth of institutionalized parties as a *sine qua non* of democratization[2] and allowed a more focused, individual party-oriented examination of the phenomenon over a longer time period.

Distinguishing between party formation, stabilization and institutionalization, the literature suggests that, having formed as a solution to a collective action and resource mobilisation problem, a party becomes organizationally stable when exchanges and flows of resources within the party – broadly understood as encompassing material resources, member participation and "public goods" such as policies and influence on public policy – settle in some kind of equilibrium Panebianco 1988; Aldrich 1995; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Hopkin 1996, 1999; for a review Randall and SvÍsand 2002b). Organizational stabilization may subsequently give way to a deeper sense of identification with the party by members, voters and supporters. When this occurs, the party becomes, to a lesser or greater extent, a part of their own identity and is seen as an end and value in itself extending beyond the instrumental goals of its founders. Institutionalization allows a party to manage its wider environment successfully and endure over time, generating an air of permanence and durability.

Viewed through the lens of the institutionalization literature, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) and (in particular) the Christian Democrats can be regarded as demonstrating key indicators of institutionalization: persistence from election to election, cohesive national organization, electorates which are relatively stable both in terms of size and loyalty of a core electorate. ODS, the newer and hence potentially more weakly institutionalized party has also survived both the departure of its charismatic founder and leader, but also his emergence as an independent national actor representing a rival pole of leadership for liberal-conservative forces in the country. Despite splits at elite level in 1997–8 which led to the foundation of the Freedom Union (US), internal conflicts have not led to fragmentation of the party and the party's internal rules – both formal and informal – seem to have proved satisfactory mechanisms for managing recent internal divisions. Parties of what might loosely be called the "liberal centre", by contrast, have been marked by a curiously contrasting instability and lack of institutionalization.

In their three-country comparative study of CEE centre-right parties, Hanley, Szczerbiak, Haughton and Fowler (2008) offer a somewhat different measure which combines the notion of organizational durability (central to concepts of institutionalization) and measures of electoral breadth and voter concentration, which they (somewhat blandly) term party "success". This work concludes that the Civic Democratic Party is the most successful Czech centre-right party; although the Christian Democrats are a stable and instutionalised force, they remain a niche party lacking electoral breadth, despite efforts to broaden their appeal, Contrasting the Czech Republic with Poland and Hungary, these authors conclude that taken *in toto* as a bloc of parties the Czech centre-right is a case of intermediate success, considerably more durable

and concentrated than the fragmented Polish right but lacking the wider appeal of the Hungarian Fidesz. However, we might speculate, the integration of further CEE cases into such an analysis would likely rank the Czech case towards the higher end of the outcome range.

In the remainder of the paper, I consider explanations that have been advanced, implicitly or explicitly, to explain such consolidation (institutionalization, "success"), seeking both to make cross-national comparisons with East-Central and Western Europe and to unpick general processes leading to the stabilization of party system and the emergence of parties as dominant political actors (Kopecký 2006, 2007) in particular those pertinent to right parties.

## 4. Legacies: Civic Forum and the origins of ODS

A first set of explanations centres on the 1990–1 period, a key formative moment for the Czech party system and the emergence of the Civic Democratic Party from the Civic Forum movement in particular,. As several authors have noted, ODS did not emerge simply as a top-down, elite initiated project, but through the transformation of a broader grassroots movement (Hadjiisky 1996, 2001; Glenn 2003; Pšeja 2005; Hanley 2001, 2007; Gomez 2008). As the effective "successor party" to Civic Forum, ODS inherited substantial organizational and political resources from the movement including a national network of local branches, managerial structures and the political mantle of OF as the main political vehicle for post-communist transformation.[3] More genuinely elite parties created by right-wing Prague-based ex-dissidents which relied on cadre-based party formation strategies like the Civic Democratic Alliance and the Interparliamentary Club of the Democratic Right initiative quickly foundered.

However, Civic Forum was typical of many transitional civic movements that arose in Eastern Europe in 1988–9 in its origins, breadth, loose horizontal structures and stress on direct informal participation, as well as in the political and organizational divisions that quickly opened up after the fall of communism (stemming from political diversity, weak lines of authority and the ambiguous identity of such movements). Although centre-right parties across CEE are "successor parties" to civic movements – and many actors seem to have seen their potential as the basis of new parties – few harnessed the organizational and political capital generated by anti-communist mobilization as ODS appears to have done.

In purely narrative terms, the solution can be found by relating the ability of the charismatic Václav Klaus (Saxonberg 1999) and the group of neo-liberal economists associated with him to act strategically as dissatisfied elite actors able to attract the support of key internal constituencies in Civic Forum for Klaus's project for "partifying" Civic Forum. The legitimacy and policy-making capacities stemming from the technocratic economic background of Klaus and his collaborators, willingness to accommodate radical grassroots anti-communism and learn from the mistakes of Polish "technopols" such as Leszek Balcerowicz in 1989–90 are also relevant aspects of the story. However, while charismatic leadership and technocratic authority are clearly helpful for successful party-building, they can be found across the region and offer little in the way of comparative explanation beyond that of the "perfect storm" (a unique configuration of unrelated factors for the successful emergence of ODS from Civic Forum which come together on one occasion).

A more generalizable explanation can, however, be found by revisiting legacy approaches. Until its final collapse in November-December, Czechoslovakia's hardline communist regime eschewed political liberalization of any kind or negotiation with opposition forces. This both impeded the formation of ideologically profiled opposition proto-parties– which emerged belatedly and embryonically only in 1988–89 – and ensured that the transition from communism when it finally came was driven by spontaneous mass citizen mobilization. This – coupled with the opposition's rapid success in toppling the regime and taking over the upper echelons of the state – gave Civic Forum a unitary (albeit unintegrated) organizational structure, marginalizing the weak Pragocentric dissident proto-parties within the movement. In contrast, civic movements that emerged in more liberal conditions were coalitional in structure, providing ready-made lines of fissure. In the Czech case, however, there was a low level of initial factionalisation and (in time) a single national organizational structure, which militated in favour of a single "successor party".

