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## **Party Organization and Electoral Success:**

### **The Case of TOP 09**

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## Summary

In the Czech Republic, new political parties that manage to enter the Chamber of Deputies after their first election usually tend to disappear from national-level politics after the following election. Political party TOP 09 is an exception to this pattern because it gained more than 10% of votes in two consecutive Chamber Elections. This thesis seeks to explain this exception, and focuses on the organizational strength of this party. This thesis argues that compared to another new Czech party - Public Affairs (VV) - which failed to repeat its first successful election results, TOP 09 has stronger organization, whereas these two parties are very similar in all other respects. This solid party organization is crucial to TOP 09's success because it helps campaigning, attracts voters effectively, conducts the party's everyday job coherently, and overcomes difficult situations successfully. The party organization rules were competently implemented during the party's initial formation due to the fact that TOP 09 has considerably more experienced politicians and non-political personnel, and much lower turnover of politicians and personnel.

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## Introduction

In 2010, the party system in the Czech Republic (CR) seemed to have reached stability with its four established political parties: ODS, ČSSD, KDU-ČSL and KSČM<sup>1</sup> (Hanley 2011; Häuberer and Linek 2012). Despite this, the Chamber Election in 2010 described by the former president of the CR Václav Klaus as a ‘political earthquake’ (Balšínek and Kolář 2010), changed the situation and introduced two new political parties that entered the Chamber of Deputies in 2010 with significant numbers of votes: TOP 09 gained 16.7% and Public Affairs (VV) gained 10.9%. These two parties, together with ODS, formed the coalition government.

However, the subsequent evolution of TOP 09 and VV differed significantly. While VV had already split by 2012 and did not present any candidate list for the Chamber Election in 2013, TOP 09 preserved its position in the Chamber of Deputies. Although new parties in the CR that manage to enter the Chamber of Deputies, tend to fail during the first or second electoral period (see Table 1), TOP 09 did not follow this pattern. Besides the Chamber of Deputies, TOP 09 also gained support in Prague and several other big Czech cities and it succeeded in the election to the European Parliament (EP) in 2014. Currently, TOP 09 is considered to be a leading party of the right-wing opposition in the Chamber of Deputies, while VV followed the pattern of new party failure at the national level within the first or second electoral period.

The main goal of this thesis is to explain the difference in the evolution of these two parties. This thesis therefore seeks to answer following question: *Why is TOP 09 an exception to the pattern that new parties hardly ever survive until the following electoral period in the Czech Republic?* This thesis argues, that although standard theoretical explanations of new parties’ success, such as an effect of the strong leader or the appeal against the established parties, might explain TOP 09’s initial success in 2010, the party’s long-term success is most likely to be explained by the party organizational approach. Solid party organization enabled TOP 09 to translate the electoral success of 2010 into a good position in the coalition government,<sup>2</sup> to conduct

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<sup>1</sup> ODS=Občanská demokratická strana (Civic Democratic Party), ČSSD=Česká strana sociálně demokratická (Social Democratic Party), KDU-ČSL= Křesťanská a demokratická unie–Československá strana lidová (The Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People’s Party) and KSČM=Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia)

<sup>2</sup> In the coalition government 2010-2013, TOP 09 held the posts of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finances, Minister of Public Health, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, and Minister of Culture.

other effective election campaigns,<sup>3</sup> and to remain publicly visible up to the present day, although it is now an opposition party.

TOP 09's strong party organization is strongly connected to the fact that its personnel and politicians are much more experienced compared to VV's. Moreover, the turnover of politicians and personnel is much lower in the case of TOP 09. Therefore, more experience and low turnover helped TOP 09 implement party organizational rules competently in the initial phase of party formation, maintain them in later phases, and develop powerful tools for efficient party functioning, such as campaigning or communicating with the electorate and the media.

This thesis first examines the evolution of both parties in detail. Then, it presents a theoretical discussion about possible explanations of TOP 09's success. Finally, it analyses the party organization of TOP 09 and VV and it concludes that the crucial difference between TOP 09 and VV is the significant experience and the low turnover within TOP 09's central office and presidency.

## **Method**

This thesis is a case study based on the method of controlled comparison. TOP 09's organizational strength was compared to the strength of another new political party - Public Affairs (VV). VV was chosen because it was the most similar party to TOP 09 regarding most of the independent variables.<sup>4</sup> However, unlike TOP 09's long-term success, VV did not survive the first electoral period. The one independent variable on which the parties are likely to differ, and which I argue is responsible for TOP 09's success and VV's failure, is party organization. For this reason, both parties' internal organizations were analysed.

This thesis engages in qualitative research based mainly on field research in the headquarters of TOP 09 in Prague, the Czech Republic. This field research consisted of (1) 'observation' (of everyday job of TOP 09 in its headquarters and in the Chamber of Deputies, internal meetings of the TOP 09's politicians or preparations of public

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<sup>3</sup> Campaign of Karel Schwarzenberg (chairman of TOP 09) for the first direct Presidential Election in 2013 became an absolute winner of the Czech Price for Public Relations 2013 (Česká Cena za PR 2013). Moreover, TOP 09's campaign for the Election to the EP in 2014 is now in between the four best campaigns in the category Political Communication for 2014 (Česká Cena za PR 2015).

<sup>4</sup> For both parties, the Chamber Election in 2010 was the first one, both parties' results in this election was good, both parties participated in the coalition government. Moreover, both parties used an appeal against the established parties in their campaign for the election in 2010 and both parties relied on their leaders – Schwarzenberg (TOP 09) and John (VV) who were popular amongst people (Häuberer and Linek 2012, chap. 9).

appearances), (2) interviews with party managers, and (3) analysis of documents provided by TOP 09. The Statutes and websites of TOP 09 and VV were also examined. In addition, media monitoring produced relevant information for the research.

## Two New Parties, Two Endings

### TOP 09

TOP 09<sup>5</sup> was founded in June 2009 by the former leader of KDU-ČSL and Minister of Finances Miroslav Kalousek and independent Minister of Foreign Affairs, nobleman Karel Schwarzenberg. A significant base for the future TOP 09 was established from a conservative-liberal wing in KDU-ČSL, which was led by Kalousek (Vodička and Cabada 2011, 285). Schwarzenberg became the party's chairman, and Kalousek was elected the first deputy chairman. Both of these figures still remain in their position today (TOP 09 2015b).

TOP 09's proclaimed ideology and orientation is based on conservatism, it emphasizes a European Judeo-Christian tradition, advocates 'fiscal responsibility', deepening the rule of law and democracy, and building a stable economy based on a free market and non-discrimination (TOP 09 2015f). Unlike its strongest rival on the right spectrum of the party system, ODS, TOP 09 is supportive of European integration. TOP 09 is a member of the European People's Party and currently holds four seats in the EP (TOP 09 2015i).

In May 2010, TOP 09 competed in the first election since its inception. In cooperation with the movement Mayors and Independents (M&I)<sup>6</sup> it obtained 16.7 % of votes and became the third largest party in the Chamber of Deputies (Stegmaier and Vlachova, 2011, 240), something which has never happened to any new party<sup>7</sup> since the independence of the Czech Republic. In October 2010, TOP 09 continued with successful electoral results in the local election and in the Senate election. The best results were recorded mainly in big cities and especially in the capital of the CR, where

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<sup>5</sup> TOP 09 is an abbreviation of Czech words Tradice, Odpovědnost, Prosperita, which translates to Tradition, Responsibility and Prosperity. The number represents the year of the foundation of the party which was 2009.

