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Electoral Performance and Voting Behavior

Evidence from the Czech Parliament 1992-2002

Abdul Noury* and Elena Mielcova

February 2005

(Very Preliminary, comments welcome)

Abstract:

In this paper we study the voting behavior of the Czech Parliament members. First, we show that low-dimensionality characterizes conflict in the Czech Parliament. The first, and dominant dimension is the classical left-right dimension, whereas the second dimension, when significant, expresses attitude toward European integration. Second, we document the party development in the Czech Parliament and show evidence of convergence to a Western European type parliamentary democracy. We show that this is mainly a result of political parties' use of reward and punishment strategies to discipline their members. Highly disciplined members were awarded with better ranking in the party list for the subsequent elections. We also find that the electors are, though indirectly, interested in roll call voting behavior of their representatives.

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1. Introduction

Political parties are the central elements of modern democracy. More importantly, as John Aldrich (1995) argued, democracy is *unworkable* without them. Not surprisingly, the literature on political parties and the party system is voluminous. Some scholars view political parties as firms or cartels in that they are created to reduce transaction costs (Cox and McCubbins, 1993). Others view them as intermediates that generate political brand names (e.g. Downs, 1957; Snyder and Thing, 2002; Aldrich, 1995). Still, others emphasize their function of commitment mechanism for politicians, vis-à-vis the voters (Osborne and Slivinski, 1996; Levy 2004).¹

When focusing on parties in legislatures, almost all studies view parties as cohesive blocs.² That is, the central issue is the degree to which political parties can discipline their members in order to ensure a cohesive bloc (Cox and McCubbins, 2004). However, political parties in parliaments have not always and everywhere been cohesive blocs. There are important variations both over time and across space. Variations across space have been well documented in the literature (see e.g. Lijphart, 1984). In this paper we document how loosely organized parties become cohesive blocs over time. To do this we do not need to study legislatures of 18th century or earlier periods. The parliaments of new democracies, in our case the Czech Parliament, provide a good opportunity to investigate this question.

More precisely, our goal in this paper is twofold. First, we show that, in the case of the Czech Parliament, parties converged from an unstable and somehow chaotic environment to a system characterized with highly disciplined politicians and largely cohesive parties. As a result the party system in the Czech Parliament is becoming

¹ Examples of studies devoted to parties are Rohde(1991), Sartory (1976), Morelli (1999), Baron (1993), Feddersen (1993), Roemer (1999), and Caillaud and Tirole (1999, 2001). On the literature on parties in legislatures see among others Poole and Rosenthal (1997), Cox (1987), Kiewiet and McCubbins (1991), Jackson and Moselle (2001), and Levitt (1996).

² Mayhew (1974), however, argue that parties are not appropriate ‘analytic units’. According to this view ‘electoral connection’ between members of Congress and the voters drives political behavior in Congress, not political ideologies or party interests.

comparable to those in established parliamentary democracies. Second, we examine how parties achieved this relatively high degree of discipline. Here we focus on the link between voting behavior and electoral performance. We argue that electoral competition is not only a central characteristic of partisan politics, but also is essential for the development of a cohesive party system.

The case of the Czech Republic is a particularly interesting one for two main reasons. First, there are important institutional variations over time. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Czech Republic, like other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, witnessed widespread institutional changes. Along transition to market economy these countries' legal systems as well as political landscape have undergone restructuring. In the Czech Republic transition to democracy was going hand in hand with transition to market economy. A loosely cohesive party system, frequent party switching, and a high level of instability characterized the initial political system in the Czech Parliament. Within less than a decade, however, the Czech political system experienced extraordinary changes. At present the patterns of voting behavior in the Czech Parliament increasingly resemble those typically observed in western democracies. These institutional variations allow us to examine how party system in young democracies develop and how this "convergence", although partial, takes place.

Second, the Czech Republic, with its proportional representation and semi-open list electoral system, coupled with the availability of a large number of roll call data, allows us to study the link between party discipline in parliament and electoral performance. Electoral performances in this context are measured by (i) the candidate's rank in the electoral list (reward by party), and (ii) the number of preference votes he or she received (reward by electors). More precisely, we ask the following question: Do political parties punish mavericks, and reward loyal members? Do electors care about legislators' voting behavior? Addressing these questions will provide some insights on party development in the Czech Republic. More generally, these questions are central to understanding of political parties (e.g. Snyder and Ting, 2002).

Our findings indicate that the voting patterns in the Czech Parliament are more complex than a simply governing versus opposition dynamics. Surprisingly, the main

dimension of conflict is the left-right, not the one that opposes governing coalition to the rest. This is in sharp contrast with findings on other parliamentary systems (e.g. Rosenthal and Voeten, 2002). Over time a second dimension became important. In this dimension skeptics about European integration are opposed to pro-Europeans. This is exactly like the European Parliament, where the second dimension captures attitude toward the European integration (Hix et al. 2005). We then show that parties became more cohesive over time. Next, we find that there is a link between legislative voting behavior and electoral performance. Parties reward loyal candidates with better places in the list. Voters, care about legislator's discipline, though indirectly. We also find that members with a high participation rate receive *less* preference votes. This is not surprising if one considers that very high profile members of the parliament spend substantial amount of time in the constituency, or in communications with media.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The next section provides some background information on the party system and parliament in the Czech Republic. After briefly reviewing the electoral system, we shortly describe the parties as well as the voting rules in the Czech Parliament. The number and content of dimensions of conflict in the Czech Parliament are analyzed in section three. In section four we focus on the link between voting behavior and electoral performance of Deputies. We present our conclusion in section five.

2. Brief Background Information

The Electoral System

The Czech Republic's main legislative body, the Chamber of Deputies, or the lower house of the Czech Parliament, has 200 members elected by a proportional representation system to a four-year term of office. The lower house of the Czech Parliament, referred to as the Czech Parliament in the rest of this paper, unlike the Senate, can be dissolved during an electoral term, and would lead to early elections.³

³ The Senate with 81 members, one third of whom come up for election every two years, is the upper house of the Czech Parliament. Senators are elected by a simple majority system in 81 constituencies. The Senate can return bills to the lower house, but neither the President nor

Before 1998, all members of the Czech Parliament were elected to eight regions. Since then the number of districts increased to fourteen. Forty five days before the elections, each political party or coalitions of two or more parties, proposes a list of ranked candidates for every region.

After elections the number of seats in the Lower House for every region is determined by the ratio of voters in that region. Votes for the entire Republic are then counted, and parties that receive less than 5 % of the votes (or coalitions of two, three or more parties with less than 7 %, 9 % or 11 % respectively) are eliminated.

The number of seats parties receive is proportional to their total number of votes. The number of regional party representatives depends on the proportion of votes for that party in that region. Within the individual electoral districts the distribution of seats is determined using the "d'Hondt" method. Representatives are taken from a list of delegates in the preliminary ranking, if the voters did not use the right to choose another order with their preference votes. Preference votes are valid if at least one tenth of the party voters also cast a preference vote. Candidates who receive a preference vote from at least 10 % of those voters are moved to the top of the list.

Voting Rules in the Chamber of Deputies

Voting in the Czech Parliament is often public and recorded (i.e. roll call), usually through the use of voting equipment and raising hands, or secret, through the use of voting ballots. Voting on legislation is always public. Deputies use voting equipment to announce their presence in the meeting room, and their presence is double checked before each voting. A quorum is constituted when at least one third of all Members are present.

To be passed, proposals usually need a simple majority of votes equal to one half of all present legislators. Exceptions to this rule include approving of constitutional acts, approving of international agreements on human rights and basic freedoms, which require

the Senate has a final power of veto. The President is elected to a five-year term of office by both chambers of the Czech Parliament.

the approval of a three fifths majority of all Deputies. Moreover, adopting declarations of a state of war and adopting resolutions expressing agreement with the presence of foreign troops in the territory of the Czech Republic require the agreement of a simple majority of all Members. The agreement of a simple majority of all Deputies is also required when the Parliament votes on draft acts which were rejected by the Senate, or when the Parliament votes on acts which were returned by the President of the Republic and when it votes on non-confidence in the Government.