The hardline nature of the outgoing communist regime also appears to have underlain the failure of Czech Communists to transform themselves into a post-communist social democratic party, delaying the formation of a credible Czech centre-left – itself rooted in, more distantly, the hardline nature of Czechoslovakia's communist regime (Hanley 2001; Gryzmala-Busse 2002; Vachudova 2008). Such weakness may have enhanced the scale of right-wing parties' electoral victory – and hence ease of access to political office – in the 1992 elections. However, the effect of incumbency on party building and party institutionalization is to some extent ambiguous; other cases suggest that fragmentation of the centre-left does not logically imply the strength or consolidation of the centre-right.[4]

## 5. Institutions as a stabilizing factor

Institutional design is widely considered to be a crucial influence on the formation of parties and party systems in new democracies and may be particularly relevant to the stabilization of centre-right parties in Central and Eastern Europe, which tend to be "new" organizations rather than successors to regime parties with pre-existing structures. The Czech Republic's party-list PR electoral system seems to have been broadly favourable to party consolidation without exercising the markedly concentrating effects seen in more majoritarian institutions (such as Hungary's mixed system. Specifically, the relatively low barriers to entry set by the Czech Republic's party-list PR electoral system allowed small right-wing parties which had established themselves in 1991–2, such as the Christian Democrats and the Civic Democratic Alliance, to maintain an independent parliamentary existence; facilitated the entry into parliament of the breakaway Freedom Union party, established by a group of anti-Klaus politicians within the Civic Democratic Party and – even following changes to the electoral law in 2002 which disadvantaged small parties by reducing mean district magnitude – provided sufficient incentives to make the foundation of TOP09 a viable project for its founders in existing parties.

A more compelling institutional argument concerning the relative cohesiveness of the Czech centre-right can be made for its parliamentary rather than presidential or semi-presidential system. In a paired comparison of the Czech Republic and Poland, Saxonberg (2003) has argued that the presence of a well-institutionalised party on the Czech centre-right derives,

in part, from an indirectly elected presidency and concomitant absence of incentives for charismatic leaders to pursue alternatives to party formation. He further contends that, by contrast, Poland's relatively fragmented centre-right is the result of the incentives facing that country's head of state. Specifically, he suggests that the relatively powerful, directly elected presidency in Poland led a charismatic leader like Lech Wałęsa to avoid founding or consistently supporting a party. To counter the argument that these institutional effects should, hypothetically, also operate on the Polish centre-left but do not appear to do so, Saxonberg argues that, unlike communist successor parties, centre-right parties are typically "new" formations, which will experience early problems of stabilisation and institutionalisation, making them particularly susceptible to these effects.

At the aggregate level, there is evidence co-relating weak party structures in new democracies with moderate and strong presidentialism (Shugart 1998). However, at the case study level – and specifically in the Czech case – it is difficult to assess whether a strong parliamentary regime should be regarded as much (if not more) an *effect* of strong political parties as a *cause;* it is difficult to separate these two processes out analytically. The Constitution of the Czech Republic was agreed to by the major political parties in December 1992 and therefore, we might argue, the current weak Czech presidency is clearly the product of strong parties, not vice versa.[5] Moreover, in the Czech case the centre-left, which was not based on a reformed communist party but a much more diverse set of forces centring on the Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) arguably benefitted more from institutional incentives for party consolidation.

Moreover, while Saxonberg is undoubtedly correct to argue that, strong Czech(oslovak) parliamentarism and a weak presidency elected by parliament made party-building the only realistic route to executive power for ambitious politicians, post-communist elites do not always appear to behave in these rational, office-seeking terms. If responding "rationally" to institutional incentives, Václav Havel should have become engaged in party politics. However, upon becoming a presidential candidate in December 1989, Havel's distaste for formal political organisation and, in particular, party-based political organisation, led him to break all contact with the Civic Forum movement he had co-founded and completely refuse to re-engage with it even in September-October when he accepted that its transformation into a more conventional party-like grouping was necessary and unavoidable. Havel's "irrational" behaviour thus opened the way for the "more rational" Klaus to win power through a party-building strategy. This suggests that the cognitive frameworks through which new political elites approach post-transition politics is at least as important in understanding party building.[6]

## 6. Timing: Critical decisions and locking in early advantages

Peter Mair's (1997: 1–16) exploration of Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) argument about the "freezing" of Western European party systems in the early 20th century identifies a range of mechanisms producing "increasing returns" for political parties which first achieve a degree of success. These include the monopolisation of pre-existing, human and material resources by established parties, leaving potential new entrants resource-starved and unable to meet high start-up costs; organisational strategies which encapsulate key constituencies and/or offer them selective group benefits; and discourse strategies shaping understandings of political

competition. At the societal level, additional "lock-in" mechanisms include the development of partisan identification among voters and members, and rational "adaptive expectations" on the part of others for whom forming or supporting a new party with little prospect of immediate success represents wasted effort. In this perspective – barring exogenous shocks or powerful external pressures – institutionalization can be seen as self-perpetuating and self-reinforcing: in other words institutionalization processes also act as a mechanism to "lock-in" parties' relative strength with regard to competitors, helping patterns of party competition settle into a changing but predictable equilibrium.