<sup>6</sup> M&I is a Czech political movement which unifies independent local politicians, usually experienced as members of the local governments or mayors. Their goal is to bring their knowledge and experience to the national level of government and to pursue local interests and problems there (Starostové a nezávislí, n.d.).

<sup>7</sup> However, it happened after. In parliamentary election in 2013 the new party ANO 2011 obtained 18.7% of votes.

**Table 1. Survival of New Parties in the Czech Republic**

Political party	First time		Next				Currently
	represented in the Chamber of Deputies	Votes (%)	election	Votes (%)	election	Votes (%)	represented in the Chamber of Deputies (2015)
<b>ODA</b>	1992 <sup>a</sup>	5.9%	1996	6.4%	2002 <sup>b</sup>	0.5%	NO
<b>US-DEU</b>	1998	8.6%	2002	14.27% <sup>c</sup>	2006	0.3%	NO
<b>The Green Party</b>	2006	6.3%	2010	2.5%	2013	3.2%	NO
<b>VV</b>	2010	10.9%	2013	n/a			NO
<b>ANO 2011</b>	2013	18.7%					YES
<b>The Dawn</b>	2013	6.9% <sup>d</sup>					YES
<b>TOP 09</b>	2010	16.7%	2013	12%			YES

Source: Plecítá-Vlachová and Stegmaier 2008; Stegmaier and Vlachová 2011; Stegmaier and Linek 2014, Volby.cz n.d.

Note: ODA=Civic Democratic Alliance, US-DEU=Freedom Union-Democratic Union, VV=Public Affairs, The Dawn=The Dawn of Direct Democracy of Tomio Okamura

<sup>a</sup>The Czech Republic is an independent state since 1993. In 1992, it was still part of Czechoslovakia which formally was a federation, therefore separate election for the Czech National Council, Slovak National Council and Federal Assembly were held. This result concerns the election to the Czech National Council. However, in the Federal level, ODA did not overcome the 5% threshold (Vodička and Cabada 2011, 298).

<sup>b</sup>ODA did not stand for the early parliamentary election in 1998 because of several internal problems (Vodička and Cabada 2011, 299).

<sup>c</sup>US-DEU formed an election coalition with an established political party Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL).

<sup>d</sup>In February 2015, The Dawn fell apart when ten out of twelve of its Deputies decided to make a new political movement (Čermáková 2015). According to the Election model of The Centre for Public Opinion Research (CVVM), which shows the anticipated result of a parliamentary election if it is taking place at the time of the particular public opinion research, The Dawn would receive 1.5% of votes in March 2015. In April 2015, The Dawn would not exceed 1% of votes (CVVM. Sociologický ústav AV ČR 2015a; 2015b)

TOP 09 obtained 41.27% of votes. (Vodička and Cabada 2011, 286). Currently, TOP 09 holds 12% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 4.7% less than in the previous electoral period (Stegmaier and Linek, 2014, 387). Despite this small decrease, the evidence suggests that in comparison with other recent new parties in the Czech Republic, TOP 09 has better performance and maintains higher support from the electorate (Table 1).



**Public Affairs (VV - Věci veřejné)**

Political party Public Affairs (VV) is older than TOP 09; it was founded in 2001. Until 2009, when VV gained its first noticeable result at the state level in the election to the EP (2.5%), it only functioned at the local level in Prague and the surrounding area. Shortly thereafter, the selection of popular investigative journalist Radek John as the chairman of VV caught the attention of the public and media. Nonetheless, Vít Bárta, owner of a large security agency ABL, was considered to be the most influential person in the party (Vodička and Cabada 2011, 287).

In VV's first campaign for the Chamber Election in 2010, VV presented itself as a pragmatic and "slightly populist party" (Vodička and Cabada 2011, 287). Their main slogan in the campaign was "Stop political dinosaurs" (Kopecký 2010) and it represented VV's goal to replace entrenched politicians. It strongly promoted tools of direct democracy (Věci veřejné n.d.). VV obtained 10.9% of votes in 2010 and it became the third party in the coalition government.

Despite this, VV did not enjoy public support for a long time. Doubts about John's lack of experience in politics and possible penetration of the security agency ABL in the state administration, in addition to bad public presentation of the party, resulted in failure in the local elections in October 2010 (Vodička and Cabada 2011, 287).

Moreover, in 2011, Vít Bárta was accused of bribery by other members of VV (Lidovky.cz 2011). The investigation received heavy media attention and led to discrepancies in the coalition government which resulted in several changes in its composition. Eventually, in 2012, deputy chairman of VV Karolína Peake announced her resignation from VV, and she founded a new political platform with other Deputies (Lidovky.cz 2012), which still intended to adhere to the coalition agreement with TOP 09 and ODS. This was followed by the annulment of the coalition agreement between ODS, TOP 09 and VV. Peake's platform called LIDEM,<sup>8</sup> replaced VV in the coalition government, and VV was left to join the opposition (Věci veřejné, n.d.).

VV decided not to stand in the Chamber Election in 2013. Only two members of VV, who were on the candidate list of The Dawn, managed to receive mandates in the Chamber of Deputies (David Kádner and Olga Havlová). VV stand in the election to the

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<sup>8</sup> LIDEM is an abbreviation for Liberal Democrats but it also means "to people" in Czech (Válková 2012).

EP in 2014 with Radek John being the election leader. VV obtained 0.46% of votes and therefore did not receive any mandate (European Parliament 2015).

## **Theoretical Discussion: Supporting the Organizational Approach**

The previous chapter shows how the evolution of TOP 09 and VV differed. While VV's development was rather shaky and ended quickly without any further successful electoral results, the evolution of TOP 09 does not indicate any instability. Their electoral results remain stable and TOP 09 saw continued success. This chapter therefore gradually presents potential theoretical explanations for the success of a political party, which are standard in scholarly literature. These include: (1) representation of new issues, (2) appeal against the established parties, (3) effect of a leader and finally the (4) party organization approach. This discussion shows that although second and third factor might have influenced TOP 09's initial success in 2010, the most likely explanation for party's long-term success is the last one – party organizational approach.

### **Representation of New Issues**

Some authors, such as Harmel and Robertson (1985), Hauss and Rayside (1978), or Hug (2001), assume that new parties emerge in democratic systems because of social and value changes within the political system, or a lack of proper representation of politically relevant issues. Therefore, there might have been a gap that TOP 09 could fill to attract voters. However, the campaign for the Chamber Election in 2010 shows that TOP 09 did not address new issues. According to the Manifesto Project Database for the election in 2010 (Volkens et al. 2015), the most frequent issues pointed out in the TOP 09's election programme were fairly similar to other established parties on the center-right spectrum of the political arena (KDU-ČSL and ODS).<sup>9</sup> This factor therefore cannot explain TOP 09's electoral success.