Political Parties

Political parties in the Czech Parliament, and the share of votes and seats they received in each election since 1992, are reported in Table 1. Before briefly describing each political party, it is important to note that in the first parliament of the Czech Republic were also present a relatively large number of small parties. The parties in the Czech Parliament are described in the appendix. The main political parties in the Czech Parliament, from extreme left to extreme right are as follows:

Table 1 Election results for the Czech Parliament in 1992, 1996, 1998 and 2002

Party	Ideology	1992		1996		1998		2002	
		Seat %	Seat #	Seat %	Seat #	Seat %	Seat #	Seat %	Seat #
KSCM	Communist	14%	35	10.3%	22	11%	24	18.5%	41
CSSD	Socialist	6.5%	16	26.5%	61	32.3%	74	30.2%	70
KDU-CSL	Christian	6.3%	15	8.1%	18	9%	20	COALITION	NA
US	Lib. Cons.	NA	NA	NA	NA	8.6%	19	COALITION	NA
DEU	Lib. Cons.	NA	NA	2.8%	0	1.4%	0	COALITION	NA
COALITION	-	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	14.4%	31*
ODS	Right	29.7%	76	29.6%	68	27.7%	63	24.5%	58

*Bold figures indicate that the party is participating in Government. * 21 seats are held by KDU-CSL Deputies and 10 seats are held by US-DEU Deputies. Other political parties not reported in the list are ODA, that was present in the first and second parliaments with 5.9% and 6.3% of seats, respectively and*

KDS that formed a coalition with ODS. In the 1992 parliament there were a large number of additional small political parties such as HSD-SMS, SPR-RSC, KDS I, LSU, CMSS, CMUS, LSNS, KDS I, and LB.

On the extreme left, there is the Communist Party (**KSCM**). This party is one of the few largely unreconstructed Communist parties on the political scene in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The KSCM's political program calls for state ownership in key sectors of the economy (banking, transport, telecommunications, energy, the extractive industries etc.). The party is strongly opposed to Czech NATO membership and describes the NATO action against Yugoslavia in 1999 as "aggression". Supporters include many older people, who have found it hard to adapt to the new conditions. It also enjoys support in industrial areas with high unemployment. The party has a large base of grass roots members, far outnumbering the other main political parties.

Moving slightly to the right, there is the Czech Social Democratic Party (**CSSD**). Socialists favor a social market economy, but in government they have also overseen an acceleration of the privatization process, notably of the main Czech banks. The party leadership is strongly pro-European Union. Supporters of the CSSD party are working-class voters in industrial towns as well as public service employees and trade union members.

Parliamentary elections of 1998 brought no clear winner, the Social Democrats, as the party with the most seats in the Chamber of Deputies, signed the so-called "opposition agreement" with the second strongest political force, the right of centre Civic Democratic Party of Vaclav Klaus, under which the Civic Democrats agreed to tolerate the minority Social Democrat government.

On the center-right sit the Christian Democrats, or officially the Christian Democratic Union - Czechoslovak People's Party (**KDU-CSL**), which is a traditional, conservative, Roman Catholic-based party. Although it defines itself as right of centre as well as pro-European Union, in many respects it is closer to the Socialists than the other right-wing parties. The party served as a junior partner in the two governments between July 1992 and January 1998. Since 1999 it has been in a close pact with the Freedom Union. The party is also taking part in the current government with Socialists. Christian

Democrats appeal particularly to Catholic voters and to conservative voters in small towns and rural areas. It enjoys strong and stable support in rural parts of Moravia, the eastern part of the Czech Republic.

Next there is the Freedom Union - Democratic Union (**US-DEU**), which was formed in January 1998 by disenchanted members of parliament, who broke away from Vaclav Klaus's Civic Democratic Party after a row about party financing. The row brought down the Klaus government in November 1997. The Freedom Union-Democratic Union is a right-of-centre party, committed to free-market liberalism. It combines right-wing policies, such as tax reductions and the introduction of tuition fees for university students, with a stress on the environment and on minority rights. The party is strongly pro-European Union, and is popular among people with higher education and particularly appeals to young people and to those disillusioned with the larger parties. Its supporters live mainly in urban areas.

In September 1999, the Freedom Union, along with three other rights of centre parties (the Christian Democratic Union-People's Party, the Democratic Union and the Civic Democratic Alliance) signed a pact, committing them to close cooperation in the run-up to the next parliamentary elections and in the period to follow. From then on they were known as the "Four Coalition". The Freedom Union merged with the Democratic Union (a small right-of-centre party that came well short of gaining the 5% of votes needed to enter parliament in the 1998 election) at the end of 2001. The Four Coalition collapsed at the end of January 2002, after a dispute over how to solve the debt crisis of its smallest member, the Civic Democratic Alliance (another party that had failed to enter parliament in the 1998 election). Since then the Freedom Union - Democratic Union has signed a new agreement with the Christian Democrats to go into the elections together with a new logo and under the title "Coalition".

On the right is located the Civic Democratic Party (**ODS**). This party was created in February 1991 after the break-up of Civic Forum, the driving force of the Velvet Revolution. After parliamentary elections in 1992, the ODS became the senior partner in the ruling right-of-centre coalition. After the June 1996 elections the ODS headed a fragile right-of-centre government, comprised of the same political partners, but reduced

to just under half the seats in the House of Deputies.⁴ ODS launched many of the economic reforms of the early and mid 1990s and was the instigator of the "voucher privatization" scheme, which aimed to create a mass share-owning society. The party retains a political vision of minimal state intervention and low taxation, coupled with a reduction of state bureaucracy. The party leadership is in favor of Czech membership of the European Union though is heavily critical of increased European integration. The ODS appeals strongly to the middle class and to entrepreneurs, and enjoys considerable support in some of the larger cities such as Prague and Brno and among younger voters. It is particularly popular with women.

Finally, on the extreme right there is SPR-RSC (**Assembly for the Republic - Czechoslovak Republican Party**). Since 1992 the party has been represented in parliament but failed to enter parliament in 1998 though with the achievement of 3.9 percent of the votes the SPR-RSC qualified for a state subsidy. Because of its extreme right-wing orientation other political parties in parliament refuse to cooperate with it. Interestingly, some of the extreme-right SPR-RSC voters later on voted for the extreme-left Communists (KSCM).

In addition, the Czech political parties can also be roughly classified as strongly pro-European, moderately pro-European, and anti-European (Kopeček and Šedo, 2003). The first group includes, since long, the CSSD and the parties belonging to the Coalition (KDU-CSL, and US-DEU). The CSSD has been a consistent supporter of Czech Republic's integration into the EU. As far as the KDU-CSL and US-DEU are concerned, the "European" issue had a great significance for them as it was one of issues that served traditionally as a defining line against the more Euro-skeptical ODS. Not only are they in favor of the Czech Republic accession to the EU, but they also support further deepening of the European integration.

⁴ The minority government led by Mr. Klaus consisted of ODS, ODA and KDU. It has resigned in December 1997 due to the scandals related to the party financing of ODS and ODA, bad economic performance and long-term disagreements. The interim government headed by Mr. Tosovsky was appointed in January 1998 in order to ensure the executive in the period before early elections in June 1998. This interim government consisted of ODA, KDU, US, and non-party ministers.

ODS is the only important party that can be described as pro-European “with reservations”. This party has been supporting entrance into the EU, but in the same time it has criticized the possibility of further deepening of the European integration.

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM) can be labeled as an anti-European party as its willingness to support the idea of Czech membership in the EU presupposes a radical change in the nature of the EU.

Roll Call Data

The sample of roll call data consists of three parts corresponding to the three legislatures of the Czech Parliament we analyze. The first part contains data from October 12, 1993 to February 21, 1996. It covers votes of legislators elected in 1992 as members of the Czech National Council. In this paper we used a sample of 3600 roll calls from the first legislature. The second part of the data includes data from the first to the last sessions of the second legislature (1996-1998). The total number of roll calls is about 4700. The third part of our roll call database includes over 14000 votes. Given the large size of the database in this legislature, we divided the data set into four parts, with each approximately corresponding to a given year.

Following Poole and Rosenthal (1997), we excluded lopsided roll calls, i.e. votes with less than 2.5% of voting members on the minority side. In addition, we excluded those members who voted on less than 25 votes in the first and the second legislatures, or during a given year of the third legislature. As a result the samples actually used in the analysis are slightly smaller than the original samples.

The roll call data are collected from the monthly sessions of the Czech Parliament. The monthly sessions were held once per month, approximately, and lasted several days, during which legislators typically voted on several hundred bills on various issues. In addition to voting on general issues like adoption of new laws or budget, the Czech MPs voted on a number of specific issues such as privatization, state regulation, church or arms ownership. This last issue attracted high coverage by the media. They also voted on

new legislation such as regional distribution, transportation system, schools or agriculture.