Many analysts have noted (Kopecký 1995; Hanley 2001; van Biezen 2003) that compared to classic cases of Western European party and party system formation, such mechanisms were weak and often absent. Mass organisation and encapsulation strategies, with a few well-defined "subcultural" exceptions, are costly and ineffective; social constituencies in the region are often ill-defined; partisan identification was weak and slow to develop in societies with limited civic engagement and where levels of cynicism about parties, politicians and politics are high. The growing role of state funding as the main source of party resources, while a useful substitute – and to some extent a "lock-in" mechanism – sustained a party only so long as it enjoyed (and usually in proportion to its) electoral success, as well as offers immediate resources to political newcomers. However, such mechanisms such as organizational encapsulation were clearly unavailable to party builders in Central and Eastern Europe, other advantages of early formation do seem to have accrued to the Civic Democrats. The party also seems to have benefitted from the development of a degree of voter identification unusual for larger, "non-historic" parties.

Such path dependence perspectives which stress the importance of timing and the "locking in" of advantages built up in formative periods[7] also allow the incorporation of political agency, strategy and choice in more theoretically convincing terms. Recent accounts of post-communist party development – and party development in new democracies in Europe more generally (Kreuzer 2009) — have often identified the key causal moments as path-setting "critical junctures" when leaders and their unconstrained choices and strategies have important – and often unintended – consequences for longer term political development. In post-communist Central and Eastern Europe such junctures are typically seen as occurring in and just after the period of transition in 1989–90. For example in her work on communist successor parties, Gryzmala-Busse (2002) argues that organisational and ideological *choices* made by reform-minded elites in communist successor parties in 1989–91 played a decisive role in determining their future developmental path.[8] A similar framework of path dependency and post-transition critical junctures has been constructed by Hanley, Szczerbiak, Haughton and Fowler (2008) to explain diversity and varying levels of success on the CEE centre-right, in the Czech cases turning on strategic choices made by leading politicians in the struggle to control and transform Civic Forum in 1990–1.

However, there are reasons to regard explanatory frameworks based on path dependency and critical junctures with some caution even in a case such as ODS, despite the party's endurance and the presence of some classic "lock-in" mechanisms such as the growth of a more loyal core electorate. Compared to other types of institutions studied in terms of path dependence such as pension systems, political parties and party systems are very weakly locked in. This is especially the case in Central and Eastern Europe where the key elements "locking

in" or "freezing" Western European party systems – voter loyalty and resource monopoliza-tion – are weakened by greater electoral volatility, the availability of state funding and the decline in the importance of party organization for electoral mobilization.

Although it would be unwise to predict the dramatic breakdown or collapse of a well-es-tablished and seemingly stable party such as ODS – erroneous predictions of whose imminent fragmentation have been made on several occasions[9] – this analysis suggests that the party's stability may be quite a brittle phenomenon. In analytical terms, it therefore seems neces-sary to consider explanatory variables other than those which, implicitly or explicitly, invoke a path dependent logic centring on events at a critical moment in the past "locking in" stability over the longer term.

## 7. Internal dynamics: stratarchy, ODS and the Czech right

Contrasting patterns of party organization, as well as patterns of party formation, have long been recognised as central to party stabilization and institutionalization. However, much work on party organization in Central and Eastern Europe has reflected a "model-fitting" logic, which seeks to relate parties in the region to typologies and models developed in Western European contexts. Such "model fitting" – or East-West comparison – has generated many useful insights. However, it arguably distracts from consideration of the internal dynamics of parties in the region as well as leading to an overemphasis on static, formal aspects of party organization.

Such work has often been most interesting when it highlights anomalies between models and empirical realities. Thus, in the case of the Czech centre-right, while it lacks the mass organization inherited by a former satellite party with historic roots in the pre-communist period such as the Christian Democrats, with local associations in some three quarters of Czech communes with 2000 or more inhabitants (Kyloušek 2005), the Civic Democrats' were far from fitting the stereotype of "new" parties in CEE as elite-dominated, state-centric low membership organizations equivalent to the "electoral professional party" that Panebianco (1988) argues ha gradually displaced residual forms of mass party organization in Western Europe. Similarly, while elites were clearly powerful, the power relationships between the different "faces" of the Civic Democrats were more complex than straightforward dominance of the party in public office.[10]

The evidently complex relationship between ODS's elite "faces" and the grassroots "party on the ground" raises questions about the image of a centralized, hierarchical party domi-nated by national leaders through control of public funding and state resources (van Biezen 2003: 147), whose local organization was essentially a redundant legacy of its origins in Civic Forum. Viewed in terms of *formal* organization, ODS did indeed appear as a four-tier hierar-chy of local, district, regional and national bodies based on linked clear lines of democratic and bureaucratic accountability. However, as Kopecký (1995: 526) first intimated, in many ways the internal dynamics of ODS are less those of the hierarchically integrated "standard party" than those of a looser, *stratarchical* alliance of local and national elites.

In stratarchical power relationships – found historically in many US and Canadian par-ties – different party "faces" enjoy considerable autonomy, whilst remaining interdependent

by establishing a rough division of labour and thus organizational stability (Carty and Cross 2006). Carty (2004) suggests that stratarchical patterns can be summarized in ideal type as a "franchise model" of party organization whereby

> "… a central organization recognizable by its common brand, determines the product line and sets standards for its production and labeling, manages marketing and advertising strategy and provides management and training as well as arranging for the supplies needed by local outlets… individual franchises exist to deliver the product to a particular market. To do so they invest local resources, both capital and personnel…"
>
> (Carty 2004: 10)