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<sup>9</sup> The most frequent issue among these three parties, according to the Manifesto Project Database, was value '*Economic Goals*'. TOP 09 covered this issue by 16.268% in its manifesto for election in 2010, ODS addressed it by 18.095% and KDU-ČSL by 15.273% (Volkens et al., 2015). The ten most frequent issues of TOP 09 in the manifesto for election in 2010 were all at some level represented in manifestos of ODS and KDU-ČSL as well. The only value that might be critical in this case is value '*Political Corruption*'. TOP 09 addressed it by 4.944% but it was covered by ODS only with 1.825% and by KDU-

### **Appeal against the Established Parties**

Voters might have chosen TOP 09 because they were disappointed by the established parties and their previous scandals. TOP 09 therefore had leverage to use an appeal against established parties for its own benefit, and so TOP 09 proclaimed during its first electoral campaign in 2010 that it would exhibit better political performance. Although some primary success might be attributed to this appeal, it cannot explain the party's longitudinal support because TOP 09 became the second largest party in the coalition government in 2010-2013. In the Central and East European (CEE) region, participation in government is seen as a risk in regards to a party's re-election (Bakke and Sitte, 2013, 211). Since TOP 09 cooperated with other established parties in the government in 2010-2013 and it turned into an established party itself, it could not use this appeal again in the election campaign in 2013. Even then, TOP 09 managed to obtain 12% of votes in 2013.

### **Effect of a Leader**

Authors such as Kopecký (1995) or Van Biezen (2003), see the role of charismatic leaders as crucial in party politics in the CEE region. TOP 09 might have strongly benefited from the personality of its leader, Schwarzenberg, because he has the personality of a charismatic leader. He was very popular amongst the public, especially in the early months TOP 09, and still remains fairly popular to this day. Schwarzenberg is one of the last people within the Czech political scene who represents ideas close to the former president Václav Havel. Moreover, Schwarzenberg was exiled during the communist regime and has, as a member of an aristocratic family, a certain level of a public appreciation. Besides that, he is an experienced politician, who has been involved in political events ever since the Velvet revolution in 1989. However, Mudde (2007) claims that the presence of a charismatic leader is very important only in the party's 'breakthrough phase' (p. 261). This seems reasonable when looking at the development of TOP 09. Even though the initial success could be attributed to Schwarzenberg's popularity, it cannot explain the continuing success of TOP 09, because his good reputation was damaged during the time he was deputy prime minister of the coalition government.<sup>10</sup> This government was not popular amongst people mainly because of the

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ČSL with 1.962% (Volkens et al., 2015). Nonetheless there was no sign of one issue that would be completely new or exceptional and at the same time strongly represented in TOP 09's manifesto.

<sup>10</sup> In TOP 09's initial phase in June 2009, 51% of respondents answered the question 'What is your opinion about Karel Schwarzenberg?' positively. Before the parliamentary election in 2010, 43% of

cuts in the state budget, and the government failed due to a corruption scandal of ODS. This means that although the presence of Schwarzenberg as a leader might serve as an explanation for the successful start of TOP 09 in 2010, his good reputation could not be the only foundation of TOP 09's long-term election results and its survival in the political arena.

### **Party Organization Approach**

Although previously mentioned factors might have influenced TOP 09's initial success in 2010, none of them can fully explain the party's long-term success. Another currently influential approach that may explain this is the Party Organization Approach. Scholars such as Mudde (2007), Gherghina (2012) and Tavits (2008, 2013) argue that the power behind political parties' electoral success and their long-term survival in the political arena is their party organization. Without proper organization, electoral success is not easy to translate into a good position in parliament, election campaigns are usually rather inefficient, and parties struggle with their presentation in media and public. Moreover, new parties, whose party organization has not been properly embedded yet, might lack "unified behaviour in the office" (Tavits 2013, 7) and thus can suffer from internal discrepancies which can eventually lead to their downfall.

As presented above, although TOP 09 is a new party, it managed to function well in parliament, conduct effective campaigns, and it has not recorded any substantial internal problems thus far. TOP 09 seems to have clear organizational rules that contribute to good electoral results. TOP 09 vastly focuses on its presentation in media and public and it tries to make its political steps loud and visible. Currently, TOP 09 shows a coherent work in the opposition, it carries out regular press conferences where it evaluates government's performance and it presents continuous critique of government's left-wing policies. TOP 09 also invests heavily in campaigning. TOP 09's campaigns are usually developed several months in advance and external public relations consultants are engaged in the creation of big national campaigns in order to bring fresh ideas.<sup>11</sup> There are several cases of very successful election campaigns and two significant examples will be presented here. First, during 2009, ODS, the strongest right-wing political party thus far, lost the support of the electorate due to corruption

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respondents saw him positively. In 2009-2011, Schwarzenberg was always in the first quintet of the most popular Czech politicians. However, since November 2011, the popularity of Schwarzenberg was decreasing. Before the election in October 2013, only 34% of respondents perceived him positively (STEM 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Source: Field research in the Central Office of TOP 09.

scandals and poor performance of the coalition government, of which it was member in 2006-2009. TOP 09 therefore aimed its campaign at the right-wing oriented voters who were not satisfied with the performance of ODS and were looking for a close alternative, and it succeeded (Häuberer and Linek 2012, 187). In the Chamber Election in 2010, twenty per cent of the previous voters of ODS thus moved their support to TOP 09 and in doing so created almost forty per cent of the TOP 09's electorate (Häuberer and Linek 2012, 183). A second successful example is a campaign for the first direct presidential election in January 2013 in which Karel Schwarzenberg was the second most successful candidate. Schwarzenberg stood for this election and advanced to the second round, where he was eventually defeated by former Prime Minister Miloš Zeman.<sup>12</sup> The extensive election campaign lasted almost six months. As mentioned above, the campaign for Schwarzenberg became the absolute winner of the Czech Price for Public Relations 2013. Moreover, according to public opinion research, the intensive campaign of Schwarzenberg increased the chances of TOP 09 in the election models from 8.5% in December 2012 to 16% in January 2013.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, in May 2015, TOP 09 launched a campaign for attracting people to become members or supporters called 'I am TOP' which is appraised by experts (Hroník 2015). To present other than election campaign is generally rather uncommon in the CR. Also the format chosen by TOP 09 is unusual – it is a set of 16 YouTube videos with conversation between TOP 09's chairman Schwarzenberg and the youngest member of local governments in the CR, member of TOP 09 Dominik Feri (TOP 09 2015h). This campaign was planned since the end of 2014 and was developed in cooperation with external communication company.<sup>14</sup> Although the primary goal is to attract potential new members, party also wants to show its diversity and to emphasize that TOP 09 does not only consists of its chairman and deputy chairmen who are the most visible publicly (Hroník 2015). Since the year 2015 is without any election, experts point out that TOP 09 is trying to employ permanent communication with voters by this campaign which can help bringing votes in elections in coming years (Hroník

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<sup>12</sup> Nine candidates run for the post of the first directly elected president of the Czech Republic. In the first round Karel Schwarzenberg received approximately 40,000 votes (0.6%) less than Miloš Zeman who won the first round. In the second round Schwarzenberg received 45.19% votes and Zeman won with 54.8% votes (Volby.cz 2013).

<sup>13</sup> Election model shows the anticipated result of a parliamentary election if it is taking place at the time of the particular public opinion research. Result of TOP 09 increased from 8.5% in December 2012 to 16% in January 2013. It remained stable until May 2013 when it decreased to 14.5% (CVVM. Sociologický ústav AV ČR 2013)

<sup>14</sup> Source: Field research in the Central Office of TOP 09.

2015). As it is shown subsequently, continuous communication with the electorate is one of the crucial aspects for gaining votes that solid party organization enables.