3. Dimensions of Politics in the Czech Parliament

Method

To analyze the dimensions of politics in the Czech Parliament we used NOMINATE (Nominal Three-Step Estimation), which is a frequently used spatial model of roll call voting (Poole and Rosenthal, 1997). NOMINATE has been successfully applied not only to the US Congress but also to other legislatures in the world (e.g. Voeten, 2000; Hix, 2001; Schonhard-Baily 2002; Noury 2002). But NOMINATE has also received its share of criticism (e.g. Heckman and Snyder, 1997). Although it is true that NOMINATE uses a particular utility (bell-shape) function, a specific distribution (extreme value, or normal) on the stochastic component of the utility function, as well as a three-step maximization procedure, often the results one typically obtains are quite robust to relaxing all of these assumptions. In truth, with a large number of roll call votes for a reasonably sized legislature, any multi-dimensional scaling method produces highly similar results.⁵ In this paper we used NOMINATE but as a check that our results are not an artifact of this particular method, we also used other scaling methods (Poole's Optimal Classification, and Heckman and Snyder's Linear Probability Model), which produced highly similar results.⁶ As can be seen from the statistics reported in Table 2, the correlation coefficients between NOMINATE and Optimal Classification, principally on the first dimension, are high.

⁵ But see Rosenthal and Voeten (2004) for a counter-example.

⁶ The results are available upon request from the authors.

Table 2 Correlation between NOMINATE and Optimal Classification

	1 st Legislature	2 nd Legislature	3 rd Legislature
1 st Dimension	0.98	0.99	0.99
2 nd Dimension	0.32	0.82	0.92

To scale legislators, we carry out separate spatial estimates of legislators' ideal points for the three legislatures of the Czech Republic. Moreover, since the number of roll call votes in the third legislature is very large (about 14000 roll calls), we separate the data into four parts. This makes the computation simpler and, more importantly, will ensure that the estimates, when comparing one legislature to another, are not affected by variations in the number of roll call votes.

Results

Goodness-of-fit of the Spatial Model

Goodness-of-fit statistics are reported in Table 3. We only present the data for one and two-dimensional models. The higher than second dimensions had no meaningful interpretations. Moreover, their contributions to increase the fit of the model were negligible.

The first dimension correctly classifies up to 95% of individual MPs' actual decisions. Based on these statistics, the first and the second legislatures look like one-dimensional, as the increase in the fit of the model, measured by Correct Classification scores, is less than 1%. The third legislature, however, seems more two-dimensional. Here the increase in the fit of the model is substantially higher than the earlier periods. The Aggregate proportional Reduction in Errors (APRE) statistics confirm the conclusions based on the Correct Classification scores.

Note that the one-dimensional fits are better than those reported for the United States (Poole and Rosenthal, 1997).⁷ The fits are comparable to those found for the French fourth republic, a legislature characterized with “perfect spatial voting” (Rosenthal and Voeten, 2002).

Table 3 Goodness of Fit Statistics

	# Leg.	# RCV	Correct Classification (%)		APRE (%)	
			Dim1	Dim2	Dim1	Dim2
			Leg. 1 (92-96)	201	3600	91.9
Leg. 2 (96-98)	206	2120	95.2	96.0	84.2	87.0
Leg. 3/1 (98-99)	201	2150	90.0	92.5	67.5	73.3
Leg. 3/2 (99-00)	204	2020	89.7	90.8	64.3	68.4
Leg. 3/3 (00-01)	204	2070	88.4	92.1	61.1	73.5
Leg 3/4 (01-01)	201	2100	89.9	91.4	66.5	71.7

APRE is Aggregate Proportional Reduction in Errors

Interpretations of the Dimensions

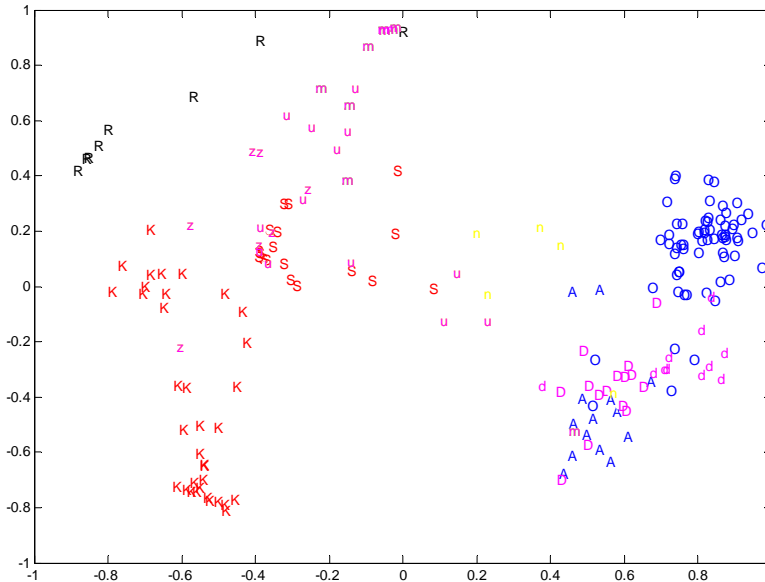
To interpret the dimensions of politics in the Czech Parliament, we first focus on the scatter-plots of legislators ideal positions. Then, using survey data, we correlate the party’s revealed positions to their electors’ self-reported positions. Figures 1-4 show the two-dimensional ideological maps of legislators in the Czech Parliament. A given token corresponds to a given legislator. The letter value of the token indicates the Deputy’s political party as follows: “K” for Communists, “S” for Socialists, “D” for Christian Democrats, “A” for center-rightist ODA, “U” for center-right-wing US, “O” for right-wing ODS, and “R” for extreme right-wing Republicans.

As is illustrated by the first map (Figure 1), many parties of various ideological colors are present in the first legislature. Parties, regardless of their ideologies, are generally not cohesive. The only exception is the main governing party, the ODS, that is relatively less divided than others. The voting space looks somehow like a legislature of a

⁷ The correct classification scores for the US House of Representatives during 1997-1998 were about 88%.

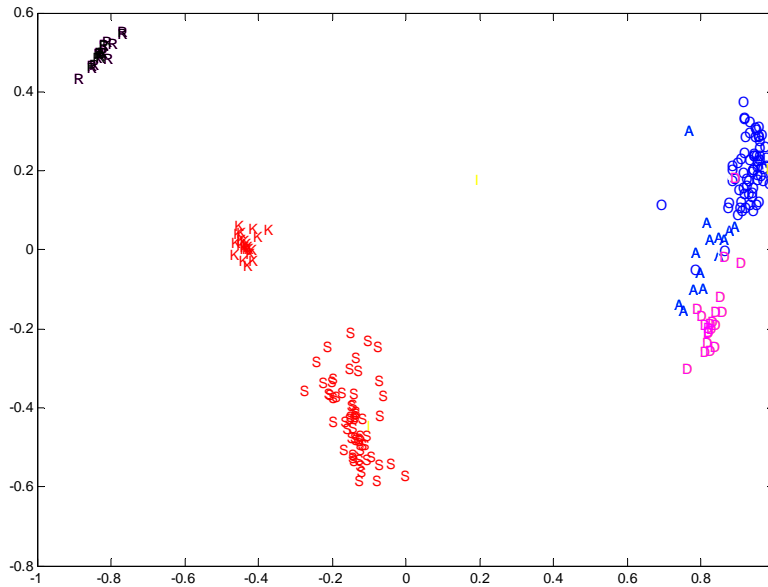
presidential system (e.g. the US Congress), not at all like a parliamentary system parliament. The political space is divided, though not clearly, between two non-cohesive groups of Deputies. Governing parties (ODS, ODA, KDU) are on the right-hand side of the ideological space, the opposition parties occupy the left. Within each group, legislators are smoothly distributed. The smooth distributions express the lack of high party cohesion. When looking at the relative positions of parties, on the first dimension legislators are distributed from extreme left to right. Socialists and Christian Democrats together with Liberals are located between Communists and right-wing Conservatives. Many small parties of various non-extreme ideologies are located on the center of the first dimension. Based on these observations, one can conclude that the first dimension is left-right. The only party that does not easily fit into this dimension is the Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (SPR-RSC). This Populist Party emphasizes cultural and racial questions while criticizing other parties for improper leadership and communist-ties. The location of this outlier party indicates that this party has an anti-system behavior.