Many aspects of ODS's formation and functioning had characteristics of the stratarchical "franchise model". In 1991–2, ODS local organisations were formally founded through the granting of "licenses" by the national leadership to local groups of pre-registered Klaus supporters. These "licenses" could be (and sometimes were) revoked for breaches of national party guidelines, which contradicted or undermined its national strategy and identity ("brand"), such as, for example, local cooperation with the Communist Party. In most respects, however, both formally and *de facto* local and district associations enjoyed very considerable autonomy in their day-to-day functioning. Despite numerous revisions in the course of 1990s, ODS statutes never stipulated any specific activities that members needed to undertake to meet the responsibilities of membership[11] and were generally far less prescriptive than the (nevertheless low) requirements of other major Czech parties (Linek 2004: 183, 184). From 1993 local ODS associations acquired the right to approve new membership applications and the exclusive right to expel members; they enjoyed full autonomy in selecting candidates for communal and municipal elections and broad latitude to enter into local level coalitions with any parties other than the Communists or the far right. Local and district organizations were required to be financially autonomous, raising funds to meet their own costs, and – despite occasional ad hoc off-the-books cash payments to fight elections – neither made nor received significant regular transfers from party headquarters. Local autonomy was further reinforced by ODS elites' neglect of their party machine after the party won national office in 1992.

Such extensive autonomy meant that grassroots political influence in ODS was uneven and limited in scope. As the party's Executive Deputy Chairman Libor Novák reported in 1996 most ODS members did no more than pay party dues and that most local party work was carried out by a handful of activists holding multiple office. As national ODS officials have noted with some frustration, grassroots members who were politically active were largely absorbed in parish pump politics and ignorant of or uninterested in national politics. Many used the party's local branches as little more than vehicles to advance personal or local interests (Hanley 2007: 101–105).

Arguably, such localism was central to the "franchise contract" through which ODS stabilized itself. The active independence of franchisee and franchisor described by Carty (2004) was evident in local (and later regional and Senate) elections when the ODS national machine and parliamentary elites provided a national advertising campaign – sometimes with a considerable budget – to support nationally known politicians and a programme offering

local organizations and candidates legitimacy and a clear political identity in exchange for their investment of local resources to deliver the ODS "product" on the ground.

In other respects, the ODS franchising relationship was one of *passive* interdependence based on respect for mutual autonomy. Local, and above all district, ODS organizations were free to pursue their own local strategies provided that they did not contradict the ODS "brand" or destabilize the party's organization structures. In exchange, the formulation of national strategy and policy was left to Prague-based parliamentary and political elites, who crafted programmes which allowed space for the local-level pursuit of business and other interests, thereby sustaining ODS organization on the ground.

Since the introduction in 2000–2 of elected regional authorities whose boundaries correspond to the 14 electoral districts used for parliamentary elections – and the consequent abolition (for most purposes) of administrative districts – most political parties, including the Civic Democrats, have adjusted their internal structures to create (or reinforce) regional organizations. This has naturally impacted upon internal dynamics and internal power relationships in Czech parties, appearing in the case of ODS to have empowered regional leaders at the expense of both national parliamentary elites and more localized power groupings, weakening – and perhaps over the longer term disintegrating – the stratarchical elite-grassroots bargain underpinning a successful franchise party. However, as stratarchically organized parties can thrive even in fully federalized political systems such as that of Canada (Clarkson 2005), it seems likely that stratarchical relationships in a party like ODS might be modified, rather than nullified. In connection to this it is interesting that the newest arrival on the Czech political scene, TOP09, seems to have adopted an essentially stratarchical "franchise model" of party formation: a central preparatory committee provides a national identity and "brand" (embodied by its leader Karel Schwazenberg) while the grassroots movement of independent mayors and Senators provides a series of local franchisees.

This may also imply a re-orientation of research on ODS away from its role as a national actor (in cross-national comparison) in favour of a regional and/or local perspective, which will allow the role of local elite networks – anecdotally of considerable importance for both ODS and other Czech parties (Pečinka 2005) – to be explored in a more rigourous way, as well as allowing a more holistic perspective that takes into account the overlapping relationships of parties, institutions, officials, economic interests and civil society (see, for example, Horak 2007).

## 8. Elite cohesion

As a purported alternative to institutional, resource mobilization and path dependent explanations Hanley, Szczerbiak, Haughton and Fowler (2008) advance the notion of elite cohesion and positioning as the key to understanding the development of broad and stable centre-right parties and blocs.[12] The ability of an elite group over time to reach and maintain consensus over key strategic and policy issues is underpinned by networks of communication based on both formal membership of parties, governments or bureaucracies and informal ties forged through common life experiences, friendship and professional networks as well as shared cultural values. The more cohesive the elite founding a party, they suggest, the more quickly, successful and broadly it will consolidate.

The Czech Civic Democrats, they argue, were founded by precisely a cohesive, socially and generationally defined elite, which emerged during late communism: a group of economists, including Václav Klaus as well as a number of other subsequently prominent political figures, which emerged during the 1970s and 1980s as part of a so-called "grey zone" of critically minded technocrats holding posts in official research and financial institutions who were radically opposed to the regime status quo but felt little need for independent organizations such as Charter 77. From the late 1960s this group evolved a common set of ideas and orientations, coming to not only reject reform communist notions of "socialist market" but also the Keynesian "neo-classical synthesis" in favour of neo-liberalism of the Austrian and Chicago schools, developing a distinct culture at odds with the Bohemianism and informal politics of some dissidents. As one Charter 77 signatory wryly observed in early 1990 "[a]ll the other people in Civic Forum wear sweaters and call each other *ty* but these gentlemen wear ties and say *vy.*" Figures from this distinct elite group not only acted as an intellectual reservoir and conduit for ideas and policies that would define the Czech right, but also became the dominant elite group around which the Civic Democratic Party coalesced in 1990–1. Between 1992 and 1997, in addition to Klaus's role as party leader and prime minister, neo-liberal economists from the former "grey zone" held two of the four Civic Democrat vice-chairmanships and four of the party's eleven cabinet posts.