Theory of Party Organization. Party organization is a complex concept that encompasses a party's internal structures and processes. In one of the first studies on party organization, Duverger suggests that party organization "constitutes the general setting for the activity of members, the selection of leaders, and decides their powers. It often explains the strength and efficiency of certain parties, the weakness and inefficiency of others" (1961, 4). Party organization consists of elements such as membership size, formal structure and branches, central organization and its professionalization, financial sources, division of labour within the party, formalization of rules, and internal decision making (Harmel and Janda 1982, 43; Gherghina 2012, 39; Tavits 2013, 7).

Why is party organization important? To answer this question, several phases of the electoral cycle have to be considered. In each of these phases, party organization is important in a different way. First of all, there is one phase right before the election, when the campaign is taking place and the party is seeking votes. In this period, the goal of a political party is to present and explain the election programme and communicate with potential voters. In this phase, strong party organization serves as an effective communication channel through which the party addresses voters, through which it presents the election programme, and which enables the party to have frequent contact with the electorate (Tavits 2013, 25). Since a well-organized party appears to be more competent and reliable to voters, it is able to be more persuasive in order to mobilize voters' support and strengthen their loyalty (Gherghina 2012, 37; Tavits 2013, 25). In sum, according to research of Tavits (2013, 63), a party's total vote share is more likely to expand in correlation with an increase in the party's organizational strength.

Second, in the phase right after the election, organization is also significant. This phase can have two forms depending on whether the party was electorally successful or not. If a party gets seats in parliament, good party organization is a significant tool in negotiating coalitions and managing cooperation in parliament, and helps translate success in the election into proper political influence and implementation of policies (Mudde 2007, 265). If a party fails to obtain seats in parliament, Bakke and Sitter (2015, 16) argue that organizational strength is an important factor as well. With proper organization and stable resources, the party can overcome the period of being outside of

parliament. In either case, strong organization helps the party establish itself in the best way possible according to its election result.

The third phase takes place roughly in the middle of the electoral period – around the second and third year of the government. In this period, no election is coming up, there is no election campaigning, and no negotiation about a coalition government is taking place. However, the party needs to work effectively in parliament and pursue its preferred policies; it has to be able to solve potential problems quickly but it should still remain visible to the public and in the media. It should not ‘forget’ the regular members or voters and keep in touch with the electorate. Alternatively, it might even begin laying the groundwork for the upcoming election. In general, in this phase, party organization is important in order to conduct the ‘everyday’ job of the party effectively and coherently (Gherghina 2012, 38).

In sum, when we look at the positive effect that party organization has on the success of a political party in each period, we might conclude that strong organization has an impact on a party’s long-term performance and its survival (Mudde 2007; Gherghina 2012; Tavits 2013). Although the political world has seen some stunning electoral achievements by new political actors (especially of populist parties) without proper organization in their first election, the same did not usually take place in the following election exactly because they lacked clear party organization that would help them maintain a certain coherence of the party’s functioning.

Local Branches, Membership, Presidency, and Central Office. This thesis will operationalize party organization along four criteria, since these are often emphasized as crucial factors (Kopecký 1995; Enyedi and Linek 2008; Tavits 2013). These four aspects are: (1) local branches, (2) membership, (3) the functioning and composition of parties’ central office, and (4) the presidency. Eventually, the composition and experience of the central office’s staff and continuity in TOP 09’s presidency will be shown as the decisive element for implementation of party organization.

*Local Branches* are the first crucial aspect of party organization. First, a party with many local branches can make use of these during the election campaign to mobilize new voters. In terms of the campaign, local offices become a marketing tool of the party because they present the party’s programme. Local offices are able to conduct a different campaigning style than the national office. These can, for example, do door-to-door canvassing and organize social events. This is a more personal style of

campaigning, and is usually more effective at gaining votes than a mass national campaign (Tavits 2013, 28). These activities also can bring more voters to the party because they usually create a positive image of the political party. Second, local branches serve as the base that helps the party survive when it is not successful at the national level. Since they focus on specific local issues, they are not affected by the problems at the national level. The local offices can help with a ‘rebirth’ of the party by providing new candidates and involvement in solving local issues that usually have simpler and more visible solutions (Tavits 2013, 28-30). All in all, local branches are important for parties because they provide votes, continuity, and stability in party activities. As Clark (2004, 37) points out, “local branches provide parties with legitimacy in the eyes of public.”

*Membership* is another meaningful tool of party organization for many reasons. First, a large number of members sends a positive signal to voters, because it expresses a party’s wide scope of interests and contradicts the possible assumption that the party only appeals to a specific group of interest and voters (Tavits 2013, 27). Stable membership statistics usually means that the public sees the party as more legitimate. Bakke and Sitter emphasize that large membership is a sign of ‘complexity of the party organization’ – a party with more members usually has more branches at a local and regional level (2013, 214). Second, party members are loyal voters. Even in periods of a party’s lack of success, it is unlikely that the members will not support their party (Tavits 2013, 26). The members themselves might bring more votes for the party through their personal contacts (Scarow, 1996, 43). Third, party members can help contribute financially to the party or assist fundraising, and they often help as volunteers during the campaigns as well (Gherghina 2012, 51; Tavits 2013, 27; Scarow 1996, 44). Fourth, a broad membership base provides a party with an opportunity to assess public opinion at the grass-roots level and to get some new, unbiased ideas from the members (Scarow 1996, 44). In sum, a large and stable membership provides a party with legitimacy, better electoral success, financial means, and free labour with innovative ideas.

A *Central Office* with professional and experienced staff is another significant element of strong party organization that this thesis focuses on. As the research of Katz and Mair (1994, 13) shows, political parties rely more and more on professional staff with experience and expertise. Although volunteers are a significant asset for a political party regarding short-term tasks, a party needs permanent staff to work on everyday



tasks and effectively manage the party's life as their full-time job. The experienced and professional staff of the central office brings a sense of coherence and continuity to the party organization and to the internal, as well as external communication (Tavits 2013, 33-34). In sum, a political party with such a staff is more likely to succeed in an election than a party without it, and the personnel is also helpful in terms of the party's long-term survival.

Leaders of the party in *the Presidency* influence the party organization's strength. As Tavits' research shows, there are two types of leaders – professional or amateur leaders (2013, 188-194). The first type of leaders tends to be more ambitious, pragmatic and experienced in management, and they therefore develop stronger organization which helps them obtain more votes. The latter ones usually pay attention to ideas and principles rather than to management and administration, and thus parties led by those people tend to be organizationally weak. Since party organization contributes heavily to parties' electoral success, parties led by inexperienced politicians in the Presidency who do not build a solid organization tend to be electorally less successful (Tavits 2013, *Ibid.*).

Party Organization in the Czech Republic. Authors, who focus on political parties in the CEE region (Kopecký 1995; Van Biezen 2003; Gherghina 2012), have noted a lack of organization of the parties in that region as compared to Western Europe. This lack of organization is caused by factors such as the top-down formation of parties, general anti-party sentiments in the post-communist countries together with the weakness of civil society, and a lack of popular involvement in public life (Van Biezen 2003; Kopecký 1995). However, Tavits (2013) and Enyedi and Linek (2008) show that some political parties in the CEE region possess a strong organization and that they are beginning to resemble Western European parties in terms of internal structure. Moreover, a closer look at political parties in the CR shows that the well-organized parties (ČSSD, ODS) have more success and survive over a long-term period (Tavits 2013, 70). Czech parties that saw their downfall after some years of activity like ODA or US-DEU, did not have a solid internal organization. The strength of organization is thus the main distinction that can be made between 'the successful and unsuccessful Czech political parties' (Tavits 2013, *Ibid.*).