Figure 1 Czech Parliament 1992-1996 [N=3600]
Party location on the Left-Right axis, from Left to Right:
K=KSCM, S=CSSD, D=KDU, U=US, A=ODA, O=ODS, R=RSC



The second parliament, depicted in Figure 2, illustrates far more cohesive parties than the first parliament. Here again the distribution of the legislators on the first dimension is consistent with left-right, if ignoring the position of the extremist Republican Party. A sharp difference between the first and the second parliaments are the distribution of legislators in the ideological space. In the second parliament each opposition party forms a cohesive block with almost no overlap with other parties. Parties in the government form a distinct cluster, which is relatively cohesive particularly on the first dimension. Another contrast with the first legislature is the relative positions of parties on the second dimension. Here one might tentatively interpret this dimension as attitude toward European integration. One problem with this interpretation is that, according to this map, Communists would be more pro-European than the ODS, which seems unlikely.

Figure 2 Czech Parliament 1996-1998 [N=2000]
K=KSCM, S=CSSD, D=KDU, U=US, A=ODA, O=ODS, R=RSC



The maps of the third parliament (Figure 3-4) illustrate a specifically cohesive party system. Each party forms a distinct cohesive cluster. The governing Socialist Party is among the most cohesive parties. This party system, in terms of cohesiveness, tends to be comparable to what one can observe in established parliamentary democracies. Given the distribution of parties on the first dimension, one can certainly interpret this dimension as a typical economic left-right one. Interestingly, the first dimension is not affected by government-opposition dynamics, where the space is divided between two blocks. This is precisely why we considered that the “convergence” to established parliamentary democracies is only partial. To see how the party systems in the latter case look like, consider, for instance, the case of Belgium. Analyzing roll call data from Belgian’s 49th legislature reveals that the first dimension is composed of two groups, opposition versus governing coalition; whereas the second dimension is left-right.⁸

⁸ The spatial maps of Belgium parliament are available upon request from Abdul Noury.

Figure 3 Czech Parliament 1998-2002 (1/4: 1998-99) [N=2092]

K=KSCM, S=CSSD, D=KDU, U=US, O=ODS

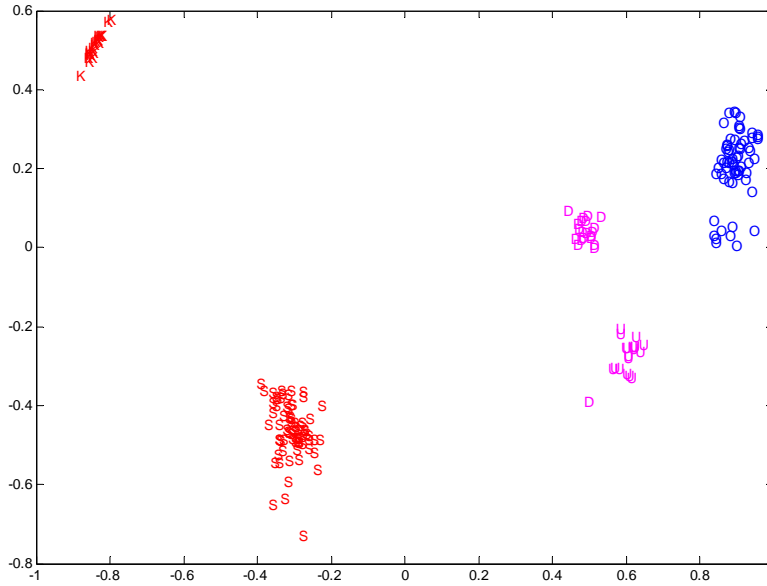
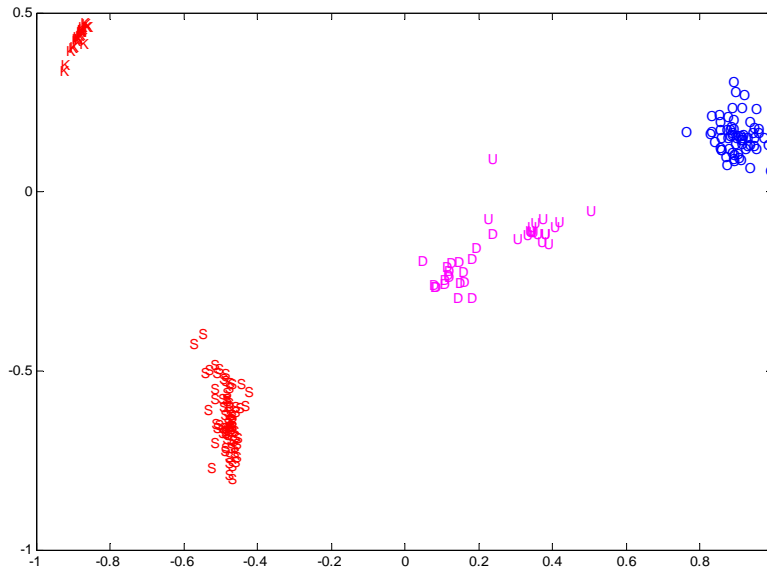


Figure 4 Czech Parliament 1998-2002 (2/4: 1999-2000) [N=2151]

K=KSCM, S=CSSD, D=KDU, U=US, O=ODS



Correlation pairs between legislatures are high. This confirms what can be seen from the figures.

The Czech Parliament is essentially a one-dimensional parliament, though over time the second dimension becomes important. There are two arguments that support low-dimensionality, especially in the first parliament. First, the increases in the goodness-of-fit statistics are marginal when adding a second dimension to the ideological space. In other places, in particular in the European Parliament, the second dimension increases substantially the goodness-of-fit criteria (Hix et al. 2005). The second argument is based on the instability of the second dimension. To document this instability, we computed correlation coefficients for legislators who served two consecutive legislatures. There were 77 MPs who served in the first and second, and 106 MP who served in the second and third legislatures. The correlations show that the positions on the first dimension are extremely highly correlated over time. In contrast, the second dimension exhibits a low coefficient between the first and second legislatures.

In contrast, the correlation between the second and the third legislatures increased considerably. It thus indicates that the second dimension after the first legislature becomes important and captures a stable component of conflict.

Table 4 Correlations between Legislatures

Legislatures	Number of MPs	First Dimension	Second Dimension
Leg. 1 & Leg. 2	77	0.98	0.39
Leg. 2 & Leg. 3	106	0.95	0.75

Correlations are computed for those who served two in consecutive legislatures

That over time the second dimension becomes more significant, as already mentioned, can also be seen by analyzing the goodness-of-fit statistics. Moreover, one can find a meaningful interpretation for this dimension, especially after 1996. On the second dimension, the locations of parties from one extreme to another can be interpreted as attitude toward European integration. On this dimension strongly pro-EU parties (CSSD, KDU-CSL, and US-DEU) are on one end, and the strongly anti-EU Communists (KSCM) sit on the other end, while moderately pro-EU ODS is somewhere between the

two groups. As a result, we conclude that the second dimension, after the first parliament, is related to European integration. Here, however, one caveat is in order. When analyzing each year of the third legislature, we noticed that the map of MPs in 2000-2001 was not consistent with this interpretation. Here socialists were located on one end, whereas US-DEU together KDU-SCL was on the opposite end of the second dimension. This finding is at odds with the above interpretation of the second dimension, and again captures the instability of this dimension.

An additional approach to interpret the meaning of the dimensions of conflict consists of using survey data regarding electors of political parties. For instance, the Survey “24 Hours before the Elections” carried out for the Czech Television reveals the positions of electors of each party on the left-right dimension (Vlachova, 1997). The scatter-plots (see Figure 7) of the mean party positions and self-positioning of voters show that the first dimension can be interpreted as left-right. As already mentioned, the only inconsistent case is the extreme right-wing Republican Party. As far as the second dimension is concerned, unfortunately, we cannot test our interpretation simply because so far we have not been able to find data on attitude toward European integration.

Let us summarize how the party system in the Czech Parliament changed over time. First, the number of political parties declined. Second, political parties become more cohesive over time. In addition, there are sharp decreases in the number of party switching.