Moreover, they argue this elite group benefited from their *positioning as credible second-rank challenger elites* to figures who had assumed positions of power in government or parliament after 1989 gained as part of the "democratic camp" that had displaced communism. They were sufficiently peripheral that, during the fluid periods of realignment that inevitably followed, they were able to project themselves as political outsiders, more closely linked than metropolitan elites to the provinces and the grassroots, and capable of bringing new policies and a new professionalism to transition politics.[13] Such perspectives again move away from the focus on static, formal organizational forms, but leave unanswered questions about how elite cohesion is maintained, how inter-elite (or intra-elite conflict) is managed or tends to overlook the fact that elite groups with different sociological and historical backgrounds collaborate and cooperate within a single organization. For example, many leadership posts in the Civic Democrat leadership of the period were held by politicians with a background in the district organizations of the Civic Forum movement (Balík 2006: 301–2). As Klaus and the "grey zone" economists vacated the party leadership in the period 1997–2002, such perspectives may have limited ability to explain continued stability. Such limitations are confirmed by the case of the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA) whose cohesive founding elite of conservative dissidents proved unable to accommodate the growing preponderance of those without this background, leading to divisive splits in the party (Pšeja 2005; Hanley 2007)

## 9. Ideology and party cohesion

Hanley, Szczerbiak, Haughton and Fowler (2008) also claim that the subsequent ability of elites founding centre-right parties to (re-)fashion broad integrative ideological narratives that relate current processes of post-communist transformation to earlier conservative, nationalist

and anti-communist traditions, unite broad swathes of activists and voters, is a key fact in their cohesion and endurance as organizations and electoral blocs. An integrative ideological narrative is, they argue, important in terms of both providing cohesion during the early stages of party formation and shaping the new political identities that are necessary to provide a meaningful framework for political action in periods of far-reaching social and political change, such as post-communist transformation. In post-communist democracies, particularly during the early post-transition period when structural determinants may be weaker, levels of uncertainty higher and political identities – especially of the long repressed political right – less well-defined, the weaknesses of civil society and well-understood social interests also give ideological construction a crucial role in orienting action.

In this perspective a key element of the Civic Democratic Party's political success – and that of the broader "civic right" – lie in its leaders' ability to frame a compelling new ideological discourse of "rightness" which imported New Anglo-American Right ideas, grounded them in a Czech post-communist context and related them to the delivery of a programme of post-communist social and economic transformation. This discourse, they suggest, was an innovative synthesis of Hayekian neo-liberalism and aspects of Czech nationalism, which successfully linked historically rooted ideas about Czech national identity with the tasks of post-communist transformation and delegitimized centrists and centre-left opponents. Similar successful projects of right-wing ideology construction, they suggest, can be found in Hungary, but not in Poland.

This draws on a strain of political economy-influenced literature concerned with understanding the social support for neo-liberal policies in the absence of distinct class or interest group structures (Appel 2004), as well as Hanley's (1999) reading and re-application of the British debates of 1980s about "Thatcherism" to the Czech context. However, whilst not implausible, such explanations are difficult to measure and test and, as some party specialists have argued that concepts such a "logic of ideas" or "structures of discourse" are so vague and difficult to operationalise that they should, at most, be used for residual explanation only when more easily testable hypotheses are exhausted (Kitschelt 1994: 278).

## 10. Electoral strategy and party stability: the "broadening out" debate

Strategic debates on the Czech centre-right from the early mid-1990s have centred on a single dilemma: that of widening electoral appeal and seeking to incorporate a diverse range of groups and views versus maintaining ideological, political cohesion and organizational cohesion to reduce risks of political instability. Such breadth versus cohesion debates have been a constantly recurring theme in the development of the Czech centre-right since 1989: ODS's tortured negotiations in 1991–2 attempting – and largely failing – to incorporate small dissident-led right-wing groups and conservative-minded dissidents in the debate; the debate launched in 1996 by ODS Vice Chairman Josef Zeleniec about "broadening out" (*rozkročení*) both towards the political centre and conservative anti-communist voters on the right, which, Zeleniec argued, ODS need to do in order to win some 40 per cent of the Czech electorate. Such ideas were rejected by Václav Klaus as diluting the party into typical Central European "People's Party" formation. More than a decade later the same debate can be found playing

out in the rival positions of the then ODS leader Miroslav Topolánek and challenger for the leadership at the party's 2009 congress, Pavel Bém, and related debates on ODS's intellectual periphery as to whether the party should integrate the voters and values of small allied parties such as the Greens or the Christian Democrats (or both) (Morava 2007). The issue has also been raised in more organizational terms following Miroslav Topolánek's vaguely worded appeal to other right-wing groups to support or work with ODS, prompting speculation that the Civic Democrats' might become the core Italian-style coalitional party perhaps organized along the line of Berlusconi's Pole of Freedom, perhaps incorporating the new TOP09 grouping of ex-Christian Democrats and independents.[14]

Such dilemmas are common to many, if not, most political parties in many party systems and involve trade-offs not only between the priorities of different factions and internal actors but also a trade-off by the party as whole between policy or ideology goals and the need to win parliamentary majorities and political office (see Kitschelt 1994; Müller and Strom 1999). However, it is a dilemma that is particularly pertinent for the Czech right, given the finely balanced and often deadlocked character of Czech elections; the weakness of the Civic Democrats' potential coalition parties; and what polling suggests is the party's more limited potential maximum vote that than of the Social Democrats (CVVM 2006). [15] In socio-electoral terms, despite having a loyal core vote based in a broad constituency of pro-market transition "winners", the Civic Democrats' underlying appeal – even in 2006 at the moment of their greatest electoral triumph – lags behind that of the centre-left.