On the one hand, the organizationally strong parties - ODS and ČSSD developed an organization during 1990s. ČSSD focused especially on building solid local branches

and a membership base in a long-term strategy. Due to this, ČSSD overcame several crises and scandals (Tavits 2013, 75) and it is now the strongest party of the Czech coalition government. After the split from the anti-communist social movement Civic Forum, ODS experienced development towards a strong organization under the leadership of Václav Klaus, and became one of the major political actors in the Czech party system (Bakke and Sitter 2005, 256). Until the ‘earthquake’ elections in 2010, ODS was the most successful right-wing party in the CR, even after the decrease in votes in 2010 and drop in 2013, when it obtained the lowest number of votes in its history,<sup>15</sup> it still remains visibly active in the political arena. The survival of ODS might be attributed to the solid organization that ODS developed over the years of its existence (Tavits 2013, 76).

On the other hand, parties such as ODA and US-DEU concentrated on the few elites without any broader goal to develop a classic party organization. ODA emerged from the Civic Forum, just like ODS. However, their development as an organization differed greatly, since ODA did not aim to create an organizational structure, to have a solid membership base, or to develop local branches. The party was solely based on several parliamentary elites (Tavits 2013, 76-78). Given the fact that the biggest difference between ODS and ODA is the level of organization, it seems that the element of lack of organization in case of ODA resulted in its poorer election results (see Table 1) (Tavits 2013, 80).

In the following chapter, the party organizations of TOP 09 and VV will be compared in order to assess how strong they are, and how they might have influenced the parties’ evolution. The assumption is that when it comes to organizational strength, TOP 09 resembles ODS and ČSSD while VV is more similar to the weaker organization of ODA.

## **Aspects of Party Organization<sup>16</sup>**

Following the previous ‘Party Organization Approach,’ this chapter analyses the organization of TOP 09 and VV. It compares the Statutes of TOP 09 and VV, their formal structure and local branches, membership, the presidency and composition of

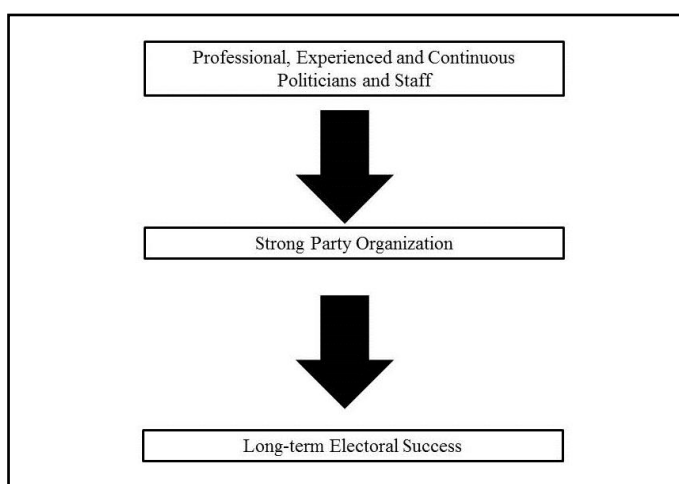
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<sup>15</sup> Since its inception, ODS always fluctuated around 25-30% of votes. However, in 2010 it obtained only 20.22% of votes and lost some votes to the new parties such as TOP 09 or VV. In 2013 it gained only 7.72% of votes (Vodička & Cabada, 2011, p. 279-280; Volby.cz – Czech statistical office, n.d.).

<sup>16</sup> This and the following chapter are mainly based on the field research in the Central Office of TOP 09 conducted in 2015.

party's central office. This chapter shows that TOP 09 has stronger organization than VV. It has more local branches, larger membership, and the amount of members remains stable. The reason for TOP 09's stronger organization is that the central office's staff and the presidency are more experienced and continuous than in the case of VV, and this is a significant factor for building and maintaining a strong party organization. These findings - TOP 09's considerably more experienced politicians and non-political personnel together with low turnover of politicians and personnel, thus provides an explanation of TOP 09's long-term electoral success (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Mechanism of the Electoral Success of TOP 09**



### **The Statutes**

The latest version of the Statutes of TOP 09 is from 2013, it has nine pages, and encompasses the programme and aims of the party, membership, structure of the party, duties of the party bodies and officials, and relations between bodies and financial principles (Statutes of TOP 09 2013). The Statutes of VV do not differ greatly from those of TOP 09, however, the document is longer. It has 26 pages, making it almost three times longer than TOP 09's Statutes. Apart from the elements that TOP 09 mentions in its Statutes, VV also incorporated the role of supporters, the expert committees, making of candidates' lists, intraparty referenda, and the role of the central office. Although the structure of the Statutes of VV is similar to the Statutes of TOP 09, the principles are prescribed in more detail (especially the role of Local and Regional Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen) (Statutes of Public Affairs 2015).

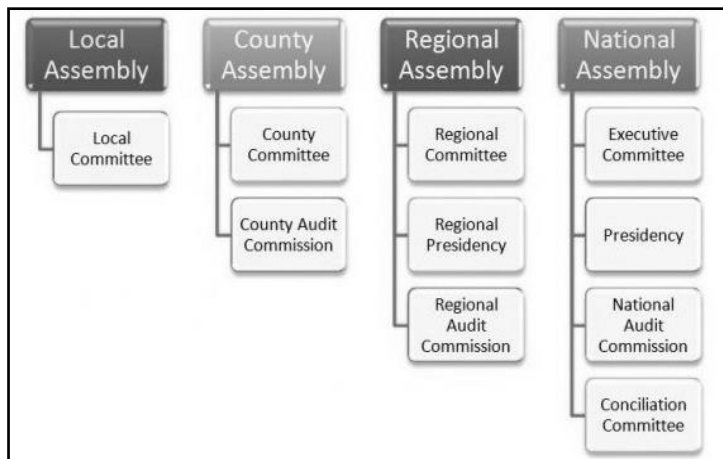
### **Formal Structure and Local Branches**

The formal structure of TOP 09 is four levelled (nationwide, regional, county and local organization). Four or three organs at the national level exhibit the typical structure of a political party in the CEE region (Enyedi and Linek 2008, 469), therefore TOP 09 does not have any extraordinary party structure. TOP 09 has 14 regional organizations (one representing each administrative region and Prague), 86 county chapters and 278 local chapters (TOP 09 2015g) that are encompassed by the nationwide level.