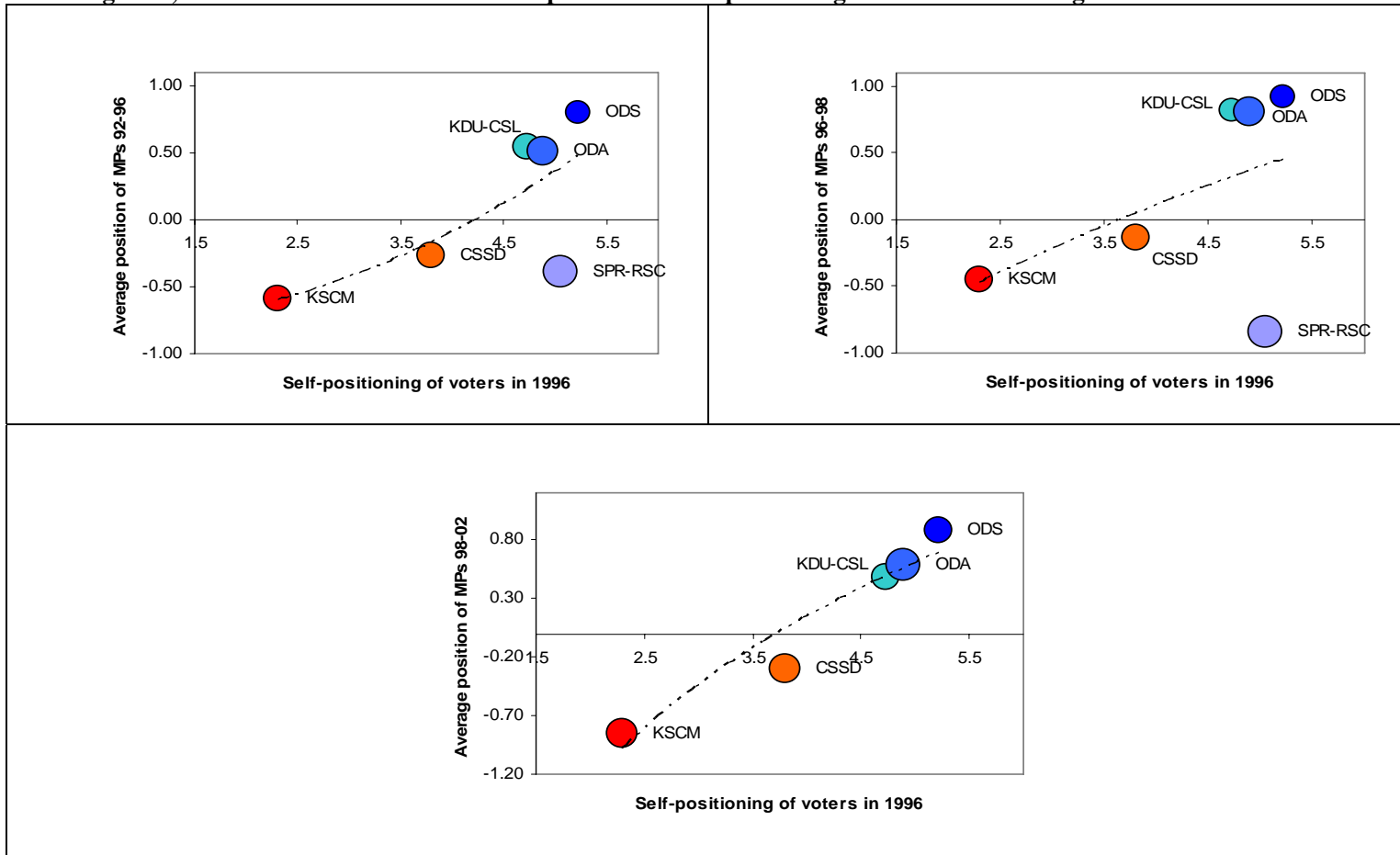
A large number of party switches is not surprising in young democracies or in democracies where legislators are elected on the basis of personal votes.⁹ The Czech Parliament is not an exception. The first two legislatures were characterized with a large amount of party switching. During the first legislature there were 97 changes in party affiliations, mainly connected with the creation or dissolution of a parliamentary party. For example, in January 1994, some MPs of the Left Block created the KSCM. Additionally, in December 1994, most former legislators of LSU and CMSS joined the

⁹ Party Switching is becoming an increasingly active research area among political scientists. Examples of legislatures where party switching has been recently analyzed are USA (Nokken, 2000), and Brazil (Desposato, 2002).

newly created political party CMU. The second legislature witnessed 43 changes in party affiliations, 33 of them connected with the parliamentary crises of 1997 and creation of a new political party – Freedom Union (US). In the rest of this paper our purpose is not to investigate why members switch party. Addressing this interesting research question is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, and this is a simplifying hypothesis, we take switching as given and concentrate on its consequences on legislators' electoral performance.¹⁰

¹⁰ This is line with the literature on switching, i.e. McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2001) or Desposato (2002)

Figure 5, Correlation between Positions of parties and Self-positioning of Voters on Left-Right



Source: Survey “24 Hours before the Elections”, SC&C for Czech Television, reported also by Vlachova (1997).

4. Party Discipline, Electoral Performance and Preference Votes

In this section we argue that the electoral competition played an essential role to party system development in the Czech Republic. Since Downs (1957) political scientists have assumed that politicians are primarily motivated by winning elections. According to this view, electoral victory is paramount, all other motives are secondary (Aldrich, 1995). Winning elections in a proportional electoral system with open list can be considered primarily as a function of two variables. First, candidate's rank in the list is a highly relevant variable that affects victory. Of course, parties have other means to reward (or punish) their members, such as attributing prestigious offices, but these types of rewards are of a short term nature, and as a result are often secondary. In contrast, placing a candidate on top of the list is the most valuable reward for a member who seeks reelection. Consequently, ranking in the list constitutes an important incentive scheme parties can use to discipline legislators.¹¹

Second, office seeking politicians have an additional means to increase their chances of reelection, even if the party did not reward them with top rankings. Electors can change the positions of candidates by their preference votes. This reward by electors may either reinforce the disciplining function of candidate placing by parties (Rank), or weaken it substantially. All depend on how competitive the two principals of legislators (party and constituency) are. If the two compete then the disciplining function of rank deteriorates. Otherwise, the preference votes will contribute to increase discipline.

The main hypothesis to test is that parties punished mavericks and rewarded loyal members. Additionally, we hypothesize that the electors' preference votes did not work against the reward and punishment strategies of parties. These hypotheses should be particularly valid in the earlier periods, when parties were loosely organized and party switching was prevalent.

To test those hypotheses, we collected data on candidate's Rank in the list (measures of reward by party), as well as on Preference Votes (reward by electors). These dependent variables are explained by two sets of explanatory variables. First we include measures of discipline. As discipline is a complex concept we collected three variables: (i) Distance from the Party Mean, measured by the first dimension of NOMINATE scaling; (ii) Participation in roll call votes measured by the frequency of time a member was present in roll call voting during his or her service; and (iii) party switching, a dummy variable indicating whether or not the MP switched party at all during a given legislature.¹²

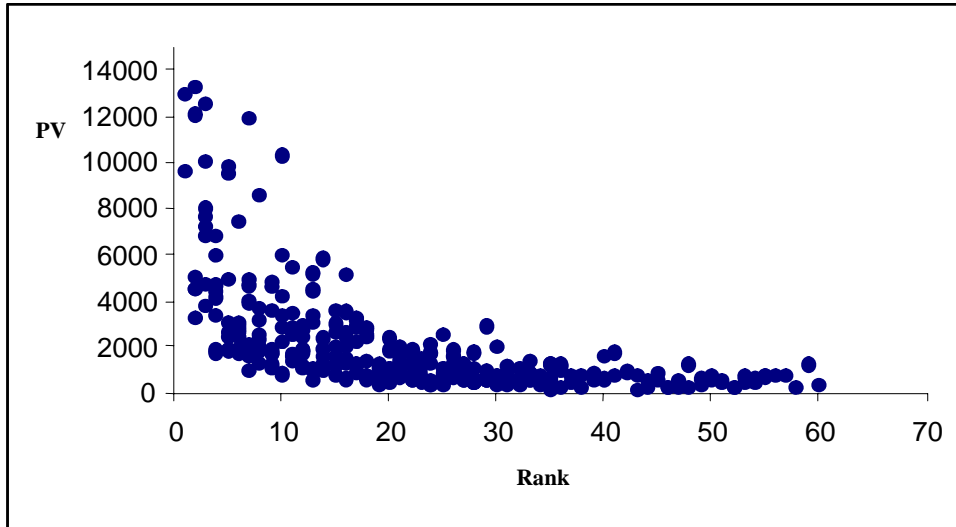
Second we introduced a number of control variables. Participation in government is a dummy variable that takes the value of one if a member was part of the government. Given that the mainly high profile members are likely to participate in government, this variable, in principle, should play an important role in ranking and/or in obtaining preference votes. Gender and age are additional control variables. One expects that older members are less likely to run as a candidate. We also included a "Highly Educated" variable as another control. This variable is created using the title of candidates in the electoral list. About half of the candidates at least had a title such as Engineer, Doctor, professor, etc. Descriptive statistics are reported in Table A3 in the Appendix.¹³

Before proceeding one interesting question to address is the nature of the link between reward by party and reward by electors. Figure 6 shows the link between the two variables. The Figure illustrates a sharp negative relationship between the two variables, indicating that electors reward those who are better ranked by parties. This finding therefore shows us that the party and the electorate are not competing principals.