## 11. Conclusions

This paper has reflected upon the consolidation of centre-right parties in the Czech Republic in the two decades since the fall of communism. It has noted that, in addition to the distinctness of the predominance of market liberal orientations, Czech centre-right parties are also characterized by an unusual pattern of stabilization: a rapidly consolidated broad centre-right party (ODS) and highly unstable "liberal centre" characterized by a succession of small, relatively short-lived groupings offering alternative brands of market-oriented liberalism. This pattern contrasts both with the stabilization patterns of the Czech left and those of centre-right groupings elsewhere in CEE. In many cases, this has taken the form of initial fragmentation followed by a period of reconstruction though merger and coalition-building around a smaller core grouping. Such a pattern can, for example, be detected in the consolidation in the late 1990s of the Czech Social Democrats (ČSSD) or Hungary's main centre-right grouping, Fidesz.

A parallel process has been the transformation (to varying extents) of existing "historic" parties with inherited mass organizations, including former ruling communist parties and their satellites. Such a process characterised the emergence of the contemporary Czech KSČM and other communist successor parties, but also the Czech Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL), Polish Peasant Party (PSL) and historic parties reconstituted after the fall of communism such as the Hungarian Christian Democrats (KNDP) or Romanian Liberals (PNL). For parties outside the post-communist left, however, this process has generally been a recipie for the creation of well-established niche parties rather than major formations.

Neither the comparative literature on CEE party development, nor more monographic work on Czech party politics has systematically addressed the issue of the stabilisation and consolidation of the Czech centre-right. Nevertheless, a number of theoretically grounded, if partly contradictory, explanations can be derived from these literatures: legacies of the communist and pre-communist period; transition legacies stemming from the break-up of Civic Forum; institutional incentives of electoral and party law; the role of internal party dynamics; successes and failures of ideological construction or the cohesiveness of elites. Of these, the most compelling explanation of the Czech centre-right's distinct pattern of consolidation is arguably to be found in transitional legacies, specifically in the character of the Civic Forum movement and the formation of its "right-wing" into the Civic Democratic Party in 1990–1. In hindsight, the boundaries set by the founders of ODS in defining the new party seem a critical juncture explaining *both* the subsequent character of ODS (including its stability) and the inchoate "liberal centre" (including its instability).

Understanding the instability and collapse of small, organizationally weak centre parties is a relatively straightforward issue. However, appeals to notions of path dependence to explain the stability of ODS must adequately specify mechanisms generating and reproducing ("locking in") such stability. So far, efforts to address such issues (for example Hanley, Szczerbiak, Haughton and Fowler 2008) have been stronger on critique than positive explanation. Similar criticism relating to under-specification of long-term causal mechanisms (supposedly operating over two decades) can be levelled at efforts to formulate alternative explanations of consolidation such as ideological construction or elite cohesion. This implies that, whatever theoretical perspectives are adopted, future research on the question of stabilization and consolidation of the Czech centre-right will have to prioritise issues of process and mechanism.

However, the elusiveness of such stabilization mechanisms in the literature might equally suggest that they are *empirically* weak or absent. A final possibility, therefore, is that the stabilization and consolidation pattern of the Czech centre-right is the product of an accumulation or coming together of some or all of the different factors identified in the literature. Such "configurational" accounts of causation are increasingly influential in comparative politics (Rihoux and Ragin 2008). Such a "configurational" understanding of patterns of stability and instability on the Czech centre-right might lead us to view them as brittle and changeable outcomes capable of being eroded, or even suddenly undermined, by internal changes or shifts in external opportunity structures. This implies that future research on parties of the Czech centre-right must be equally alert to potential mechanisms of "deconsolidation"[16] such as the longer consequences of change in centre-periphery power relations brought about by regionalization, or shifts in long-term strategic debates on the Czech centre-right about the trade-off between political breadth and political coherence.

The distinctness of the Czech centre-right and its patterns of consolidation therefore seem to offer rich and underexploited opportunities for research that foregrounds the national context while retaining a strongly comparative perspective of the kind advocated by Lees (2007), additionally drawing on – and developing – comparative strategies such as the amended critical case study approach outlined by Gerring (2007) or the systematic use of the sub-national comparative method (Snyder 2001).