Five bodies operate at the nationwide level of TOP 09. It is the (1) National Assembly, (2) Executive Committee, (3) Presidency, (4) Conciliation Committee and (5) Nationwide Audit Commission. *The National Assembly* is the supreme body of TOP 09 and it should convene at least once every two years. The National Assembly elects the Presidency, fifteen members of the Executive Committee and members and the Chairman of the National Audit Commission and Conciliation Committee (Statutes of TOP 09 2013). *The Executive Committee* is the party's executive body which assembles as needed, usually every two months (TOP 09 2015e). It approves drafts of the party's annual budget, the Statutes, creates other rules and guidelines, proposes candidates for elections, and appoints and removes the Secretary General (the head of party's central office). *The Presidency* consists of eleven people: the Chairman, the First Deputy Chairman, four regular Deputy Chairmen and five members of the Presidency. The meetings of the Presidency are usually held once a week, and for those the Chairmen of the Caucus of Deputies, Caucus of Senators and Caucus of Members of the European Parliament who are party members are also invited. The Presidency mainly deals with political and programme issues. Also, as the party's statutory body, it discusses the budget, the Statutes of the party, or the activity of local or county committees (Statutes of TOP 09 2013). After a meeting, a press conference about the results of negotiations of the Presidency is usually held. *The National Audit Commission* controls "financial, economic and administrative activity of the Party" (Statutes of TOP 09 2013). *The Conciliation Committee* settles disputes among party members and bodies at both regional and nationwide level, and produces the ultimate decisions on interpretation of the Statutes or internal party regulations. As Figure 2 shows, the regional, county, and local levels resemble the nationwide level in terms of structure. The Assembly is the supreme body of the party in the regional, county or local chapter. The Assembly elects the Committee of the particular chapter. County and regional chapters both have their

own Audit Commission, whereas local chapter does not have one (Statutes of TOP 09 2013).

**Figure 2. Formal Structure of TOP 09**



Source: TOP 09 2015e

The formal structure of VV also fits within the typical structures in the Czech party system according to Enyedi and Linek (2008, 469) – it is three-levelled. VV operates at the nationwide, regional, and local level. Unlike TOP 09, VV does not have a county level in between the regional and local level. VV's organizational extensiveness is smaller than TOP 09's. According to the VV's website, VV does not even have regional chapter in each of the fourteen regions in the CR. VV currently has five regional chapters and an unknown number of local chapters.<sup>17</sup>

As in the case of TOP 09, the supreme body of VV is *The National Assembly*. It appoints The Presidency and members of other party bodies. However, in the case of VV, the National Assembly convenes more often - at least once a year. Other nationwide bodies are The Presidency, Executive Committee, Board of the Party, Conciliation and Audit Committee, and National Programme Committee. *The Presidency* of VV is smaller (seven members) than TOP 09's (eleven members), however, it works in a similar way. VV's *Executive Council* and *Board of the Party* represent the function of TOP 09's Executive Committee. The Executive Council deals more with everyday political activities of the VV. The Board of the Party, which consists of the members of Executive Committee and Chairmen of Regional Councils, is responsible for the party's long-term activity. VV's *Conciliation and Audit*

<sup>17</sup> Since VV did not respond to any of author's email with additional questions, this part about VV's network of local branches is only based on the information available online and in the Statutes of VV.

*Committee* deals with similar tasks as TOP 09's two control bodies (it settles disputes and controls financial and administrative activity of the party). However, VV's *Conciliation and Audit Committee* works for all levels, whereas TOP 09 has Audit Committee also for every Regional and County chapter. A body that VV has which TOP 09 does not, is a *National Programme Committee*, which prepares the proposal of the election programme and analyses its fulfilment (Statutes of Public Affairs 2015). In sum, despite some above-presented minor differences, according to the Statutes of both parties, structure and functioning of VV resembles those of TOP 09. However, TOP 09, unlike VV, managed to create a more extensive structure of local branches.

### **Membership**

In general, any citizen of the Czech Republic who is older than 18 years and who is not a member of any other political party can become a member of TOP 09 after submitting a written application and paying the membership fee.<sup>18</sup> A member of TOP 09 has the right, amongst others, to participate in the meeting of the local chapter where he or she is member, to vote and be elected for party positions, to propose candidates for elections, and to be informed about activities and resolutions. Members' obligations are, for example, to support the goals and programme of TOP 09, and to obey the Statutes, internal party regulations, resolutions and decisions adopted by party bodies. The member can be suspended from a party position, removed from a party position or even expelled from the party due to violation of the above-mentioned duties or due to a wilful criminal act, abuse of a party or public position, or due to stating false data in the application for party membership (Statutes of TOP 09 2013).

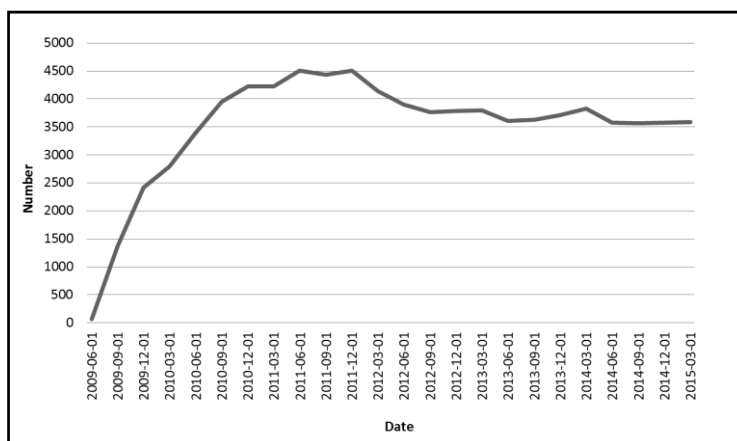
Figure 3 shows that after the initial increase of the number of members, TOP 09's membership stabilized around 3500-3900 members. There are no major deviations regarding the number of members.

Besides membership, TOP 09 has its supporters who register on their website.<sup>19</sup> Their role is, however, not embedded in TOP 09 Statutes, therefore it is not limited and it is basically up to the supporters how active they choose to be. There is no fee similar to the members' fee, and there are no other obligations. The only necessity is to fill in the application form on the website. After that, supporters receive emails from the central office with offers to engage in party's activities – campaigns, seminars, petitions

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<sup>18</sup> The regular membership fee is 400 CZK and 100 CZK in case of students and retired people (TOP 09 2015c).

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.my.top09.cz>

**Figure 3. Number of Members of TOP 09 since 2009**

Source: Adapted from Database Office, Central headquarters of TOP 09.

conferences and so forth. Supporters and members of the party can also participate in discussion forums on the website *www.my.top09.cz*. TOP 09 had 13 197 supporters in April 2015 (TOP 09 2015h).

The conditions of membership in VV are not particularly different from those of membership in TOP 09. Any citizen of the Czech Republic who is older than 18 years, who has legal capacity and is not a member of any other political party can become a member of VV. The member's obligations, rights, and penalties resemble those of TOP 09. However, one difference can be found in the admission process. In case of VV, there is an extra phase before the candidate becomes a fully-fledged member, that is the status of an 'aspiring member' which lasts up to three months at a maximum. During that period, the aspiring member has the right to participate in the meetings of the particular local chapter. Within these three months, the decision about acceptance or rejection is made based on the aspiring member's performance in the party.<sup>20</sup>

VV also has its supporters. Unlike TOP 09, the rights and obligations of VV's supporters are prescribed in the Statutes. VV prescribes several requirements for supporters (a supporter has to be older than 18, cannot have any past criminal record, cannot be a member of another political party and has to follow the Statutes, programme and other rules of the party). After submitting the electronic application, the Board of the Party decides on acceptance. The supporter of VV has the right to participate in the functioning of the party, present his/her opinion, and has right to vote in the inter-party referenda. Status of the supporter can be terminated if the supporter acts against the

<sup>20</sup> In 2009, the period of waiting time for becoming a member of VV was prolonged to one year (Parlamentnilisty.cz 2009).

Statutes or programme goals of the party (Statutes of Public Affairs 2015). Because of these broadened requirements and rights, a supporter of VV approaches the status of a regular party member more so than a supporter of TOP 09 does.