¹¹ It is also true that parties sometimes strategically manipulate the ranking of the lists so as to maximize their vote shares.

¹² An alternative variable that one may create here would be counting the number switching per MP.

Figure 6 Link between Rank and Preference Vote (PV)



Estimation Strategy

As already mentioned, we have two main equations of interest and as a result, two dependent variables (Rank and Preference Votes). The lower is the ranking of a MP seeking reelection, the better will be his or her reward by the party. Regarding the second variable, obviously, more is better.

$$r_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \delta_{it} + \beta_2 CONTROL_{it} + v_{it} \quad (1)$$

$$\log p_{it} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \delta_{it} + \alpha_2 r_{it} + \alpha_3 CONTROL_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

where p_{it} and r_{it} are Preference Votes and Rank, respectively; δ_{it} is the vector of discipline variables (Distance from Party Mean position, Switching, and Participation).¹⁴ In a first specification, we assume that $\beta_2 = 0$, and estimate each equation separately. In a second specification we consider the potentially serious problem of *sample selection* (see below). Finally

¹³ Data on elections and candidates can be found at <http://www.volby.cz>

¹⁴ In equation (2) the dependent variable is the logarithm of Preference Votes. Given the distribution of this variable, a specification with logarithm produced better and more reasonable estimates.

in a third specification we estimate both equations jointly. Before summarizing the main findings, let us shortly explain the problem of sample selection in the context of electoral competition.

Sample Selection Problem

Our goal here is to explain how parties punish/reward their members based on their voting record, and how the electors allocate their preference votes to candidates. Our dependent variables are thus Rank in the list (r_{it}) and the number of Preference Votes (p_{it}).

The problem is that although we observe data on explanatory variables for all 200 members of the Czech Parliament, we do not observe our dependent variable of interest for all members. Data on r_{it} and p_{it} are only observed for those who seek reelection and decide to run as a candidate. In our case, we only observe data on 111, 141 and 162 members for the first, second and third legislatures, respectively. Denote the set of explanatory variables by X_{it} which also includes control variables. The following model describes the estimation problem at hand (the problem with our preference vote equation is similar).

$$r_{it} = X_{it}\beta + v_{it} \quad \text{if} \quad c_{it}^* > 0 \quad (3)$$

$$r_{it} = 0 \quad \text{if} \quad c_{it}^* \leq 0$$

$$c_{it}^* = Z_{it}\gamma + u_{it} \quad (4)$$

$$c_{it} = 1 \quad \text{if} \quad c_{it}^* > 0$$

$$c_{it} = 0 \quad \text{if} \quad c_{it}^* \leq 0$$

Equation r_{it} is an ordinary regression equation, except that we do not observe part of this variable. Denote c_{it} the dummy variable indicating whether or not the dependent variable is observed. Observation of the dependent variable of interest r_{it} is a function of the so-called selection equation, which relates a latent variable c_{it}^* to observed characteristics Z_{it} .

It is well-known that estimating equation (3) using only observed data leads to biased estimates, if the error terms of equations (3) and (4) are correlated (Heckman, 1979). That is, the estimates would be biased if the data are not missing randomly. In our specific case, it is unlikely that legislators randomly choose whether or not to run for elections, meaning that the sample selection bias is very likely to be serious. As a result, in our estimations, along with ordinary least squares (OLS) method we use the two-step Heckman approach as well as the full maximum likelihood.¹⁵

Findings

We carried out several types of regression analysis. First we pooled the data from the three legislatures and estimated Rank as well as Preference Votes as functions of discipline variables together with control variables. Then we estimated our equations by legislatures. Results of the regression analysis with the pooled data are reported in Table 5. Columns 1-2 are the estimates of the Rank equation; columns 3-4 are those of Preference Votes. For each dependent variable, the first and third models (i.e. columns 1 and 3) are estimated with ordinary linear regression method, whereas columns 2 and 4 are estimated with Heckman Two-Step Sample Selection method. The reported results are similar when using the two different methods. This finding indicates that sample selection is not a severe problem, even if a priori one may suspect this to be highly important in this context. Given this, we also jointly estimated the two equations with rank as an endogenous variable in Preference Vote equation. Here we excluded switching from the Preference Vote equation, as it is very likely that the switching only indirectly affect preference votes, via party ranking of candidates.

¹⁵ These methods are described with details, for example, in Wooldrige (2002). To estimate our equations we preferred Maximum Likelihood method. However, with pooled data, which requires a large number of dummy variables, convergence becomes an important issue. As results, our pooled models are estimated by Heckman's two-step sample selection method.

Table 5 Determinants of MP's Rank and Preference Votes

	DV: Rank		DV: Log Pref. Votes		Rank and Pref. V. Jointly Estimated	
	1 OLS	2 HECKMAN	3 OLS	4 HECKMAN	5 3SLS (Rank)	6 3SLS (Pref. V.)
Participation	2.913 (1.04)	2.916 (1.09)	-2.520 (6.29)**	-2.538 (6.61)**	2.862 (1.06)	-2.257 (5.68)**
Distance from Party Mean (92-96)	20.486 (2.81)**	20.483 (2.97)**	-3.026 (2.90)**	-3.019 (3.05)**	18.687 (2.66)**	-1.642 (1.40)
Distance from Party Mean (96-98)	-6.750 (1.08)	-6.41241 (1.08)	0.063 (0.07)	0.241 (0.28)	-5.991 (0.98)	-0.370 (0.42)
Distance from Party Mean (98-02)	-3.251 (0.71)	-3.1482 (0.73)	-0.171 (0.26)	-0.111 (0.18)	-4.118 (0.93)	-0.693 (1.07)
Government Participation	-2.297 (1.89)	-2.330 (2.00)**	0.494 (2.83)**	0.470 (2.81)**	-2.935 (2.48)*	0.136 (0.76)
Switching	8.333 (5.85)**	8.308 (6.07)**	-0.766 (3.75)**	-0.778 (3.95)**	8.065 (5.81)**	
Gender (Male=1)	0.674 (0.84)	0.680 (0.89)	-0.340 (2.96)**	-0.340 (3.09)**	0.725 (0.93)	-0.259 (2.31)*
Age	0.030 (0.94)		-0.010 (2.13)*		0.026 (0.84)	-0.008 (1.70)
Highly Educated	-0.809		0.020		-0.545 (0.86)	-0.019 (0.21)
Rank						-0.096 (3.89)**
Constant	2.834 (0.90)	1.46 (2.753)**	11.470 (25.42)**	11.504 (24.69)**	1.138 (0.38)	11.613 (27.48)**
Party Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislature Dummy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	407	-	406	-	406	406
R-squared	0.35	-	0.40	-	0.31	0.36

DV: Being a Candidate			
Age		-0.0162 (2.89)**	-0.016 (2.89)**
Highly Educated		0.458 (2.62)**	0.456 (2.6)**
Constant		1.065 (3.59)**	1.066 (3.60)**
Lambda		4.147 (1.4)	-0.622 (1.45)
N	-	609	608
Censored	-	202	202
Chi2 (25)	-	215	255

Absolute value of t-statistics in parentheses. * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%
Columns 2 and 4 are estimated using Heckman's two-step sample selection method.

From Table 5 one can see that the two measures of discipline (Distance from the Party Mean and Switching) are statistically significant. They both have positive coefficient, meaning that parties punished disloyal MPs by not ranking them on top of the list. As expected, Distance from the Party Mean is significant only in 1992-1996 parliament. It is not significant in other parliaments simply because there was high discipline. Party Switching has a positive coefficient suggesting that Members who switched party are punished by parties. With the Heckman sample selection method the only noteworthy difference is that the coefficients of Age and Highly Educated variables in the selection equation are significant. On the one hand, older members are found to be less likely to seek reelection. On the other hand, highly educated Members are more likely to participate in elections, not less. This finding may seem surprising, given that the highly educated members have better outside options. However, their choice can be justified if they think they have a better chance of being reelected.

Not surprisingly, Government participation is significant with a negative sign. Other variables are not significant. In addition to statistical significance it is important to consider also substantive significance or effect of the explanatory variables. In terms of magnitude, we found that the two most important variables are Switching and Distance from the Party Mean in 1992-1996 parliament. Switching increases in the dependent variable (Rank) by 40% in terms of standard deviation and a one standard deviation increase in distance from the party mean implies a 31% standard deviation increase in the dependent variable.