## Notes

1. KDU-ČSL had observer status in the EPP from 1996, becoming an associate member in 1998 and a full member in 2004 following Czech EU accession.
2. This re ects both the shifting agenda of democracy research in the region from one of system stability to issues of democratic quality (Roberts 2006) and the several examples in the region of successfully consolidated democracies with persistently fragmented, weakly institutionalized parties and party systems (the Baltic states (Sikk 2006) and, to a lesser extent, Poland (Markowski 2001).
3. Civic Forum's "farewell Assembly" of February 23, 1991 agreed that Civic Forum's assets at the national level would be split evenly between Klaus's Civic Democratic Party and the liberal-centrist Civic Movement, but would, partly on Klaus's insistence, exclude other political groups within the Forum. Local and district Civic Fora were to agree on their own arrangements for the division of their property. Given Klaus's considerable grassroots support, the majority agreed that most or all of their assets should be passed to ODS. In almost every district a majority of Civic Forum's full-time professional "managers" (officials) – nationally approximately three quarters of the total – joined ODS (Hadjiisky 1996; Hanley 2007 8; see also Pšeja 2005).
4. As the Polish experience of the 1990s demonstrated even in the presence of weakened centre-left parties, the centre-right can fragment (Szczerbiak 2004; Ost 2005).
5. Even under the Czechoslovak constitution of 1990–2, which accorded the presidency stronger powers, parties were able to check Havel. For example, they easily blocked a package of emergency constitutional and political laws that Havel proposed in late 1991 to resolve the crisis of Czecho-Slovak federalism.
6. Semi-presidentialism should perhaps be viewed as offering a complex mix of incentives and can in certain circumstances *favour* the formation of broad parties or party blocs, albeit perhaps more often "rally" (*rassemblment*) type parties familiar from the French context (Graham 1993).
7. Indeed, Lipset and Rokkan's classic 1967 article on party systems is often cited as pioneering path dependence perspectives (see Pierson 2004).
8. See: Anna Grzymała-Busse, *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Parties in East-Central Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
9. This is also the case for the Czech Social Democrats (ČSSD) whose electoral support has oscillated more markedly than that of ODS and which appears more factionalized.
10. As van Biezen (2003: 147, 150–2) points out, although the ODS parliamentary group had well defined autonomy with the party; ODS parliamentarians and ministers overlapped with the national leadership; elected representatives enjoyed *ex-offico* rights to attend party congresses and district and regional assemblies as delegates. However, the bulk of the public subsidies on which ODS, like other Czech parties, relied were channelled to the party's national organization not to its parliamentary group. In practice, and despite overlapping membership, the relationship between the "party in central office" (the ODS Executive Council and *gremium*) and its ministers and parliamentarians seems to have been a confused one which tended to empower the party leader.
11. The 1994 Law on Political Parties requires party statutes to definite members' rights and responsibilities.
12. It is unclear from their work if their analysis is intended to be generalizable to other party types or whether the greater newness and collective action problems of centre-right parties makes this perspective especially relevant to them.
13. In the other successful case of right-wing party development they review, Hungary, Viktor Orbán and his associates came from provincial backgrounds, but were educated at elite Budapest universities.
14. A related but more subsidiary debate which touches upon both the stability and identity of the Czech centre-right concerns whether it should try to compete with the centre-left and/or work for centre-right majority government, rather than cooperating with the left and centre in coalition governments

spanning the left-right divide (conceivably including Grand Coalition). However, there are few on the Czech centre-right who would advocate this as more than a tactical, temporary tactic.

15. CVVM found that 85 per cent of ODS voters in 2006 also supported the party in 2002 – but estimated ODS's maximum potential vote at 37 per cent, while that for the Social Democrat electorate was 40 per cent. It also found that higher turnout benefited the Social Democrats. See also reports of the CVVM press conference. *Hospodářské noviny* 24 July 2006, *Lidové noviny* 24 July 2006.

16. I borrow this term from Geoffrey Pridham (2009) while disagreeing with his broader arguments that the Czech Republic is not a consolidated democracy and that the "democratic consolidation" perspective therefore remains relevant to the study of contemporary Czech politics.

## References

Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Appel, Hilary. 2004. *New Capitalist Order: Privatization and Ideology in Russia and Eastern Europe.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Bale, Tim; Seán Hanley and Aleks Szczerbiak. 2010. "May Contain Nuts? The reality behind the rhetoric surrounding the Conservatives' new group in the European Parliament." *Political Quarterly* 81, No. 1, 85–98.

Balík, Stanislav, ed. 2006. *Občanská demokratická strana a česká politika.* Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury.

van Biezen, Ingrid. 2003. *Political Parties in New Democracies: Party Organization in Southern and East-Central Europe.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

van Biezen Ingrid and Daniele Caramani. 2006. "(Non)Comparative Politics in Britain." *Politics* 26, No. 1, 29–37.

Carty, R. Kenneth. 2004. "Parties as Franchise Systems: the Stratarchical Imperative." *Party Politics* 10, No. 1, 5–24.

Carty, R Kenneth and Cross, William. 2006. "Can Stratarchically Organized Parties be Democratic? The Canadian Case." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 16, No. 2, 93–114.

Clarkson, Stephen. 2005. *The Big Red Machine: How the Liberal Party Dominates Canadian Politics.* University of British Columbia Press: Vancouver.

CVVM. 2006. *Jak Češi volili.* Press release and presentation, 24 July (http://www.cvvm.cas.cz/index.php?disp=zpravy&lang=0&r=1&s=1&offset=&shw=100595).

Gerring, John. 2007. "Is There a (Viable) Critical Case Study Method?" *Comparative Political Studies* 40, No. 3, 231–253.

Glenn, John K. 2003. "Parties out of movements: party emergence in post-communist Eastern Europe." In: *States, Parties and Social Movements.* Ed. Jack A. Goldstone. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 147–169.

Gomez, Victor. 2007. *From Protest to Party: The Transformation of Post-Communist Opposition Movements in East-Central Europe.* Paper presented at 79th Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association, Calgary, 1 June.

Hadjiisky, Magdaléna. 1996. *La fin du Forum civique et la naissance du Parti démocratique civique (janvier 1990 – avril 1991).* Prague: Documents du travail du CEFRES No. 6.

Hadjiisky, Magdaléna. 2001. "The Failure of Participatory Democracy in the Czech Republic." *West European Politics* 24, No. 3, 43–64.

Hanley, Seán. 1999. "The new right in the new Europe? Unravelling the ideology of 'Czech Thatcherism'." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 4, No. 2, 163–90.

Hanley Seán. 2001. "Are the Exceptions Really the Rule? Questioning the Application of 'Electoral-Professional' Type Models of Party Organization in East Central Europe." *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 2, No. 3, 453–479.

Hanley, Seán. 2007. *The new right in the new Europe: Czech transformation and right-wing politics, 1989–2006*. London: Routledge Curzon.

Hanley, Seán; Szczerbiak, Aleks; Haughton, Tim and Fowler, Brigid. 2008. "Sticking Together: Explaining Comparative Centre-Right Party Success in Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe." *Party Politics* 14, No. 4, 407–434.

Hopkin, Jonathan. 1996. *The Institutionalisation of New Political Parties: A Framework For Analysis*. Birmingham: Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Birmingham.