The number of members of VV was not as stable as in the case of TOP 09.<sup>21</sup> During the campaign for the Chamber Election in 2010, VV recorded increasing interest in membership. The increase rose from 490 members in November 2009 to 1,683 members by the end of 2010. However, during 2011, when the number of members was on the peak in case of TOP 09, the number of VV's members dropped greatly to 929 members. The explanation for this decrease might be found in the commencing investigation of Vít Bárta (see the chapter Public Affairs above). In 2012-2013, the number oscillated around 800 members. Although the most recent data from VV is unavailable, it can be concluded that VV does not have as extensive and stable membership as TOP 09.

### **Party's Central Office**

The Central Office of TOP 09 resides in Prague and consists of approximately twenty people. The head of the Office is the Secretary General. His Deputy also works in the position of a Campaign Manager. The Campaign Manager has an assistant who also works as an International Secretary.

The Central Office of TOP 09 consists of several offices. First of all, there is the Press Office. The Press Office takes care of the communication between the party and media or public. It organizes the press conferences and public appearances of the politicians of TOP 09 and writes press releases of all kinds. In addition, it carries out the daily monitoring of media, other currently relevant research, and analyses the effectiveness of TOP 09's communication tools. Second, there is an educational office which takes care of the think-tank TOPAZ. Activities of TOPAZ mainly entail the organization of conferences, seminars and discussion evenings about political, economic and social topics for members of TOP 09 as well as for public. Furthermore, TOPAZ offers internships for students. Third, there is the IT office. Besides the fact that the IT office is responsible for the internal information network of the party and its mobile devices, it also creates graphics and provides technical support for organizing public events. These are, for example, the press conferences, seminars or discussions of

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<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, VV has not provided author with numbers of members and supporters, therefore some numbers were obtained from other online sources (Parlamentnilisty.cz 2009; Válková 2011; Válková 2013).



TOPAZ and also the party's national assembly, which takes place every two years. Fourth, there is the Economic Office, which manages all the financial aspects of party's organization – the state subsidies, financial gifts, salaries of the employees etc. It also produces the annual financial reports. Fifth, there is Database Office. It gathers all the data, for example about the members and supporters. It also takes care of the party's Statutes and its potential change. Finally, there are several assistants to the leading managers and the photographer.

The role of the Central Office of VV is, unlike TOP 09, described in the Statutes of VV. According to the Statutes, Central Office's main tasks are to (1) take care of the party's public appearance and representation, (2) to administrate data and databases, and to (3) provide party's bodies and members with the technical support. The Office of VV is led by the Manager and consists of several offices.<sup>22</sup> However, the Central Office does not seem as extensive as TOP 09. For instance, VV does not have an educational think-tank like TOP 09's TOPAZ which would spread party ideas and educate the public.

The examination of TOP 09's and VV's party organization shows that TOP 09 has stronger party organization. TOP 09 has a more extensive network of local branches and it has a larger and more stable membership. Although the prescribed rules in the Statutes do not differ that much between these two parties, the actual organization is stronger in the case of TOP 09. This confirms the statement of Hloušek that there is a discrepancy between VV's Statutes and the factual power constellation of power (2012, 327). According to Jarmara, TOP 09 is more institutionalized than VV (2011, 70). The following chapter shows what might be the most likely reason for this.

## **Experience and Continuity as a Cause of a Strong Organization of TOP 09**

Since TOP 09 and VV both entered the national-levelled politics at the same time and both developed solid Statutes with internal rules and prescriptions, one could speculate about why VV's actual party organization is not as strong as TOP 09's. The answer appears to lie in the characteristics of the leading politicians and non-political personnel of the parties. This chapter shows that politicians and personnel of TOP 09 were much

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<sup>22</sup> Regarding this topic, author tried to obtain more relevant information via email communication with the VV's press office. However, no one responded to the emails.

more experienced than those of VV, and that in TOP 09 people were not changing rapidly in these positions. This chapter presents how the experience and continuity influenced the implementation of party organization.

**Table 2. The Presidency of TOP 09**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Chairman</b>	K.Schwarzenberg	K. Schwarzenberg	K. Schwarzenberg
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Chairman</b>	Miroslav Kalousek	Miroslav Kalousek	Miroslav Kalousek
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Marek Ženíšek	Marek Ženíšek	Marek Ženíšek
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Pavol Lukša	Pavol Lukša	Pavol Lukša
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Jaromír Drábek	Jaromír Drábek	Leoš Heger
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Ludmila Müllerová	Helena Langšádlová	Helena Langšádlová
<b>Member</b>	Jiří Oliva	Leoš Heger	Jaroslav Kacer
<b>Member</b>	Jiří Špička	Adolf Jílek	Adolf Jílek
<b>Member</b>	Jan Husák	J. Schejbalová	František Laudát
<b>Member</b>	Vladimír Pavelka	Vladimír Pavelka	Jiří Oliva
<b>Member</b>	Stanislav Motyčka	Daniel Korte	Tomáš Tesař

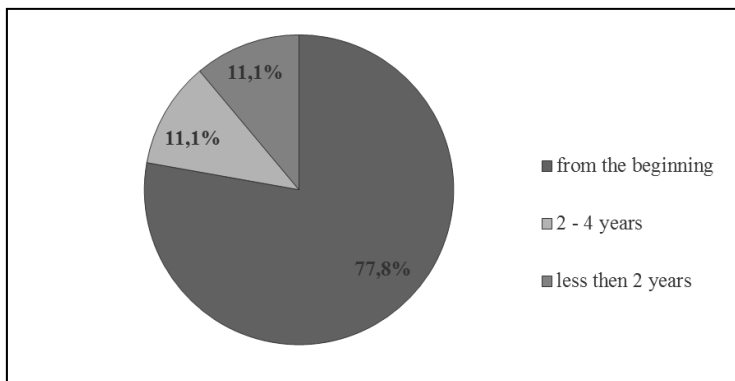
Source: Seznam politických stran a hnutí - Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky n.d.

The first Presidency of TOP 09, which was elected in November 2009, already had many experienced politicians amongst themselves. Seven out of the eleven members in TOP 09's Presidency elected in 2009 had previous experience in a political party at the national level. As mentioned above, some politicians left KDU-ČSL to TOP 09 with Miroslav Kalousek who has been a member of KDU-ČSL since 1984, and who has worked in the state administration since 1990. Six of them, including Kalousek, became part of the Presidency. The current chairman of TOP 09 Karel Schwarzenberg has been working in public sphere since 1990; he was a member of ODA or US-DEU and former Minister of Foreign Affairs (TOP 09 2015d). Moreover, Table 2 shows that there has been no rapid turnover in the positions within the Presidency since 2009, thus TOP 09's Presidency has remained continuous.

Most of the current employees in TOP 09's Central Office also had previous working experience in a political party before they started working for TOP 09. Currently, there are twenty employees in the TOP 09's headquarters, and 61.1% of them

previously worked for another political party (see Figure 4). Ten people worked for KDU-ČSL before TOP 09, and one worked for US-DEU. Another important factor shown in Figure 3 is that 77.8% of TOP 09's headquarters worked for the party from its foundation, and all of the people who previously worked for another political party have been working for TOP 09 from its inception. This proves that the experienced employees stayed, which shows organizational continuity and stability.