Turning to our Preference Vote equation, the third and fourth columns tend to indicate that that party discipline is important not only for parties but also for voters. Voters reward those who vote more along party lines. However, when jointly estimating our two equations, we find that rank is significant but discipline is not. This finding suggests that electors follow parties to reward or punish MPs. Parties not only play their traditional role, but also provide important information to electors that are less well informed than parties. This finding is not really in contrast with the theoretical assumption of models that consider electors as caring about roll call voting behavior of

legislators (e.g. Snyder and Thing, 2002). Our findings suggest that they do care, though indirectly, about MPs discipline.

A surprising result is obtained regarding participation in roll call votes, which is associated with *less* preference votes, not more. This however, is not that surprising if considering that members with high presence in the constituency, or in the media are better rewarded by voters than those who primarily spend their time in the assembly. One may argue that participation is capturing the effect of other variables not included in our regressions. Although this possibility should be seriously explored in future studies, we did include a variable precisely to capture this effect. Government participation is the main reason why a legislator is less present in the assembly. The inclusion of this variable, which is statistically significant at all standard levels, did not change the results regarding participation. That is, despite inclusion of this variable the coefficient of participation turns out to be significant with an unexpected sign.

Potential problems that should be noted include measurement errors. In our specifications we included a variable (Distance from Party Mean) that is estimated by a scaling method (NOMINATE). The problem would be serious, if the measurement error in this variable is systematically related to the error term of our regression equation. Although there is no reason why this should be the case, care should be taken regarding this possibility. Unobserved heterogeneity is an additional potential problem. Like almost all panel data sets this problem is a serious one. To alleviate this problem we include dummy variables for political parties, districts and legislatures. Finally, an additional source of concern is potential endogeneity of the switching variable. Admittedly, party switching is not a random variable. Legislators do not randomly migrate from one party to another. As a result, our estimates should be seen as a first order approximation. Needless to say that investigating the question of party switching, particularly in the case of the Czech Parliament, would be an important future exercise.

As an additional check we carried out the analysis by legislature, rather than pooling and estimating fixed effect models. The results of the analysis by legislature, reported in Tables A1 and A2 in the appendix, confirm the findings emphasized here. It is

important to note that there was almost no party switching in the third legislature, which is why there is no estimated coefficient for this variable on the third parliament.

5. Conclusion

The Czech Parliament was highly unstable in its early periods after the break-up of Czechoslovakia. With two out of every five Members switching parties in the 1992-1996 the Czech Parliament could be ranked among the champions of switching and instability. However, in less than a decade the parliament moved from such an unstable and chaotic environment to an organized legislature with cohesive political parties and disciplined members.

The main dimension of conflict in the Czech parliament is interestingly left-right, despite its parliamentary system. This finding is in contrast with the predictions of models that assume high coalition cohesion in all parliamentary systems (Diermeier and Feddersen, 1998). The second dimension can be interpreted as attitude toward European integration. This is not surprising given that the country was preparing to join the EU.

Our econometric approach emphasized that the not only parties but also voter care about the discipline of Members. They both reward loyal Members and punish those who switched parties and those who voted against the party lines. The use of this reward and punishment strategy, coupled with voters care about MPs voting behavior, we believe, was the main factor driving party discipline in the Czech parliament.

Analyzing countries with similar characteristics would provide further insights about the validity of our argument, which should be tested in the case of similar countries. Fortunately, the availability of massive data for most Eastern and Central European countries makes the analysis less painful.

The important question of convergence to mature democracy is both controversial and topical not only among experts but also among policy makers. By no means can our analysis can be taken as a proof that any newly created country can experience democracy within less than a decade. Instead the Czech case can be considered as an example. Only with good institutions can people in emerging democracies hope to experience democracy.

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Appendix

Table A1 Determinants of MP's Rank

	Dep. Var.: Rank in the List		
	1996	1996	1996
Participation	-0.252 (0.06)	4.227 (0.72)	9.243 (2.40)*
Distance from Party Mean	24.539 (3.57)**	-9.801 (0.93)	-2.942 (0.98)
Government Participation	-3.611 (1.44)	-3.568 (1.32)	-1.472 (1.22)
Switching	5.056 (1.86)	9.857 (4.51)**	- -
Gender (Male=1)	-0.547 (0.35)	2.114 (1.26)	0.381 (0.47)
Constant	29.745 (5.24)**	0.966 (0.15)	-0.716 (0.21)
Observations	198	208	203
Censored obs.	87	72	43

	Selection Eq. Dep. Var.: Candidate		
	1996	1996	1996
Age	-0.028 (2.80)**	0.019 (1.99)*	-0.041 (2.96)**
H. Educated	0.114 (0.53)	-0.237 (1.02)	6.787 (0.00)
switching1			
Constant	1.572 (2.83)**	-0.382 (0.75)	2.244 (3.20)**
Observations	198	208	203
Chi2	104	76	42

Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses

* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

The equations are estimated by Maximum Likelihood. The two-step Sample Selection method of Heckman produced identical results.

Table A2 Determinants of Preference Votes

	Dep. Var.: # Preference Vote		
	1996	1996	1996
Participation	-0.995 (1.35)	-2.629 (4.14)**	-4.318 (5.65)**
Distance from Party Mean	-2.389 (2.03)*	-2.411 (2.19)*	0.114 (0.18)
Government Participation	1.192 (2.72)**	0.335 (1.16)	0.349 (1.48)
Switching	-1.343 (2.81)**	-0.587 (2.56)*	- -
Gender (Male=1)	-0.498 (1.81)	-0.365 (2.01)*	-0.283 (1.74)
Constant	6.923 (6.83)**	10.837 (14.84)**	11.742 (17.23)**
Observations	198	207	203
Censored obs.	87	72	43

	Selection Eq. Dep. Var.: Candidate		
	1996	1996	1996
Age	-0.028 (2.80)**	0.019 (1.98)*	-0.041 (2.96)**
H. Educated	0.114 (0.53)	-0.242 (1.04)	6.787 (0.00)
Constant	1.572 (2.83)**	-0.376 (0.74)	2.244 (3.20)**
Observations	198	207	203
Chi2	95	97	81

Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses

* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

The equations are estimated by Maximum Likelihood. The two-step Sample Selection method of Heckman produced identical results.

Table A3 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
First Legislature 1992-1996					
Rank in the List	111	5.658	6.327	1	34
Log of Preference Votes	111	8.064	1.000	4.575	10.000
Participation in Roll Call Voting	201	0.670	0.152	0.200	0.980
Distance from Party Mean*	201	0.113	0.137	0.000	0.950
Government Participation	201	0.030	0.171	0	1
Party Switching	201	0.313	0.465	0	1
Gender (Male=1)	201	0.905	0.293	0	1
Age	201	53.075	9.102	33.000	74.000
Highly Educated	201	0.761	0.427	0	1
Second Legislature 1996-1998					
Rank in the List	141	5.972	7.702	1	52
Log of Preference Votes	139	8.268	0.897	4.787	10.987
Participation in Roll Call Voting	215	0.734	0.129	0.370	0.960
Distance from Party Mean*	202	0.065	0.079	0.000	0.678
Government Participation	215	0.079	0.270	0	1
Party Switching	215	0.172	0.378	0	1
Gender (Male=1)	215	0.851	0.357	0	1
Age	213	50.272	9.405	28	73
Highly Educated	215	0.805	0.397	0	1
Third legislature 1998-2002					
Rank in the List	163	4.074	3.996	1	22
Log of Preference Votes	163	7.864	0.870	4.970	10.605
Participation in Roll Call Voting	207	0.833	0.107	0.280	0.990
Distance from Party Mean*	201	0.036	0.115	0.000	1.165
Government Participation	207	0.087	0.282	0	1
Party Switching	207	0.010	0.098	0	1
Gender (Male=1)	207	0.841	0.367	0	1
Age	205	49.078	9.405	28	74
Highly Educated	207	0.488	0.501	0	1

* The party mean is calculated from the estimates of first dimension ideal points by NOMINATE

Political parties in the Czech Parliament

KSCM: The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia).

The KSCM is one of the few largely unreconstructed Communist parties on the political scene in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In other countries the word "communist" has usually been replaced by terms such as "democratic left", but the KSCM continues to take pride in its Communist history. The party in its current form was not founded until March 1990, but it is effectively the heir to the KSC (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia), in power from 1948-1989. Several groups splintered from the party in the early 1990s and founded their own parties - such as Left Block and later the Party of Czechoslovak Communists, but while they have faded into obscurity the KSCM has sustained its firm position in parliament consistently winning over ten percent of the vote.