Hopkin, Jonathan. 1999. *Party Formation and Democratic Transition in Spain: The Creation and Collapse of the Union of the Democratic Centre*. Basingstoke: Macmillan/St Martin's Press.

Horak, Martin. 2007. *Governing the Postcommunist City: Institutions and Democratic Development in Prague*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Kitschelt, Herbert. 1994. *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kitschelt, Herbert. 2006. "Review of Aleks Szczerbiak and Sean Hanley: Centre-Right Parties in Post-Communist East-Central Europe." *Slavic Review* 65, No. 4, 797–799.

Kopecký, Petr. 1995. "Developing Party Organizations in East-Central Europe: What Type of Party is Likely to Emerge?" *Party Politics* 1, No. 4, 515–534.

Kopecký, Petr. 2006. "Building Party Government: Political Parties in the Czech and Slovak Republics." In: *Party Politics in New Democracies*. Eds. Paul Webb, Stephen White and David Stansfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 119–146.

Kopecký, Petr. 2007. "The Rise of the Power Monopoly: Political Parties in the Czech. Republic." In: *Post-Communist EU Member States: Parties and Party Systems*. Ed. Susanne Jungstam- Mulders. Aldershot: Ashgate, 125–146.

Kreuzer, Marcus. 2009. "How Party Systems Form: Path Dependency and the Institutionalization of the Post-War German Party System." *British Journal of Political Science* 39, No. 4, 669–697.

Kyloušek, Jakub. 2005. "ODS a její vnitřní fungování." In: *Občanská demokratická strana a česká politka.* Ed. Stanislav Balík. Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 245–256.

Lees, Charles. 2007. "We are all Comparativists Now: Why and How Single-Country Studies Must Adapt and Incorporate the Comparative Politics approach." *Comparative Political Studies* 40, No. 2, 1084–1108.

Linek, Lukáš. 2004. "České politické strany a jejich členové. K postupné proměně charakteru členství." In: *Rozvoj české společnosti v Evropské unii I – Sociologie, prognostika a správa.* Eds. Jiří Kabele, Martin Potůček, Irena Prázová and Arnošt Veselý. Prague: Matfyzpress, 174–192.

Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage structures, party systems and voter alignments: an introduction." In: *Party systems and voter alignments: cross-national perspectives*. Eds. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan. New York: Free Press, 1–64.

Mainwaring, Scott and Scully, Timothy R. 1995. *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Mair, Peter. 1997. *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Markowski, Radoslaw. 2001. "Party System Institutionalization in New Democracies – Poland a Trendsetter with no Followers." In: *Party Development and Democratic Change in Post-Communist Europe – The First Decade*. Ed. Paul G. Lewis. London: Frank Cass, 55–77.

Morava, Jan. 2007. *Cesty a proměny ODS.* CEVRO Revue No. 2007/5 (http://www.cevro.cz/cs/cevrorevue/aktualni-cislo-on-line/2007/5/195815-cesty-promeny-ods.html).

Muller, Wolfgang C. and Kaare Strom. 1999. *Policy, Office or Votes? How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ost, David. 2005. *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in the Post-Communist Europe*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press.

Pierson, Paul. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions and Social Analysis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Pridham, Geoffrey, ed. 1990. *Securing Democracy: Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe*. London/New York: Routledge.

Pšeja, Pavel. 2005. *Stranický systém české republiky: politické strany a jejich vývoj 1989–1998.* Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury.

Panebianco, Angelo. 1988. *Political Parties: Organisation and Power.* New York: Cambridge University Press

Pečinka, Bohumil. 2005. *Politika z obou stran – Česká politika 1989–2005*. Prague: Ivo Železný.

Pridham, Geoffrey. 2009. *Democratic consolidation in the Czech Republic: Comparative perspectives after twenty years of political change.* Paper presented at the 20 Years of Czech Democracy conference, Masaryk University, Brno, 14 September.

Randall, Vicky and Lars Svĺsand. 2002a. "Introduction: the Contribution of Parties to Democracy and Democratic Consolidation." *Democratization* 9, No. 3, 1–10.

Randall, Vicky and Lars Svĺsand. 2002b. "Party institutionalization in new democracies." *Party Politics* 8, No. 1, 2–29.

Rihoux, Benoît and Charles Ragin. 2008. *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*. London: SAGE.

Roberts, Andrew. 2006. "What Kind of Democracy Is Emerging in Eastern Europe." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 22, No. 1, 37–64.

Saxonberg, Steven. 1999. "Václav Klaus: The Rise and Fall of and Re-Emergence of a Charismatic Leader." *East European Politics and Societies* 13, No. 2, 23–36.

Saxonberg, Steven. 2003. "The Inﬂuence of Presidential Systems: Why the Right Is so Weak in Conservative Poland and So Strong in the Egalitarian Czech Republic." *Problems of Post-Communism* 50, No. 5, 22–36.

Shugart, Matthew S. 1998. "The inverse relationship between party strength and executive strength: a theory of constitutional choices." *British Journal of Political Science* 28, No. 1, 1–29.

Sikk, Allan. 2006. *Highways to power: new party success in three young democracies*. Tartu: Dissertationes rerum politicarum Universitatis Tartuensis 1, Tartu University Press.

Snyder, Richard. 2001. "Scaling Down: The Sub-National Comparative Method." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36, No. 1, 93–110.

Szczerbiak, Aleks. 2004. "The Polish Centre-Right"s (Last) Best Hope: The Rise and Fall of Solidarity Electoral Action." *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 20, No. 3, 55–79.

Uhl, Petr. 1990. "The Fight For Socialist Democracy in Czechoslovakia." *New Left Review* 179, 111–119.

Vachudova, Milada Anna. 2008. "Centre—Right Parties and Political Outcomes in East Central Europe." *Party Politics* 14, No. 4, 387–405.