**Figure 4. How long have you worked for TOP 09?**



Source: Adapted from the questionnaire distributed amongst the employees of TOP 09's headquarters in Prague, March 2015.<sup>23</sup>

The same experience as in the case of TOP 09 cannot be found in the Presidency of the VV.<sup>24</sup> In 2009, new chairman Radek John was elected and he had no previous political experience. Out of the other five members of the VV's presidency, three – Kateřina Klasnová, Josef Dobeš and Karolína Peake had previous political experience. However, the experience was not at the national level but only at the local level in Prague, and it lasted only a few years (three years in the case of Klasnová and Peake, seven years in the case of Dobeš). In the case of politicians of TOP 09, the experience was at the national level and lasted longer - for more than twenty years in Schwarzenberg's or Kalousek's cases. In addition, Schwarzenberg, Kalousek, and some other leading politicians (Marek Ženíšek, Pavol Lukša) have been part of the Presidency of TOP 09 since its inception, and still hold these positions now, preserving continuity. The same does not apply for VV, which has had six different Chairmen since its formal inception in 2002. Since 2009, VV has had three Chairmen, whereas TOP 09 is still led

<sup>23</sup> The questionnaire distributed in TOP 09's headquarters was not answered by all the employees. It was answered by eighteen out of twenty employees.

<sup>24</sup> This concerns only the politicians in the Presidency. Data about the personnel of the Central Headquarters is not available since VV's office did not respond to any of author's emails.

by Schwarzenberg. Moreover, as Table 3 shows, the turnover in the position of VV's Deputy Chairmen was high as well. In sum, VV's Presidency did not prove as experienced and continuous as TOP 09's Presidency.

**Table 3. The Presidency of VV**

Year	2009-2013	2013-2014	2014 – present
<b>Chairman</b>	Radek John	Vít Bárta	Jiří Kohout
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Chairman</b>	Karolína Peake, Kateřina Klasnová	Petra Quittová	Olga Havlová
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Lenka Andrášová	Jana Drastichová	Simona Chytrvá
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Josef Dobeš	Petr Skokan	Alice Čechilová
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Jiří Kohout	Michal Babák	Jan Ježovica
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Milan Šťovíček	Jiří Lexa	David Kádner

Source: Seznam politických stran a hnutí - Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky n.d.

### **How Experience and Continuity Influences Party's Organization?**

It has been shown that experience and continuity in party organization are the crucial differences between TOP 09 and VV. This section explains how these factors influence a party's organization and therefore its electoral success. *Experience* positively contributes to the implementation of the prescribed party organization, and affects the actual everyday functioning of the political party. Once a new party emerges, it has to implement solid party organization in order to benefit from all the aspects good party organization can bring (see above), and to reach its best possible electoral result. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many theories have already been created about party organization, and several successfully organized political parties can serve as examples. Therefore party officials can easily become inspired and outline their own organization. However, in order to implement a theory into the real political world and to start a new political party, knowledge about the specific party system, judicial condition and the atmosphere of the society is required. All these elements are usually understood best by people who have spent a reasonable amount of their career in the political environment, i.e. experienced politicians and party officials.

This research demonstrates that the crucial difference between TOP 09 and VV is that TOP 09's leading politicians and personnel were by far more experienced in

political work than the politicians and personnel of VV. It is exactly this experience that enables the smooth implementation of proper party organization in the case of TOP 09 which, in turn, results in better functioning of the party, more effective campaigning and overall public appearance of TOP 09, eventually bringing more votes. The campaign manager of TOP 09 shares the same opinion. He claims that it was ‘experience’ which enabled the “smooth and successful start of TOP 09, because people in the Presidency knew what their job was.”<sup>25</sup> VV, on the contrary, did not have as many experienced politicians. Thus, although VV had ‘theoretical’ knowledge about party organization, which it presented in its extensive Statutes, it struggled with its implementation in practice. It did not develop an extensive network of local branches; nor did it have large membership. Since VV was not unified by solid organization, which was needed to properly deal with its continuous expansion, it eventually developed internal disputes, turnovers in the party’s Presidency, and ultimately resulted in the failure of the party. As Hloušek claims, the inexperience of the leading politicians of VV caused several internal and external crises (2012, 330). Although TOP 09 also underwent some internal disputes,<sup>26</sup> it has overcome them without larger consequences for the party. The same cannot be said about the development of VV, which is now, according to its election results, almost an ‘invisible’ party.

*Continuity* positively affects the party’s public image. Tavits (2013, 17) argues that continuity in the party’s central office is important, and might be cause of party electoral success because it is reflected in the party’s public performance. Thanks to that, voters see the party as predictable, understandable, and without deviations. Because of frequent turnovers in the Czech politics which are often caused by corruption (and other) scandals, voters often look for a change or for an ‘undamaged’ political party (Häuberer and Linek 2012). Therefore a party with stable leading politicians might seem more attractive to voters.

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with TOP 09’s campaign manager, 2015.

<sup>26</sup> The crisis in the Prague chapter of TOP 09 in 2014 followed by withdrawal of two influential members of TOP 09 in Prague Tomáš Hudeček (Mayor of Prague at that time) and Jiří Vávra (Chairman of Prague chapter of TOP 09) or the police investigation of Vlasta Parkanová in 2012 because of an unintelligible purchase of planes for the army during the times she served as Ministry of Defense (she served in 2007-2009, when she was still a member of KDU-ČSL).

## Conclusion

The main goal of this thesis was to explain the exceptional success of the new Czech political party TOP 09 which was an exception to the pattern of new parties' failure in the CR. In order to answer this question, this thesis first examined several possible theoretical explanations for the parties' success, such as the effect of a leader, appeal against established parties, or representation of new issues. Although the initial success of TOP 09 in 2010 might have been caused by the presence of a popular leader or voters' desire for new parties, it was hypothesized that TOP 09's long-term survival can be attributed to strong party organization. This hypothesis was tested by analysing and comparing the party organization of TOP 09 and another new Czech party VV. The analysis shows that TOP 09 has a strong organization, whereas the political party VV, which broke down after two years in the Chamber of Deputies did not display as strong organization. Unlike VV, TOP 09 possesses a stable membership base and an extensive network of local branches. It also conducts successful election campaigns, not only according to good election results but also according to experts on campaigning.

The proper implementation of all the party organization rules was, in the case of TOP 09, enabled by experience and continuity within the party's Presidency and Central Office. Thanks to those two elements party organization was developed gradually and competently. It became strong and it helped the party reach the best possible electoral results. Not only scholars realize the importance of experience and continuity within political parties' management, also TOP 09's non-political personnel and leading politicians are well aware of this fact, basing the party's functioning on it. Miroslav Kalousek, 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Chairman of TOP 09 claims that:

Politics is a very sophisticated profession. You have to have experience to do it well. It is similar to a medical profession. Imagine yourself going into the hospital with gallbladder inflammation. Would you say you want to have surgery done by someone who has never held a scalpel in his hand only because it is evident that he has never failed a surgery? (Švehla 2015).

In sum, experienced and professional politicians and non-political personnel are significant elements for implementation of strong party organization, which contributes

to parties' electoral success and it enables them to survive in the political arena over the long-term. It should be recognized that this applies to the case of TOP 09 thus the validity of these findings should be further researched for other cases. However, new political parties should consider the factor of experience when developing their party organization strategy. The findings of this thesis suggest that if new political parties ground their organization with several politically experienced individuals, the ratio of new parties' survival might increase.

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