The KSCM's political program calls for "an appropriate degree of state ownership in key sectors of the economy (banking, transport, telecommunications, energy, the extractive industries etc.)". The party is strongly opposed to Czech NATO membership and describes the NATO action against Yugoslavia in 1999 as "aggression". Recently some leading party members have expressed support for European Union membership, but the party remains divided on the issue. Most mainstream trade union leaders distance themselves from the party. Up to now all the other parties currently represented in parliament have ruled out any kind of coalition deal with the KSCM, unless the party undergoes major reforms.

CSSD: the Czech Social Democratic Party

Moving to the right, there is socialist party (CSSD). This is the oldest of the existing Czech political parties, dating back to the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Since 1989 it has grown into one of the main players on the Czech political scene. It has been the party of Government since 1998.

During the early and mid-20th century, social democrats were in favor of stronger labor laws, nationalization of major industries. At present, they favor a social market economy, but in government it has also overseen an acceleration of the privatization process, notably of the main Czech banks. The party leadership is strongly pro-European

Union. CSSD is identifying itself closely with parties like the Social Democrats in Germany and the British Labour Party.

KDU-CSL: Christian Democratic Union - Czechoslovak People's Party

The Czechoslovak People's Party goes back to the days of the foundation of Czechoslovakia in early 20th century as a conservative, largely Catholic party. In 1992 it changed its name to the Christian Democratic Union - Czechoslovak People's Party, but known as Christian Democratic Union. The party served as a junior partner in the two governments between July 1992 and January 1998. Since 1999 it has been in a close pact with the Freedom Union. Christian Democratic Union is taking part in the current government with Czech Social Democratic Party from the year 2002.

The KDU-CSL is a traditional, conservative, Roman Catholic-based party. It defines itself as right of centre, but in many respects it is closer to the Social Democrats than the other right-wing parties. Like the Freedom Union - Democratic Union, the party is pro-European Union and is strongly in favor of direct presidential elections. On some social issues, such as the question of legalizing homosexual partnerships, it is conservative, consistent with its Catholic tradition. The KDU-CSL and the Freedom Union-Democratic Union have put forward a common right-of-centre pre-election manifesto with a strong focus on the battle against corruption and the rule of law.

US-DEU: The Freedom Union - Democratic Union

The Freedom Union was formed in January 1998 by disenchanted members of parliament, who broke away from Vaclav Klaus's Civic Democratic Party after a row about party financing. They accused the party leadership of not being willing to investigate and answer serious questions about party sponsors. They were also unhappy with the leadership style of Vaclav Klaus. The row brought down the Klaus government in November 1997. Several members of the emerging Freedom Union served in the interim government of Josef Tosovsky prior to the early elections held in June 1998. In September 1999, the Freedom Union, along with three other right of centre parties (the Christian Democratic Union-People's Party, the Democratic Union and the Civic Democratic Alliance) signed a pact, committing them to close cooperation in the run-up

to the next parliamentary elections and in the period to follow. From then on they were known as the "Four Coalition". The Freedom Union merged with the Democratic Union (a small right-of-centre party that came well short of gaining the 5% of votes needed to enter parliament in the 1998 election) at the end of 2001. The Four Coalition collapsed at the end of January 2002, after a row over how to solve the debt crisis of its smallest member, the Civic Democratic Alliance (another party that had failed to enter parliament in the 1998 election). Since then the Freedom Union - Democratic Union has signed a new agreement with the Christian Democrats to go into the elections together with a new logo and under the title "Coalition".

The Freedom Union-Democratic Union is a right-of-centre party, committed to free-market liberalism. It combines classic right-wing policies, such as tax reductions and the introduction of tuition fees for university students, with a stress on the environment and on minority rights. A further frequent theme in the party's rhetoric is the battle against economic and political corruption. The party is strongly pro-European Union. The party vigorously advocates constitutional change to enable the Czech President to be elected directly by the electorate rather than parliament.

ODS: Civic Democratic Party

ODS is officially created in February 1991 after the break-up of Civic Forum, the driving force of the Velvet Revolution. The party held its establishing congress in April 1991, when the then Finance Minister Vaclav Klaus became party leader. In 1995 it absorbed the far smaller Christian Democratic Party. After parliamentary elections in 1992, the ODS became the senior partner in the ruling right-of-centre coalition and Mr Klaus became Prime Minister. After the June 1996 elections the ODS headed a fragile right-of-centre government, comprised of the same political partners, but reduced to just under half the seats in the House of Deputies. A row broke out inside the ODS in late 1997 following a dispute over the party's funding. This led to the collapse of the coalition government, and some leading party figures seceded from the ODS to establish the Freedom Union (called US)¹⁶.

¹⁶ The minority government led by Mr. Klaus consisted of ODS, ODA and KDU. It has resigned in December 1997 due to the scandals related to the party financing of ODS and ODA, bad economic

ODS launched many of the economic reforms of the early and mid 1990s and was the instigator of the "voucher privatization" scheme, which aimed to create a mass share-owning society. The party retains a political vision of minimal state intervention and low taxation, coupled with a reduction of state bureaucracy. As part of their pre-election campaign the Civic Democrats are calling for a set rate of income tax at 15%. The party leadership is in favor of Czech membership of the European Union but is heavily critical of increased European integration. This Euro-skepticism is also reflected in the party's views on defense, which focus on the trans-Atlantic link.

Assembly for the Republic - Czechoslovak Republican Party

SPR-RSC was founded in November 1989 by Miroslav Sladek. In the 1990 elections this party failed to reach the electoral threshold, but two years later it gained 14 seats in the Czech National Council. Since then the party has been represented in parliament. In 1998, the party again failed to enter parliament, but with the achievement of 3.9 percent of the votes the SPR-RSC qualified for a state subsidy. The SPR-RSC is an extreme right wing party. Because of its extreme right orientation every other political party in parliament refuses to cooperate with its representatives. Recently, the party has had serious problems with internal democracy and accounting.¹⁷

Movement for Self-Administrative Democracy - Society for Moravia and Silesia

(HSD-SMS; 1992): In January 1993 some members created a faction called the Movement for Self-Administrative Democracy of Moravia and Silesia – HSDMS (later renamed the Czech and Moravian Center Union – CMUS). The parliamentary party of HSD-SMS existed until April 1994, at which time all its Lower House members quit the party.

performance and long-term disagreements. The interim government headed by Mr. Tosovsky was appointed in January 1998 in order to ensure the executive in the period before early elections in June 1998. This interim government consisted of ODA, KDU, US, and non-party ministers.

¹⁷ More information on this can be found at <http://www.europeanforum.bot-consult.se/cup/czechia/parties.htm>.

Liberal-Social Union (LSU; 1992): In December 1994 the party, together with CMSS, joined the Czech and Moravian Center Union.

Movement for Self-Administrative Democracy of Moravia and Silesia (HSDMS; 1992) and **Czech and Moravian Center Party** (CMSS; 1992): Was created after the split of HSD-SMS in February 1993. In February 1994 the party was renamed CMSS. The party joined LSU in December 1994 to create the Czech and Moravian Center Union (CMUS).

Czech and Moravian Center Union (CMUS; 1992): Members of LSU and CMSS created this party in December 1994. The party did not gain enough votes to have representatives in the Lower House in the 1996 election.

Free Democrats – Liberal National Socialist Party (LSNS; 1992): The parliamentary party of LSNS was formed in November 1992, when some members of SPR-RSC and LSU quit their former party. In the 1996 election, the party gained 2.05 % of valid votes and since then it has not had representatives in the Lower House of the Czech Parliament.

Faction of KDS (KDS I; 1992): This faction of the Christian Democratic Party was created in May 1995, after the split of the former party. In November 1995, all of its members joined the Christian and Democratic Union - Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-CSL).

More complete party descriptions can be found in Munich and Sorm (1995), Turnovec (2000), and Turnovec (1996)

List of abbreviations for political parties

CSSD - Česká strana sociálně demokratická – *Czech Social Democratic Party*

KDU-CSL - Křesťanská a demokratická unie - Československá strana lidová - *Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party*

KSCM - Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy – *Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia*

ODA - Občanská demokratická aliance – *Civic Democratic Alliance*

ODS - Občanská demokratická strana – *Civic Democratic Party*

SPR-RSC - Sdružení pro republiku - Republikánská strana Československa - *Association for the Republic - Republican Party of Czechoslovakia*

US – Unie svobody – *Freedom Union*

US-DEU - Unie svobody - Demokratická unie – *Freedom Union – Democratic Union*